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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, September 18, 2023

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

VACANCY

DURHAM

The Speaker: It is my duty to inform the House that a vacancy has occurred in the representation.

[*English*]

It is Mr. O'Toole, member for the electoral district of Durham, by resignation effective Wednesday, August 2, 2023. Pursuant to paragraph 25(1)(b) of the Parliament of Canada Act, I have addressed a warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for the election of a member to fill this vacancy.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-12, an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Sex Offender Information Registration Act and the International Transfer of Offenders Act.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

The House resumed from May 4 consideration of the motion that Bill C-318, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act and the Canada Labour Code (adoptive and intended parents), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what a pleasure it is to rise and speak on what I would classify as very important legislation. We demonstrated very clearly how important that legislation was during the pandemic, a time when Canadians needed to feel that the government had their backs. Individuals understood that during the pandemic there was

going to be a lot of pressure on the Canadian economy in different ways, and one of the programs that supported Canadians from coast to coast to coast in a very real and tangible way was the employment insurance program.

If we look at the origin of the program and its intent, it was there to provide an income supplement for when individuals were having a difficult time, primarily in the area of employment. What we have witnessed over the last number of years is a substantial growth in employment. Since 2015-16, somewhere in the neighbourhood of over two million jobs have been created. That is an incredible number of jobs in a relatively short period of time, but one has to put it in the context of what is happening in our environment today. Canadians are very much concerned about issues such as inflation and employment, and we need to continue what we started years ago, that is, to be there to support Canadians in every way that we can.

If there is a message I want to convey to people who might be following the debate, it is that they can rest assured that, as a government, we will continue to look at ways to improve conditions, whether it is battling inflation or housing issues.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to welcome everyone back. I can sense everyone's excitement. Let us hope that our parliamentary work will be very productive. I hope you had a good summer, Mr. Speaker. You are looking very well indeed.

In speaking to Bill C-318, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act and the Canada Labour Code regarding adoptive and intended parents, which would introduce an attachment benefit, I recognize that this is a sensitive issue.

I would like to start by saying that the Bloc Québécois supports the principle of Bill C-318. The arrival of a child is a complex and challenging time for the whole family, all the more so when the child is adopted or conceived through surrogacy.

I will talk about that very briefly in my speech while emphasizing the need for attachment. Then I will talk about the need for employment insurance reform and, lastly, I will talk about how the governments of Canada and Quebec need to be on the same page.

Private Members' Business

First, I would like to remind the House that the bond created with the child is an important part of parenthood. Again, in the case of adoption or the arrival of a child from a surrogate, this process can be a delicate step since the link with the parents is not biological. We know that international adoptions are becoming less frequent and that children adopted by Canadian or Quebec families are often older than in the past, or have special needs. As a result, we can be sympathetic to the desire of these new parents to receive a special benefit to foster attachment.

We also know that the attachment process is complex and time-consuming, particularly for adopted children, and that it is part of an equation that also involves the so-called normal needs of a baby or toddler. That is why it is a good idea to create this new benefit.

The bill also provides for an extension when the child is hospitalized. The extension would be equivalent to the number of weeks the child receives care in a health care facility. We know that hospitalizing a child is an emotionally difficult ordeal. This extension therefore seems necessary, especially if we take into account the emotional factors that are added when adopting or welcoming a child from a surrogate.

We should also bear in mind that this legislation will require royal recommendation. Adding this new benefit to the existing EI program would involve approximately \$88 million in spending between 2023 and 2028.

Second, there is also the government's lack of leadership on employment insurance in general. In 2021, the Liberals had campaigned on the promise to modernize employment insurance and had committed to expanding the program to cover self-employed workers and address the gaps highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. There is still nothing in the latest budget, however. The Liberals say they are committed to modernizing the system, but we can see that their communication is lacking; they do not walk the talk.

The only changes announced by this government in the budget are two small reforms. The first is to extend a temporary change to employment insurance introduced in 2018 that increases the number of weeks of coverage available to seasonal workers. The second is to strengthen the prohibitions for misclassification of federally regulated gig workers. That is a far cry from the major structural changes that we, my colleague from Thérèse-de-Blainville in particular, have been seeking for so long.

The Bloc Québécois is calling for greater leadership on this issue. The government must review the current formula, the structure of the program, its eligibility requirements, its funding and its administrative technology.

This bill proposes to amend the Employment Insurance Act to add a new type of special benefit, namely a 15-week attachment benefit for adoptive parents and parents of children conceived through surrogacy. It also amends the Canada Labour Code to extend parental leave accordingly.

In Canada, the EI program provides 17 weeks of maternity leave for pregnant women, which can begin at any time during the period that starts in the week before the expected date of delivery and ends 17 weeks after the actual date of delivery. The Canadian program also provides parental leave of up to 63 weeks for natural and adop-

tive parents. Parents who both work for federally regulated employers can share the parental leave, which entitles them to eight additional weeks of leave.

Parents who share parental leave are entitled to 71 weeks of leave. They can take the leave at any time during the 78-week period that starts on the day of the child's birth or on the day the child is entrusted to them. There is no provision in the Code for paid parental leave. Longer parental leave under an employer's policy, a collective agreement or an employment contract may also apply.

● (1105)

Third, let us compare this with what is currently being done in Quebec. In the case of a birth, parental leave can begin the week of the child's birth. It is in addition to the 18-week maternity leave or five-week paternity leave. In the case of an adoption, each adoptive parent is also entitled to 65 weeks of parental leave. The leave may begin no earlier than the week when the child is entrusted to his or her adoptive parents or when the parents leave their work to travel outside Quebec to receive their child. Leave ends a maximum of 78 weeks afterwards. In a same-sex couple, both parents are entitled to parental leave if the child's relationship to his or her mothers or fathers has been established in the birth certificate or adoption judgment. At the parent's request, parental leave is suspended, divided or extended if the parent's or child's health requires it. In other situations, at the parent's request and if the employer agrees to it, leave may be divided into weeks.

Up until December 2020, Quebec's parental insurance plan, the QPIP, did not offer the same benefits to all workers. Adoptive parents had 18 weeks less to spend with their children. It was ultimately at the end of a battle by the Fédération des parents adoptants du Québec, or FPAQ, that the tide turned. Passed on October 27, 2020 and assented to on October 29, Bill 51 gave equitable treatment to adoptive parents as of December 1, 2020 through the creation of reception and support benefits, as well as adoption benefits for the second parent. In total, adoptive parents are entitled to the same durations and income replacement levels as biological parents. For the time being, both the Canadian and Quebec plans do not provide any attachment benefits such as those proposed in this bill.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has studied the spending that Bill C-318 would entail. The current proposal is that beneficiaries would receive a benefit equal to 55% of their average weekly insurable earnings for 15 weeks, up to an amount determined using the maximum annual insurable earnings received in the affected year. The maximum weekly benefit for 2023 is \$650. For each child, those 15 weeks of benefits could be divided between the two parents. The cost of the program would be approximately \$88 million over five years, from 2023 to 2028. However, it is important to keep in mind that the forecasts for the number of adoptions and births of children conceived through surrogacy are not robust and create some uncertainty as to the final real costs of implementing this new benefit.

To conclude, allow me to steer the discussion back to attachment theory, which is generally credited to John Bowlby. Bowlby drew attention to the fact that children turn to adults for protection from the time they are born. Stability, consistency and adequate basic care are key components of attachment theory. Depending on the child's disposition and the adult's approach to meeting the child's needs, the child-adult relationship develops into a mutual partnership.

A comforting, healthy attachment provides children with an important starting point for exploring the world, secure in the knowledge that safety is never far away. Attachment plays a critical role in teaching children to organize their feelings and behaviours, confident that they can rely on the person who cares for and comforts them. Forming attachments is also vital to a child's long-term psychological health. Attachments teach children to trust others, which makes it easier for them to form healthy relationships later in life. Most attachments, however, depend on two basic factors: proximity and time. The long-awaited arrival of a new child is an emotional time for parents, and this new benefit could help them adjust to their new parental role and give it their full attention.

As we know, EI is part of our social safety net. It is a proven fact that the pandemic has exacerbated the current problems with the EI system. We are asking for these changes to be made simply out of compassion and because EI is the tool we gave ourselves. It is our safety net to help people through hard times. We are asking for these specific benefits, but, as I heard a lot over the summer, especially from women's groups, and as we are resuming our work here in the House, I can tell members that a comprehensive reform of the whole EI system is badly needed to help people get through these challenging times.

• (1110)

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: Before we continue debate, I just want to remind folks that due to the Standing Order changes, we all have to be speaking from our seats.

• (1115)

We will resume debate with the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start out by congratulating Adopt4Life, the Child and Youth Permanency Council of Canada and the time to attach campaign for their tireless advocacy, which has led to Bill C-318 today.

Private Members' Business

I also congratulate my colleague from Battlefords—Lloydminster for putting this bill forward. It is an important first step in providing adoptive parents with the parental time they need to attach to adoptive children.

This is a critical first step in improving the outcomes for children being adopted, many of whom are over the age of 10 at the time of placement and have a history of trauma and loss. I, along with my NDP colleagues, support this change as we recognize that building relationships between children and adoptive families is vital for the success, not only of the child, but also for the adoptive family.

The first year that children are with their adoptive parents or caregivers is crucial for bonding and creating a foundation for strong relationships. The extension of this parental leave is crucial.

Unfortunately, one of the areas where this bill falls short is the recognition of kinship and customary care arrangements. This is strongly supported by Adopt4Life and Time to Attach campaign, which are also fighting for an additional 15-week leave for children who are receiving customary and kinship care.

The province of Manitoba defines “kinship care” as an arrangement in which the child is placed with extended family, such as a grandparent or someone with whom they have a significant relationship. Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions defines “customary care” as care through an individual's lifespan in which the community takes care of its own members according to its customs, traditions and norms.

Both kinship and customary care arrangements are common within indigenous nations as we struggle to reclaim our families and children. This is a serious omission in the bill that needs to be addressed, especially because, in the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 90% of all children in care are indigenous. There are more children in the child welfare system today than at the height of the residential school system.

We know the harmful implications of separating children from their families and communities. One only has to look at the impacts of residential schools, where children were forcibly removed from their families and shipped off to residential schools, and at the sixties scoop, where indigenous children were removed from customary care structures and placed in non-indigenous foster homes, disconnecting them from their familial and community structures, to see the lasting damage that has caused.

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In both instances, physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and spiritual abuse were rampant. This has resulted in lasting trauma and loss for individuals, families and communities. This was acknowledged in the 2015 report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Moreover, the omission of customary and kinship care is contrary to our international obligations, including UNDRIP and Bill C-15, which is now a law in Canada. It is also in violation of article II of the UN convention on genocide.

I want to share a story about my mother. My mother, Marjorie Gazan, was a street kid and a child welfare survivor who ended up in the system after my grandmother abandoned her and her younger brother in a hotel room in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, when she was five years old.

My grandmother had to leave them to earn money. There were no supports for indigenous women in the 1930s. There were no human rights. There was no one to turn to, especially for indigenous single mothers, and my grandmother was not an exception.

Since my mother was the eldest child, my grandmother left her in charge of her younger brother with specific instructions. She said, "Here is a loaf of bread, peanut butter and jam. It needs to last five days." I remember my mother telling me how she, along with my uncle, gleefully ate the loaf of bread and ran out of their food ration in only one day. Hungry, scared and alone, my mother decided to call the Children's Aid Society.

• (1120)

It is beyond most people's imagination, especially those who have been privileged with human rights, what a five-year-old girl would have to have endured to understand who to call and how to work with the bureaucratic child welfare system to relieve her and her brother's hunger. It was not that my grandmother did not love her, but she had grown up as a street kid, who later in life became a serious alcoholic to deal with the violent genocide she had experienced throughout her life. Dislocated from her family for reasons directly correlated to the Indian Act and other institutional and colonial disruptions, including residential schools, she did not have anyone or anywhere to turn to. In fact, under the former Indian Act, a "person" is defined as "any individual other than an Indian". This made it impossible for my grandmother.

When my mother and uncle were apprehended into care, my late great auntie Stella Goodwill offered to take them into her house on Standing Buffalo reservation. However, this did not occur. As a result, my mother ended up being switched between 15 different placements between the ages of five and 18. It was not until I was 13 years old that my mother reconnected with her family and her community of Wood Mountain Lakota first nation. My mother had to endure a life alone in the world, and as a result, I was brought up almost completely devoid of extended family. I often envied my friends having big family dinners with their relatives. This was robbed from our family by the child welfare system and residential schools, as well as the intergenerational impacts of institutionalization, colonialism and systemic racism.

I sometimes wonder why I was brought to the House of Commons, an often racist, misogynistic, classist and neocolonial environment, where talk of reconciliation is cheap and the discomfort demonstrated when the residue of trauma caused by colonial vio-

lence rears its head is received with assumptions and judgments. Maybe that is why I am here, to tell these stories, to speak these truths so that they will forever be recorded in the Hansard, to fight for justice for families and communities, and to bring our children and women home.

Customary and kinship care is one way to achieve this. Although the NDP will be supporting this bill, it is my hope that extending the benefits to customary and kinship caregivers will be addressed at committee to truly reflect reconciliation.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be back in the House of Commons to speak on behalf of my constituents of Peterborough—Kawartha. I am very honoured to be supporting my colleague and friend from Battlefords—Lloydminster and her Bill C-318, which I will be speaking to today.

I am the critic for families, children and social development. Since being elected, I have had the opportunity to speak to thousands of people across the country. There is something that I hope everyone in the House knows, and that is that our children are in a mental health crisis. There is no doubt about it and there is no denying it. It is everywhere we go. The increase of neurodivergence and the increase in the needs of our children are increasing as the cost of living is increasing and putting stress on parents.

There are huge issues across this country in affordability, housing and mental health. It is a spider web, and none of it can be separated. None of it can be treated without the other. As happens so often in government, at all levels, it is hard to start. How do we fix such significant, giant problems?

For people who do not know, a private member's bill is when a member of the House, in this case it is my colleague from Battlefords—Lloydminster, puts forward a bill to pass through the House. It is a tangible item that we can all work together on in the House, across all party lines, to approve and make sure it happens. It is something that starts the ball rolling. It is a tiny thing that would change the crisis we are in.

What is this? It is a bill that pushes for adoptive and intended parents to have extended EI benefits. Many people do not know this, but adoptive and intended parents do not get the same EI benefits that other parents do. Why is that? I do not know the answer. It seems pretty silly when we say it out loud. It seems like a very common sense thing.

One in six families in Canada is suffering from infertility. That number is going up. There are 20,000 children across this country who are members of the state, which means they are not with a family. The majority of those kids are over 10 years old. Those first years of life are when the brain is developing, and anybody who has any neuroscience background knows that the brain is a little playdough that gets mapped. If children are not loved or attached, or are in an environment that is not safe, that is going to cause long-term issues. There might be mental health issues, addiction issues or trouble forming healthy relationships. These are all things that we have studied in the FEWO committee.

We have an equity bill that offers that same amount of EI benefits for adoptive and intended parents. It is a compassionate, common sense bill that I think could get support throughout the entire House.

I am going to go into some of the details. Up to 15 weeks of additional leave allows a parent to stay home to care for their child, bond and form healthy attachments within the critical first year of their life or placement in a family. Bill C-318 also recognizes the unique needs and complexities of attachment for adoptive families by better supporting healthy attachments, and it will of course help improve long-term outcomes and strengthen families.

Carolyn McLeod, a professor and chair of the department of philosophy at Western University, did a survey of 974 adoptive parents and found that 94% of these parents would find additional benefits very beneficial and roughly 75% said that they did not have enough time to bond with their children. She stated that a significant portion of them said that the current benefit system was a barrier to them adopting a sibling group or children with complex needs. They did not feel that they would have enough time with a child in those circumstances, so they simply did not choose to adopt a child in those circumstances.

Every child and youth needs time to adapt and adjust to their new family. Trust is the foundation for attachment. Many of these kids, as we said earlier, are over 10 and are going to desperately need that time. Every person deserves to belong to a family, feel safe and know that they have somebody who has their back.

• (1125)

The Liberal government has long promised to deliver 15 additional weeks of parental leave for adoptive families, but it has repeatedly failed to deliver on that promise. Back in 2019, the Prime Minister campaigned on fixing this problem; yet another broken promise.

Despite overseeing the file and being mandated to fix this problem for four years, the former minister of employment, workforce development and disability inclusion would not commit to providing the necessary royal recommendation for this bill. It was within her mandate as minister to introduce a 15-week leave for adoptive parents. Most recently, the former minister publicly alluded to a benefit for adoptive parents included in the 2023 budget, yet when the budget was delivered it was not there.

I will give a call to action for everyone watching at home, because sometimes it just sounds like there is a lot of talk in the House. People can directly message the minister and say that they

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need the minister to approve the royal recommendation, because if it does not happen, this bill dies. That is what needs to happen; that is what we are calling on today.

We have heard from all parties and they have given great speeches. I thank my colleagues from the Bloc, the NDP and the Liberal Party. They see the value in this bill. How can they not? However, there has to be action attached to the words or they are just empty promises.

I want to read for members a lovely story from Kyla Beswarick, who has gone through the process herself. She stated:

35 weeks is simply not enough time for a youth like me to feel comfortable with an entirely different family, let alone build trust with these unknown parental figures. I believe, we, who through no fault of our own, have experienced significant losses, deserve equal if not more time to heal and attach to our new family.

These are the stories we need to hear, and this is all members need to know to support my colleague's, the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster, bill today.

Canada is an outlier in not providing equal leave for all families. If we look at comparator countries such as Australia, New Zealand and U.K., we see that they all provide equal leave to these families. Moreover, it would not be a huge cost burden.

According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's estimate, the proposed new EI attachment benefit for adoptive and intended parents would cost \$88 million over 2023-24 to 2027-28. When we look at fiscal responsibility, this is it. It is how money is spent. It is where it is directed. It is the return on investment. I would challenge anyone in the House to tell me what better return on investment there is than building healthy families, than teaching children that they are loved and supported, than helping parents not stress about being with their children when they need it most.

Again, I will leave with this. I call on the Minister of Employment and Workforce Development today to provide royal recommendation, because if he does not, the bill will die. I encourage every single member in the House to start off this session showing Canadians that we mean what we say and we say what mean, and that we care about children and families in our country.

I want to congratulate my colleague on Bill C-318. I thank everyone for supporting it.

• (1130)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to this legislation, which is extremely well intentioned and certainly is in line with where our government wants to go with respect to employment insurance.

Private Members' Business

We understand that EI parental benefits need to be fair for all workers. That is why we are committed to adopting legislation that would provide adoptive parents with an additional 15 weeks of leave to ensure that they receive the same level of support to care for their children as other parents do.

When we look at the various different measures we have brought in, whether they are the Canada child benefit, affordable child care or incentivizing shared leave, our government has delivered in many regards with respect to providing for Canadian parents. We will continue to do that at every opportunity.

I do note that there are some flaws with the legislation, in particular, perhaps not a flaw but a major hurdle, the issue with respect to royal recommendation. My colleague who spoke before me certainly indicated that it was possible to contact the minister, but the minister does not have ultimate jurisdiction over what is awarded royal recommendation. It is an extremely difficult process to overcome that hurdle of a royal recommendation, and I would be more than interested to hear of examples that former Conservative governments did with respect to allowing for royal recommendation when similar legislation came forward.

I know of the issue of royal recommendation very well. Back in 2016, I brought forward a bill that I did not believe required a royal recommendation. However, after the bill had been tabled, the Speaker determined that it did. Needless to say, the government certainly did not support my request for royal recommendation. My bill was on the same topic of EI and maternity benefits for women who worked in hazardous conditions. The point is that this hurdle of royal recommendation is indeed an extremely tall one that requires an incredible amount of consideration, and it is very rare that royal recommendation is given by cabinet.

There are some other challenges with the bill that I would like to address.

Under the current EI regulation, adoptive parents and parents of children conceived by surrogacy are entitled to up to 40 shareable weeks of EI parental benefits to care for and bond with their children. Adoptive parents do not, however, as the bill tries to address, have access to EI maternity benefits of 15 weeks, which support the recovery of claimants who are pregnant or who have recently given birth.

Bill C-318 would create a new 15-week EI benefit for the attachment and caring for adoptive children or those conceived by surrogacy that is available from the week of placement up to 52 weeks. This is an attempt to mirror the 15 weeks of maternity benefit, which can start as early as 12 weeks before the expected date of birth and can end as late as 17 weeks after the actual date of birth. However, the proposed 15-week benefit would only commence at the time of "placement". In other words, it would not support the individuals during the time they need to prepare for the arrival of a child, for example by preparing their home and other lifestyle changes that are required to take in a new addition to their family.

In addition, the bill would provide 17 weeks of leave; that is two additional weeks to the proposed benefit's 15 weeks of income support, which is an outdated practice from when the EI waiting period used to be two weeks rather than the current one week.

I absolutely applaud the member for bringing this forward. I think most members in the House agree, and I certainly do, that we need to move in the direction that would allow for this type of implementation, but there are some issues with it.

• (1135)

The problem the bill faces right now is whether it receives that royal recommendation, because it will not be able to proceed much further from this point until that occurs. As I indicated previously, it is very rare that this occurs.

Nonetheless, I applaud the member for the initiative. It is a very important one. I think there will be opportunities in the future, if not through this bill specifically, to continue to collaborate together in the House to ensure that maternity and parental benefits are widely available to all those who have children. We continue to see different forms of that happening throughout the country as families are growing.

I thank the member for bringing the bill forward. Unfortunately, because of the reasons I outlined, I will not be able to support it, but I look forward to seeing where the issue goes in the future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I first want to welcome you and all my colleagues from every party back to the House.

I rise today on Bill C-318, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act and the Canada Labour Code, regarding a very specific topic: adoptive and intended parents.

The Liberal government has demonstrated a severe lack of leadership on that file. As a quick explanation for those who might not be familiar with the bill on this first sitting day after the summer break, it introduces a new type of special EI benefits, specifically, an attachment benefit of 15 weeks for adoptive parents and parents of children conceived through surrogacy.

The bill would also amend the Canada Labour Code to extend parental leave accordingly. It would also extend the benefit period while the child is hospitalized. I do not think anyone here in this House is questioning the need for a parent to take time off work to properly welcome a new baby home.

Whether we have children of our own or not, we all know that the arrival of a new child in a home is an intense and challenging time: cries, tears, nightmares, anxiety, colic pain, possible health or feeding issues, and so on. I see members smiling. We have all been there. We have to remove from the house everything that can possibly be dangerous for the little one and arrange the space so as to maximize the baby's mental and physical development.

An important part of being a parent is creating that special bond with the child. Parents have to make sure that their kids are happy, that they have everything they need, and that they feel safe and can develop trusting relationships with their new family.

There is no question that all new parents go through a complex adjustment period that is full of challenges and is different for each child. Unfortunately, or fortunately, there is no manual or piece of legislation that can really prepare us for that. Believe me, I too have been through it.

However, there are measures the government can put in place to make things a little easier and give new parents the tools they need—and I do mean all new parents. As it is often said, adoptive parents do not have it any easier than biological parents.

In fact, the opposite is often true, and this relates to the notion of attachment mentioned in the summary of Bill C-318. The literature indicates that the attachment theory referred to earlier by my colleague has emerged as a decisive factor in determining the best interests of the child.

John Bowlby's theory highlighted the fact that, from birth, children turn to adults for protection. The elements of attachment theory are based on the need for stability, consistency and adequate basic care in terms of both quantity and quality. Forming attachments is essential to children's long-term psychological health.

That said, in the case of adoption or surrogacy, the process of forming attachments can be tricky because there is no biological connection. The relationship needs to be developed, and that takes time.

It is worth noting that the meeting between parents and child often involves long-distance travel in different time zones, fatigue and changes of culture, language and climate. The children themselves obviously do not share the same excitement as their new parents. They have to say goodbye to the places they know and to everyone who has cared for them since they were born, people they have formed bonds with.

● (1140)

The impact of the overall decline in international adoption must also be factored in. I say this because it is increasingly difficult to adopt young children here in Canada. The process takes longer and is more complex than it used to be.

As for parents adopting a child conceived through surrogacy, certain factors may differ, but the challenges of creating a bond are quite similar. They need enough time with their child to foster attachment and create a strong, lasting parenting bond. I would also like to remind the House that, currently, neither the Canadian nor the Quebec maternity and parental leave plans contain an attachment benefit as proposed in the current bill.

Considering all this, the Bloc Québécois obviously and firmly supports creating a 15-week attachment benefit—yes, 15 weeks—for adoptive parents and parents of children conceived through surrogacy. This is not an onerous measure. I therefore invite my colleagues to vote with the Bloc Québécois in support of Bill C-318.

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However, what is somewhat disappointing to the Bloc Québécois right now is the Liberals' lack of leadership in the whole EI file overall. Need I remind the House that two years ago, in 2021, the Liberal Party campaigned on the promise to modernize employment insurance? It promised to extend the system to cover self-employed workers and to address the shortcomings brought to light by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here we are now in September 2023 and, based on the Liberals' last budget, we can see that there is still nothing. Nothing has been done except for two small reforms, if we can call them that. We are far from the major structural changes that were promised to Canadians and Quebecers. What guarantee do we have that this bill, even if it is passed, will be implemented by the Liberals? As my colleague was saying, the Liberals need to walk the talk. The talk does not seem to be a problem, but the walk is not getting us very far.

In closing, I invite my colleagues yet again to vote with the Bloc, and me, of course, in favour of Bill C-318. This could help many families in dire need.

I thank my colleagues for listening and I wish them a good return to Parliament.

● (1145)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: I recognize the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster for her right of reply.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as has been said today and throughout the course of this debate, the arrival of a new child is one of the most important times in a parent's life. It is a time of great joy and excitement; however, a growing family also presents added pressure on parents. Parenting demands time, energy and attention. It also adds financial costs to household budgets.

The employment insurance program provides important supports for new parents. Maternity and parental benefits help to offset some of the pressures they face. These benefits provide parents with critical financial support so that they can afford to take time off work to care for and bond with their child.

The leave entitlement provisions in the Canada Labour Code and provincial labour codes ensure that when parents take leave, their jobs are protected. Unfortunately, the current reality is that the employment insurance program does not treat all families equally. Those who grow their families through adoption and/or surrogacy are entitled to 15 fewer weeks of leave. These families are no less deserving of time with their new child, and that time is no less needed.

Government Orders

Bill C-318 is a common-sense piece of legislation that rectifies the existing gap in our system. It delivers parity for families formed through adoption and surrogacy. However, at its core, this legislation is about the welfare and well-being of our children. This is why the preamble of this bill intentionally acknowledges that families formed through adoption and surrogacy can face unique attachment challenges. Overcoming these challenges requires time, patience and dedicated effort.

The first year of a child's life in placement within a family is a critical time to form secure and healthy attachments. With the opportunity for families to have more time together, the proposed benefit in this bill would nurture healthy attachment and ultimately contribute positively to a child's social, emotional and cognitive development. The benefits of healthy attachment are lifelong, and they support the long-term outcomes within a family.

It has been encouraging to hear comments from all sides of the House in support of a parental leave system that treats all families fairly. Canadians across this country are now eagerly waiting for those supportive comments to translate into the passage of this bill.

I have heard directly from many parents. Some are hopeful that this bill will pass in time to deliver them the supports they need. So many more know first-hand how meaningful 15 more weeks of leave would have been for their own families, and they do not want other families to miss out on that precious time together. It is time that we support all families equally, honour the diversity of families in Canada and ensure that government policies and programs are inclusive.

Bill C-318 provides every member of this House the opportunity to support adoptive and intended parents. Together, we can take a meaningful step toward parity. With the stated support of my parliamentary colleagues from across partisan lines, it can now be anticipated that this bill will live or die based on the provision of a royal recommendation.

Just as his predecessor avoided taking a position on this bill, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages has not yet provided the royal recommendation needed or even acknowledged my correspondence to him. This issue is truly non-partisan. In fact, the Liberal government has been promising to deliver parity to adoptive parents since 2019, and it made the same promise to intended parents earlier this year. However, it has failed to act and deliver on these promises. These families are owed more than just broken promises from the Liberal government. Adoptive and intended parents should not have to keep waiting for parity in our benefit system.

I sincerely hope that a royal recommendation is forthcoming from the minister and the Liberal government, particularly from the cabinet. It is time that we give all parents the time with their children that they need and deserve.

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

[*English*]

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

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, September 20, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Deputy Speaker: The House will suspend until noon.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:52 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1200)

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.) moved that Bill C-48, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (bail reform), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-48.

As this is my first time rising in this chamber as Minister of Justice and Attorney General, I want to first thank the Prime Minister for placing his confidence in me and appointing me to this position. I want to thank the constituents of Parkdale—High Park for their faith in me over the past three elections. I look forward to continuing to earn their support in this new role. I also want to thank my parents and my sister for always empowering me to dream, and I want to thank my wife and children for supporting me in realizing my dreams.

There is another person in this chamber without whose work I could not be engaging in this, and that is the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard—Verdun. The work he has done over the past four and a half years has made Canada a better place and the justice system more fair. His work will continue to inspire me in the work that I do in this role.

Lastly, I want to congratulate my parliamentary secretary, the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore. I have the pleasure of having him as a riding neighbour in Toronto, and I am very excited to work with this excellent lawyer and parliamentarian to improve Canada's justice system.

Government Orders

Bill C-48 will strengthen Canada's bail laws to address the public's concerns relating to repeat violent offending and offences involving firearms and other weapons. It is a response to direct requests we have received from provinces, territories and law enforcement.

I know that these issues are of top concern for all parties in this chamber and indeed all Canadians. I look forward to seeing everyone in this chamber, across party lines, help pass this bill quickly in order to make Canadians safer. We have heard support for this package from provincial and territorial counterparts across the country of all political stripes as well as municipal leaders, police and victim organizations.

I want to begin by expressing my sincere condolences to the families of those we have lost recently in senseless killings. My mind turns to the family of Gabriel Magalhaes who was fatally stabbed at a subway station in my very own riding of Parkdale—High Park. The country mourns with them. This violence is unacceptable and we cannot stand for it. Canadians deserve to be safe in their communities from coast to coast to coast.

As a father, I am personally concerned about crime and violence. I want to make sure that my two boys are protected, as are all Canadian families. That is one of my goals as justice minister. This bill will help advance that goal.

Our government is working to ensure that these crimes cannot be repeated, which means tackling crime as well as what causes crime. We are the party of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Canadians expect laws that both keep them safe and respect the rights that are entrenched in the charter. In Bill C-48, we have struck that important balance. This legislation recognizes the harms posed by repeat violent offenders and would improve our bail system to better reflect this reality.

I will take a moment to remind my colleagues about the values we hold on this side of the House. Public safety is paramount for our Liberal government. This means ensuring that serious crimes will always have serious consequences. It also means improving mental health supports and social services that will prevent crime in the first place and help offenders to get the support or treatment they need to reintegrate safely into communities after they have served their sentence. We believe that investing in our communities ensures safety in the long term.

I was dismayed by the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition in the spring. He would rather engage in fearmongering for political gain instead of doing what is right: coming up with real solutions. He advocates for measures that would limit Canadians' charter rights. He points fingers instead of acknowledging the root causes of crime. The Leader of the Opposition has ignored evidence; he has voted against progress. I am dismayed, but I am not surprised. The Conservative approach to criminal justice has been short-sighted. We cannot return to Harper-era policies of clogged prisons, court delays, wasted resources and increased recidivism.

However, I was heartened to hear the Leader of the Opposition, on August 18, just about a month ago, say, "I am happy to bring back Parliament today and will pass bill reform by midnight" tonight. Well, Parliament is back. We are here. I am willing to put

in the work to have this bill pass by midnight tonight. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will stay true to his word and is ready to do the same along with his caucus colleagues. Premiers around the country want this. Police around the country want this. Canadians around the country want this. Let us get this done; the clock is ticking.

● (1205)

What are the specific measures we are speaking about in Bill C-48? According to existing Canadian law, bail can be denied in three circumstances: to ensure the attendance of the accused in court, to protect the public and to maintain public confidence in the administration of justice.

Justice ministers across Canada agree that the bail system functions properly in most cases. However, at the same time, we heard there are challenges with the bail system when it comes to repeat violent offenders. Circumstances change and our justice system should reflect those changes. We are always open to making the system better. When we see a problem, we act. That is what Bill C-48 is about.

The targeted reforms in this bill would improve bail in five regards, as follows: first, by enacting a new reverse onus for repeat violent offending involving weapons; second, by adding certain firearms offences to the provisions that would trigger a reverse onus; third, by expanding the current intimate partner violence reverse onus, fourth, by clarifying the meaning of a prohibition order for the purpose of an existing reverse onus provision; and last, by adding new considerations and requirements for courts regarding the violent history of an accused and community safety.

Let me start, first of all, with the newly proposed reverse onus. A reverse onus at bail starts with a presumption that an accused person will be detained pending trial unless they can show why they should be released. The onus is on the accused. It sends a strong message to the courts that Parliament believes bail should be harder to get when there is an increased risk to public safety or because a release in these cases would undermine confidence in the system. Importantly, the decision and the discretion to deny bail rests with the courts, which are best placed to make such determinations.

Government Orders

[Translation]

This new reverse onus would apply in the following situations: when violence was used, threatened or attempted with the use of a weapon in the commission of the offence; when the offence is punishable by a sentence of 10 or more years in prison; and when the accused has been charged with another offence that meets these criteria in the past five years.

[English]

Bill C-48 targets repeat violent offending. My provincial and territorial counterparts and the police have told us this is what we need to address. We are delivering in terms of that specific request.

The new reverse onus targets the use of dangerous weapons. What am I speaking about? I am talking about firearms, knives and bear spray, which I know has been a particularly acute problem in the prairie provinces, thus the direct ask that was made of me and my predecessor.

In the second category, we are cracking down on firearms offences. Bill C-48 would create a reverse onus for additional indictable firearms offences. When the premiers of the country came together in January and wrote to the Prime Minister, they said a reverse onus was needed on unlawful possession of a loaded or easily loaded prohibited or restricted firearm. This bill would deliver that.

On top of what they asked us for in January, we added additional provisions. Those are if one is charged with breaking and entering to steal a firearm, if one is involved in a robbery to steal a firearm and if one is charged with making an automatic firearm. In all those additional instances, the onus would be reversed, which would make bail much more difficult to receive.

Gun crime is a serious threat to public safety. We heard this from coast to coast to coast in this country. We heard about this in this chamber. We have seen too many lives lost and innocent people hurt because of guns. Our government knows when a gun is involved the risk is so much greater. That is why we are expanding the reverse onus provisions to make it harder to get bail in those circumstances.

These reforms respond directly to the calls of the 13 premiers across this country, some who share my political party stripe, many who share the Speaker's and Conservative Party's political stripe, and some who share the NPD's political stripe. What is important is it is a multipartisan approach. The reforms also reflect the perspectives of law enforcement partners to make bail more onerous for accused persons charged with serious firearms offences.

My third category is that this bill would strengthen the existing reverse onus that applies to accused persons charged with an offence involving intimate partner violence where they have a previous conviction for this type of offence. As members may recall, this particular reverse onus was enacted through former Bill C-75, which received royal assent in June 2019. It makes it more difficult for an accused person to get bail where a pattern of violence against an intimate partner is being alleged. The goal is to provide further protection to victims from the escalating nature of this type of violence. Our Liberal government, under the direct leadership of the Prime Minister, has always taken the issue of intimate partner vio-

lence seriously and will continue to protect victims of such violence.

● (1210)

[Translation]

The fourth key element of this bill is that it clarifies the meaning of a prohibition order at the bail stage.

Right now, the reverse onus applies at the bail stage when a person has allegedly committed a firearm-related offence while subject to a firearms prohibition order.

The bill clearly states that the reverse onus will also apply in cases of bail orders that carry a condition prohibiting the accused from being in possession of firearms or other weapons. This amendment serves to strengthen the existing reverse onus provision by making it clearer and easier to apply.

[English]

The final key proposal among the group of five that I mentioned at the outset relates to what considerations a court must make and take when deciding whether to release someone on bail. In 2019, the former Bill C-75 amended the Criminal Code to provide that before making a bail order, courts must consider any relevant factor, including the criminal record of the accused or whether the charges involved intimate partner violence. That very provision would now be expanded to expressly require courts to consider whether the accused's criminal record includes a history of convictions involving violence. This would help strengthen public confidence and public safety, because bail courts would now be specifically directed to consider whether the accused has any previous violent convictions and whether they represent an increased risk of reoffending even when the proposed reverse onuses do not apply.

The bail provisions would be further amended to require a court to state on the record that it considered the safety and security of the community in relation to the alleged offence. Let me repeat that: This bill, once it passes, and indeed I hope it passes today, would require a court to state on the record that it considered the safety and security of the community in relation to the alleged offence when making a bail order. That is listening to communities and responding to their needs directly through parliamentary action. It would complement the current requirement that the court consider the safety and security of any victim.

This amendment would address specific concerns I have heard from municipalities, indigenous communities, racialized communities and marginalized communities. Our collective safety matters critically in bail decisions. This is an important change. Members of small rural communities have told us that the release of an accused on bail can have significant implications for their residents. This change would require the courts to explicitly consider the wishes of those very communities.

[*Translation*]

It is our government's responsibility to ensure that legislative measures are consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I am confident that the proposed measures are compliant. More information is provided in the charter statement for this bill, which is available on the Justice Canada website.

[*English*]

I am deeply committed to ensuring that any measures taken in the chamber by this Parliament would not exacerbate the overrepresentation of indigenous, Black and racialized persons in our criminal justice system. We must not further marginalize and disadvantage vulnerable people, including those struggling with poverty, homelessness and mental health and substance use issues.

[*Translation*]

The government is committed to addressing systemic discrimination in Canada's criminal justice system. I believe that the approach taken in this bill, which makes narrow but important changes, is evidence of that.

[*English*]

The measures proposed in the bill are the result of extensive collaboration among federal, provincial and territorial governments. Members may be aware that the previous ministers of justice and of public safety convened an urgent meeting on March 10 of this year with their provincial and territorial counterparts to discuss ways to strengthen the bail system. This was a productive meeting. The ministers agreed that law reform was necessary but was only part of the solution. The provinces and territories expressed willingness to take action in various areas themselves, including improved data collection, policies, practices, training and programs in the area of bail support and bail enforcement.

I am very encouraged by the efforts by these provincial and territorial partners that are already taking place to improve the bail system in Canada. They are our partners in this issue. They will be our partners in rendering Canada more safe. For example, Ontario and Manitoba have announced commitments to enhance bail compliance measures, among other things, to increase public safety and to address concerns posed by those engaged in repeat violent offending. In British Columbia, the premier has also stepped up and made significant investments to strengthen enforcement and improve interventions in relation to repeat violent offending. I believe that any criminal law reform enacted by Parliament will be even more effective because of such actions taken by the provinces I have just listed, and I am hoping that every province follows suit.

Government Orders

• (1215)

The position I am taking and pronouncing here in the chamber, which is entrenched in Bill C-48, is backed up by law enforcement. Brian Sauv , president of the National Police Federation, said this on this very issue:

We also see the federal government's tabling of Bill C-48 in June as a good first step, but this cannot be the only solution. Provincial and territorial governments must now look at their own justice systems and make needed improvements. Our justice system is complex with many interrelated challenges and flaws that cannot be addressed through legislation alone.

[*Translation*]

Apart from the Criminal Code reform, our government is also fighting crime through non-legislative means. For example, the Minister of Public Safety announced \$390 million in funding to help fight gangs and gun crime. This kind of funding will support provincial government initiatives related to the bail system and will complement our efforts to crack down on firearms through Bill C-21.

[*English*]

Ultimately, we all have a role to play in keeping our communities safe. I would be remiss not to acknowledge the dedication and service of law enforcement personnel across our country in doing exactly that: protecting the safety of our communities, sometimes jeopardizing their own personal safety in doing so.

We are pleased that the police associations across the country have come out in support of Bill C-48. This past weekend, in my very own riding of Parkdale—High Park, I hosted the Toronto chief of police, Myron Demkiw, for a festival. He personally expressed to me his hope that Bill C-48 would become law as soon as possible. When I told him it would be debated first thing on Monday, he said, "*Dyakuyu*", which means "thank you" in Ukrainian.

We have also discussed bail in meetings with representatives from national indigenous organizations. Their views were and continue to be welcomed. This helps us to better understand what is needed in relation to criminal justice system reform and keeping all communities safe.

[*Translation*]

Our government takes cases of repeat violent offending and offences involving firearms or other weapons very seriously. Our goal of protecting public safety and victims plays a major role in our analysis of how the bail system operates and whether it is performing as planned.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Bill C-48 demonstrates our commitment to taking action at the federal level to strengthen the bail system in response to the challenges raised over the past several months. Provinces, territories and law enforcement have all lauded this legislation. They come from political parties of varying stripes. This is not a partisan issue. It is about safety, and it is now our turn to pass this bill swiftly.

I started off by acknowledging some people who have been important in my life, and I want to return to that message right now. I talked about my parents and my sister. When those three people and I came here from Uganda as refugees in 1952, we were fleeing the persecution of General Idi Amin. We came here for one thing above all else: safety. We came here because Canada offered that safety and the prospect of a better life. That concern remains alive and well 51 years later for me and everyone who has the ability, honour and privilege of calling this country home. We have the ability today to do something that promotes and advances safety. I hope we can all do it co-operatively and collegially, and can get this done today.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish to offer a very sincere congratulations to the new Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada. I know he worked very hard for his appointment and certainly broke a number of glass ceilings with his historic appointment, so we offer our very sincere congratulations in that regard. I wish him the best of luck, because the country is facing some serious public safety issues that I hope he addresses.

The minister recently gave an interview to Reuters and mentioned that he believed that “empirically” it is unlikely that Canadians are becoming less safe. That was his position a few weeks ago when he was first appointed. Unfortunately, we are seeing violent crime statistics up about 39% since the Liberals formed government in 2015. Murders are up 43%, gang-related homicides are up 108%, violent gun crime is up 101% and sexual assaults are up 71%. I could go on.

I wonder how he squares that circle. Does he believe violent crime is up, yes or no?

• (1220)

Hon. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her comments and her kind words.

I would say to her point-blank that the answer to her question is yes. What I know, as a representative of a community, one of 338 communities represented in the House, is that people are feeling that crime is a problem. Crime is up. I have seen that in my own riding with respect to violence on transit systems. I have heard that from parents like me who are concerned about the welfare of their children. It is what I have seen over the past month looking at the anecdotal evidence. I have also seen it married with statistics that demonstrate that exact fact.

Crime is up. We are looking to address the fact that people are feeling these concerns. That is why this bill is needed now more than ever, not just to be debated in the House but also to be passed. That is fundamentally why I pushed for it to be prioritized on the legislative calendar.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let me congratulate you on the success of this return to Parliament.

I also wish to congratulate the minister on his promotion. I am sure we will have ample opportunities to work together in the future.

I have a question for the minister. I am concerned that any tampering with the presumption of innocence or the right to remain silent could set dangerous precedents.

My question is simple. In its current form, is Bill C-48 fair?

Hon. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his question and kind words.

I am perfectly comfortable with this bill. I think it is fair and absolutely necessary. It is also fully compliant with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We always need to strike a balance between the need to protect communities and keep them safe and the need to always comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I believe that Bill C-48 strikes that balance.

I hope the hon. member opposite and all his colleagues in the Bloc Québécois will help us move this important legislation forward.

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my personal congratulations to the new Minister of Justice. I have worked with him in a number of capacities in Parliament and have always found him to be reasonable and a hard-working member of Parliament. I am sure he will bring the same to his new job.

I would also like to congratulate the new parliamentary secretary, who is sitting next to him, with whom I have also had a good relationship in the past. I look forward to our making progress on issues important to Canadians with these two new people in place in justice.

The minister said today a lot about getting this done today. I am going to express my hope that there is actually a plan rather than rhetoric involved with the idea that we pass this today. Certainly, New Democrats understand the urgency of tackling bail reform, both in the violent crime area and also in assisting those who get trapped in the justice system because they cannot get bail.

Does the minister actually have a plan for advancing this today?

Hon. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I would say that I have tremendously appreciated working with the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke in different capacities in this Parliament and in previous Parliaments.

Government Orders

In terms of the plan to advance this legislation, I will say quite openly and candidly that the plan has been worked on for some months. What I mean by that is that we had incidents of violence that were occurring at the end of last year. We had a call-out from premiers around the country. That was in January. In March, we convened an ad hoc meeting of FPT officials, and we developed an idea and a consensus around what could be done. Within about eight weeks, we had legislation tabled in Parliament. That is a lightening-fast pace of proceedings in terms of the development of legislation. I do believe the important work has been done.

I would point out to the member opposite that the premier in his province of British Columbia, Premier David Eby, has been one of the most vocal proponents of this. In terms of addressing the needs expressed by Premier Eby and his government, as well as the needs expressed by so many other premiers, I think it is incumbent upon us to do this as quickly as possible. That is not a desire to short-circuit any sort of parliamentary oversight; it is far from it. I think a lot of that work has already been done in the co-development of this legislation with legal actors, law enforcement actors and other intergovernmental colleagues. I think that work has been done, and we owe it to Canadians to be promoting this as quickly as possible.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the minister on his new role. He referenced the fact that this bill is widely supported throughout the country. I believe that all premiers are on board. I believe that most, if not all, associations of police are on board. I note that, in particular, the premier of Ontario, Doug Ford, said, "I'm urging the federal government to use this time to quickly pass their bail reform bill."

I am curious whether the minister can expand on the widespread support for this and how important it is, given not just what we have hearing across the country but also what we have been hearing in the House, in particular from Conservatives, over the last number of years, to move very quickly with this.

• (1225)

Hon. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, the member's question underscores a very important aspect of how this bill has come to pass. It is not just the premier of the province of Ontario who has been getting behind this bill. My first meeting with a provincial analogue was with Doug Downey in my home province of Ontario. He said in his statement that he has been working in close collaboration with us to develop a bail reform plan. He personally thanked the government for the partnership that we have been showing and for "taking direct action to ensure violent and repeat offenders stay behind bars."

Jennifer McKelvie, at that time the acting mayor of Toronto, and Guelph mayor, Cam Guthrie, said that they are pleased with this initiative. The Ontario police association has indicated the same, and the Ontario Provincial Police Association itself has indicated its support.

This really cuts across a lot of different sectors. After eight years in this place, I know pretty confidently that I can say that this level of co-operation and, indeed, unanimity, is quite rare to find in this place. That is what gives me the confidence to say, quite boldly, that if we are going to take people to be true to their word, there is a path forward to get this done and to get this done very quickly and

on to the Senate and ultimately to royal assent, where it needs to be to ensure the safety of Canadians. We rarely see this type of unanimity. I think we deserve to recognize it, work on it and act on it.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I certainly wish to add my congratulations to the hon. member on his joining cabinet in his very critical position as Minister of Justice. I have also seen, as my colleague from Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke and others have said previously, nothing but really strong relationships and non-partisan and strong collaborative efforts from the member.

I know that the public is very alarmed by people being released on bail who go on to commit violent crimes, but we know that the bill by itself could actually make things worse given the institutional biases and racism in our system of justice. Pretrial detention offers very little, and even less once people have received their sentences, in the way of mental health supports and the attention that would assist in keeping people off the streets to avoid recidivism. A balance will need to be struck that would not be struck by the bill alone.

Because I know we want to see the bill passed quickly, and I think it is likely there will be an effort to get it passed today, I want to flag another concern that I hear from prosecuting attorneys: When people do get bail, and the surety is often a family member who puts up money for the accused's bail provisions, it is almost unheard of to go after the person who puts up the money to collect the money, so there is even less incentive for a person out on bail to observe their bail conditions.

I wonder if the hon. Minister of Justice has turned his mind to this aspect of needed bail improvements and reforms.

Hon. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her continued collaboration. I think she knows, after my last eight years in this place, that advancing equality and curing systemic overrepresentation have been a hallmark of all of the work I have always tried to do. This bill would not impugn that objective. This bill is targeted. It has been called for by indigenous communities and Black communities around the country. Those communities need to be safe from violence exactly the same as everyone else, and the work that we continue to do to cure overrepresentation is represented by Bill C-5, by the impact of race and cultural assessments, by dealing with anti-hate strategies and by the work we will continue to do on curing online harm.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the House for unanimous consent to split my time.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Mr. Speaker, this past summer, on July 7, a mother of two young children, Karolina Huebner-Makurat, was fatally shot by a stray bullet from a gunfight between drug dealers near a so-called safe injection site in Leslieville, just east of downtown Toronto. The alleged suspect responsible for her death was out on bail at the time. He was also banned from possessing weapons and was obviously not allowed to deal illegal drugs. A man out on bail involved in a drug deal gone wrong got into a gunfight with another drug dealer, and a mother of two young children was shot to death in Toronto.

Just the other day, on September 14, a man who had been charged with first-degree murder for gunning down a person sitting in their car pleaded guilty to manslaughter and was out on bail following that. He is now wanted on a second charge of homicide, after killing someone else when he was out on bail.

On June 14, in southwest Edmonton, a man shot multiple rounds, killing another man in a back alley. At the time of this murder, he was wanted by police for failing to attend a sentencing hearing for murdering another person in July 2020. After pleading guilty to manslaughter for that murder, he was let out on bail, then failed to appear in court and murdered someone else.

Murderers are being let out on bail and are murdering more people. All of this is in the past number of months.

Also in June, a video went viral that I am sure members probably saw. I know a number of Conservatives did. It was very alarming and disturbing. The video that went viral online was of a man stabbing another man multiple times on a subway in Toronto. The suspect, who has been charged with attempted murder, aggravated assault, assault with a weapon and two counts of failing to comply with a release order, was out on bail at the time.

I have taken public transit and the subway in Montreal and other cities on multiple occasions. We could be sitting next to someone who is out on bail for a violent crime, like this man who stabbed another man multiple times, and that is not something that Canadians deserve to deal with every day. I do not think that is not something Canadians ever thought they would have to deal with, yet if we read the news on a regular basis, we know that assaults, stabbings, shootings and murders inside and outside public transit have unfortunately become the norm in many parts of our great nation.

I will just wrap up with a few more examples. I could go on all day. We have all heard and read about them. It is endless.

In August, news broke that a man accused of four cold cases of sexual assault in Vancouver was released shortly after being charged. A rapist, accused of four counts of rape or sexual assault, was released on bail into the community. He could be walking among us. I did not realize that Canada had become like this. When researching for today, I saw tale after tale of violence against women, murders, shootings, stabbings and physical assaults, over and over again.

The crime stats back this up. It is not just in our heads; we are not just paying more attention to the news or social media, not that we can get the news on social media anymore thanks to the Liberal government. The stats from Stats Canada back this up. In fact, since the Liberals formed government in 2015, violent crime has gone up

39%, murders are up 43%, gang-related homicides are up over 108% and violent gun crime is up 101%. Again, this is in light of OICs and so-called gun control legislation that go after law-abiding hunters and sports shooters in this country that the Liberals have promised will end gun violence. After all of that effort and all of that division, gun crime is up over 100% under the Liberals' watch in the eight years that they have been in power. Obviously it is a very failed approach to addressing violent gun crime in this country.

Sexual assaults are up 71%. Again, this is a feminist government, as they say at every opportunity. We know that sexual assaults are mostly against women, and there has been a 71% increase in sexual assaults since 2015.

The next stat is difficult to say, but sex crimes against children are up 126% since 2015. Also, car thefts are up 34%, which pales in comparison to sex crimes against children, but as MPs we hear that car thefts are through the roof, especially in major cities. People cannot leave their cars outside. Even if they are in the garage there are devices to steal them now. We hear about this over and over again.

● (1230)

I will remind the House that of the 44 shooting-related homicides in Toronto last year, 17 of the accused were out on bail at the time. In Vancouver, the same 40 offenders were arrested 6,000 times. There were 6,000 interactions with police in one year with 40 people. The people of Vancouver deserve far better. Why can we not do something with those 40 people who are causing mayhem, who are causing hardship, assaults, harms, rapes, thefts and abuse? Why is it that they continue to walk free time and time again?

Even more troubling is that the overall severity of crime in Canada, tracked by the violent crime severity index, has increased by nearly 30% under the Liberal government during its eight years. I will remind the House again that under former prime minister Stephen Harper, the same metric fell by 25%. It was down 25% and now is back up 30% under the Liberal approach.

Government Orders

Crime is one of the top things I hear from my constituents in Winnipeg. It is not just in their heads. In fact, violent Criminal Code violations increased from 9,400 in 2015 to over 14,000 last year. There were 9,400 in 2015 when the Liberal government took the wheel, and there are over 14,000 eight years later. The statistics speak for themselves: The Liberal approach to dealing with public safety and violent crime is failing Canadians. It is actually costing lives, as we have seen. This is not just a partisan issue or just a difference of ideology. This is really about the safety and security of women, children, the elderly, people riding public transit and men and women who are just going about their day.

It is very important that we are having this discussion. The Conservatives have been leading the charge on violent crime reduction discussions in the House for years. We have been talking about bail reform for a very long time, and it is just in the past few months that the premiers have sounded the alarm. Premiers from every political party have written multiple letters to the Prime Minister demanding bail reform. Every police force across the country that I have talked to says we need bail reform. There are also issues with people getting out early on parole. There are issues with conditional sentencing, with people given house arrest instead of jail time, not following that house arrest and going out and creating more mayhem for people in their communities.

I did congratulate the new Minister of Justice for his new role. It is a very important role in Canadian society. He is tasked with the Criminal Code. He alone is responsible, in addition to his boss, the Prime Minister, for fixing these problems. What concerned me, though, is that mere days after being appointed, he unfortunately said, as quoted in Reuters, that “empirically it’s unlikely” that Canadians are becoming less safe. Those are his words. I asked him about it today and he seemed to backtrack, but that was his initial position.

How do we trust the Liberal government given this is its record and given that it has made no moves to make any changes until recently because of public pressure from the premiers and from police? Everybody and their dog is asking for bail reform and tough-on-crime measures. Now the Liberals are doing something. They are bringing forward a small bill of about seven pages to fix a problem that was created by a bill that was over 200 pages, Bill C-75, from a few years ago. That was a Liberal bill from about five years ago that made it easier to get bail, bottom line.

Now they have brought forward a piddling little seven-page bill that they are telling Canadians will solve all the problems. I do not believe them. I believe the minister’s words when he said he did not really believe there was a lot of crime going on, though I am paraphrasing. The Liberals have sort of downplayed the concerns of Canadians. I have read the statistics and the stories, and clearly there is a problem.

I do not think there is any way we are going to solve this problem unless we have a change of government. The Conservatives have a proven track record of reducing crime in this country. It has been proven. It is in the data. The Liberal approach has failed, and people are being harmed as a result. We have a justice minister who, right out of the gate, downplayed these concerns, making it seem like they are all in our heads.

I will quote from the National Post. Adam Zivo wrote about this recently, which will sum it up really well. He said, “Canadians deserve political leaders who don’t gaslight them about violence in their communities. If the Liberals want to tackle this issue half-heartedly and do only the bare minimum needed to temper public anger, then that’s their choice—but it will be the end of them.” I very much agree with Mr. Zivo.

I hope we will see much more effort to address public safety in the remaining days of the current government, but if not, this side of the House is ready and waiting to get to work, roll up our sleeves and clean up our streets.

• (1235)

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her contributions in this chamber in advancing public safety. I appreciate that she is committed to public safety.

The member comes from Manitoba. Manitoba justice minister Kelvin Goertzen has himself said that the bill appears to be “hitting on a lot of the themes that ministers were concerned about” at the recent federal-provincial-territorial meeting. The justice minister in her home province is aligned with the sentiments she just expressed. The leader of His Majesty’s loyal opposition said this summer, literally one month ago today, that he is ready to get this bill passed by midnight as soon as Parliament is back.

My question to the member is simple. Parliament is back. We are ready to sit until midnight. Are the Conservatives going to support us in getting this bill to the Senate?

• (1240)

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Mr. Speaker, even if the Liberals give us an inch when we need miles of reform on public safety, it is very important that we move forward with the small pittance they are providing us in this bill.

However, Bill C-48 is not bail reform, which is what premiers, police forces, provincial justice ministers and civic leaders are all asking for. They are not asking for tweaks on the margins; they are asking for broad bail reform. What the Liberals are proposing today is not that.

Government Orders

I will draw the minister's attention to the fact that there has been a consistent Liberal government theme over the last number of years of going soft on criminals. It is not just Bill C-75 that made it easy to get bail. Bill C-5 removed mandatory minimums for violent gun offences and permitted more house arrest for rapists. Bill C-83 allowed mass murderers, like Paul Bernardo, to be transferred to medium-security prisons.

This is a theme, a perspective that the Liberals bring to the table, which has resulted in more violent crime, and that will not be solved by a measly seven-page bill, Bill C-48.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleague about an interesting aspect of the bill that warrants further study. It is also a request from women's groups who have been thinking about a specific issue.

The bill reads in part:

expand the reverse onus provision for offences involving intimate partner violence to ensure that it applies to an accused person who has been previously discharged for such an offence;

This has been debated a lot in Quebec. There was a report entitled "Reb tir la confiance" about rebuilding trust in the justice system.

Given this mention of intimate partner violence, would this bill not be a good way to send victims of domestic violence a message that we care about the issues they are facing? Would that not be an important first step?

[*English*]

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Mr. Speaker, aspects of the bill need to be studied to ensure they are effective. Anything regarding violence against women should be paid special attention. As I have said, since the Liberals formed government eight years ago, sexual assault is up 71%.

I would kindly remind the Bloc Qu b cois that it supported Bill C-5, which passed in the fall under the former justice minister. It removed mandatory prison time for a number of dangerous gun offences. It also facilitated more house arrest for rapists.

In Quebec alone, there have been five cases where convicted rapists have not served one day in prison. Instead, they are serving house arrest. They get to be in the comfort of their homes after violating women in the most horrific way. The Bloc Qu b cois supported that.

The Quebec national assembly has called on the House to review that and undo the harm. We are the only party that did not support Bill C-5. Does the Bloc Qu b cois regret its decision to support it?

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am a bit perplexed by the member for Kildonan—St. Paul's speech. We have a bill before us today that has had broad support from premiers who demanded action. I think it has had broad support from all political parties, with the leader of the member's party saying that he was prepared to pass it on the first day of this sitting.

In her speech, we heard some things get mixed up, things that had nothing to do with bail reform and had to do with other parts of the justice system. We have a disparaging of this bill, which has broad support from police and other members in the law enforcement community.

Is the Conservative Party serious or not? Is it standing by its leader's statement that it would like to get this done expeditiously or not?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Mr. Speaker, with my remaining seconds, it is difficult for me to take questions from the NDP seriously when it has supported, every step of the way, the Liberal government's soft-on-crime approach. The reason we are here is because of its support. If it does not like the government's approach, it should not vote for it anymore, and we can go to an election today.

• (1245)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Prime Minister, the cost of living is going up because of an inflationary tax that the Bloc supports and that they want to drastically increase. The cost of living is also going up because of inflationary deficits.

It no longer pays to work and the cost of housing has doubled. The desperation that these policies have caused is leading to a crisis of homelessness, drug use and crime. That is the situation after eight years of this Prime Minister.

Today, we are rising in the House of Commons to talk about the utter chaos that the Prime Minister has unleashed on our streets with his changes to the bail system. He introduced Bill C-75, which was passed. That law allows criminals who have been charged dozens of times to be released on the very day they are arrested.

That bill was supported by the Bloc. Yes, voting for the Bloc is not worth the cost. A vote for the Bloc is a vote for Liberal policies that cause crime in our streets. What are the consequences of that Liberal-Bloc policy?

After eight years of this Prime Minister, violent crime has increased by 39% and homicides by 43%. Gang-related homicides are up 108%. Gun crime is up 101%. I will stop there for now. The Prime Minister thinks that fighting gun crime means banning hunters' weapons. He stated in his comments that he wanted to ban firearms that are used for hunting. That is what he proposed in Bill C-21, to which he added 300 pages containing the list of hunting weapons he wanted to ban.

The Bloc Québécois was beyond happy, it was ecstatic. The Bloc said it wanted to adopt that list and that it had been waiting many years for this major ban on hunting weapons. Now the Bloc leader is trying to do an about-face, trying to make the people in Quebec's regions forget that the Bloc betrayed them with its agenda of banning hunting weapons. The Bloc Québécois also voted in favour of a law that allows criminals who use firearms to commit violent acts to return to our streets on the day they are arrested.

That approach did not work. We Conservatives will protect hunters and put the real criminals in prison. We will allocate resources to the border to prevent weapons from entering the country illegally from the United States.

Moreover, we see that assault causing bodily harm has increased 61%. Sex crimes against children increased 126% after eight years of this Prime Minister. Car thefts increased 34% after eight years of this Prime Minister.

This is the record of this government's approach of freeing the most violent criminals while banning hunting weapons. This does not actually work. It does not make sense. That is why the Conservative Party is the only party in the House of Commons that had the common sense to oppose this and stand up for the rights of hunters. We are going to put criminals in prison and protect law-abiding citizens.

● (1250)

We know that the Conservative approach works, because when we were in power the crime rate decreased by 26%. We targeted the most violent and vicious criminals and made sure that repeat offenders were sent to prison. All the other parties said that this would increase the prison population. In fact, the number of prisoners decreased by 4.3%. There were fewer people in prison and less crime on our streets. In addition, we were able to eliminate the gun registry to protect our hunters.

Our approach works because by targeting the most violent criminals and denying their release to prevent them from committing the same crimes again, we can protect society and deter crime by others. We will take that common-sense approach again when I am prime minister of Canada.

[English]

Today, we have a bill that partly reverses the damage that the Prime Minister has caused. We all know that after eight years of the Prime Minister, life costs more, work does not pay, housing costs have doubled, and crime, chaos, drugs and disorder are common in our streets. We know that his policy of freeing repeat violent offenders the same day they are arrested came to us in Bill C-75, supported by both Liberals and their coalition partners. In fact, the NDP wanted to go even further.

What are the consequences of their catch-and-release policy? Violent crime is up 39%. Homicide is up 43%. Gang killings are up 108%. Aggravated assault is up 24%. Assault with a weapon causing bodily harm is up 61% increase. Sexual assault is up 71%. Sex crimes against kids is up 126%. Kidnapping is up 36%. Car thefts are up 34%. These crimes are almost always committed by a very small minority.

Government Orders

The good news is that we do not have a lot of criminals in Canada. The bad news is they are very productive. They are allowed to be productive because of the catch-and-release policies passed in Bill C-75 that allow an offender to be arrested often within hours of their latest crime. In Vancouver, the police had to arrest the same 40 offenders 6,000 times, because the police and the system required them to be released under the Prime Minister's bill, Bill C-75.

The bill before us today partly and modestly reverses the catch-and-release bail system that the Prime Minister created, but it does not go far enough. Our policy is very clear. A common-sense Conservative government led by me will bring in jail and not bail for repeat violent offenders. Those offenders with a long rap sheet who are newly arrested will be in our jails today.

When we brought in policies of this sort under the previous Conservative government, we not only reduced crime by 25%, but we actually reduced incarceration rates. That was against all of the rhetoric of the radical left that said that we would have to build mega prisons to accommodate all the criminals. In fact, our laws were narrowly targeted at the worst repeat offenders and they scared the rest of the criminals away. We actually had fewer criminals, less crime and, therefore, fewer prisoners. That meant safer streets.

The Prime Minister has unleashed a crime wave over the last several years.

I was just in Whitehorse yesterday at Antoinette's restaurant. The owner told me that his restaurant had been robbed 12 times in 18 months, multiple times by the same offender who was released again and again. In fact, police officers told him they were going to stop arresting the offender because it was not worth the time of having him arraigned and being released almost immediately. It was easier and more cost-effective to just leave the thief on the streets and let him do his business.

That is how broken our criminal justice system is after eight years of the Prime Minister. Now he has appointed a radical justice minister who says that crime is all in the heads of Canadians, that their imaginations have gone wild. However, the data proves otherwise.

● (1255)

It turns out that Canadians and Conservatives are right. A common-sense Conservative government will fix the mess the Liberals made. It will fix what is broken with jail and not bail. Now, let us bring it home.

Government Orders

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the safety of our communities is a non-negotiable priority; it can never be partisan. As do parents across this country, I need to know that my sons are safe when they are on their way to school each and every morning.

The measures contained in this bill, Bill C-48, are focused on keeping repeat violent offenders off our streets. We have the support of all law enforcement around the country. We have the support of 13 different provincial and territorial governments, including many Conservative governments that the member opposite works with closely.

The one Conservative who is equivocating on this issue is the Leader of the Opposition. I want to ask him about a statement he gave to journalists, where he said, “We’ll pass it this afternoon. In fact, call [the minister] and tell him I’m happy to bring back Parliament today. We’ll pass bail reform by midnight.”

Was the Leader of the Opposition being honest when he made that statement?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, yes I was. In fact, I would have undone the Liberal bail law in Bill C-75 six years ago, the day it was passed.

Not only did the minister go on vacation before addressing bail, but he also went to a radio station and claimed that we were holding up the reversal of Liberal bail policy. He thought no one would find out about this. In fact, he was on vacation and had allowed Parliament to rise without bail reform occurring in the first place. Let us not forget that what little good this bill would do is just undoing the damage his party already did.

Finally, I would ask the minister to stand in his place and apologize to Canadians for trying to gaslight them and tell them that rising crime is just a perception issue. I have given him all the data published by his own government, which shows that violent crime has raged out of control after eight years under the Prime Minister. These are data points. These are facts. Will he admit it and apologize for gaslighting Canadians?

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Conservative Leader of the Opposition, whose innuendo is calculated to deceive the public, does not really like what the polls say in Quebec. When he speaks of Quebec, he speaks in French and when he speaks in English, he speaks of the NDP to make his point.

We must separate fact from fiction. When they talk about the carbon tax that does not apply to Quebec, that is nothing but a sham. When they make no distinction between hunting weapons and assault weapons, that is nothing but a sham.

Is the leader of the official opposition actually able to separate fact from fiction?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, now the Bloc Québécois wants me to talk about them in English. Bizarre.

Here are the facts. The Bloc Québécois supported the ban on hunting weapons. Their MP on the Standing Committee on Justice

and Human Rights received the 300-page list of hunting weapons banned by the Liberals. He thought it was excellent and said that people had been waiting for this ban for years.

Now, perhaps the Bloc Québécois leader has forgotten how his party voted. Speaking of the carbon tax, yes, it does apply in Quebec.

We moved a motion in the House of Commons to cancel this tax. The Bloc Québécois voted to keep the tax. One Bloc member said it should be drastically increased.

I, for one, am going to stand up for Quebec taxpayers, not add to the burden that the federal government has put on them.

[*English*]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have a bill before us today that has the support of all the premiers and broad support in the law enforcement community. It incorporates many of the things the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights studied and recommended in the hearings it conducted.

Since we already had hearings, we have broad support from the premiers and we appear to have at least some level of support from all the parties, I am back to the original question for the Leader of the Opposition: Is he serious about passing this, even if it is not the perfect bill for him? Can we get this done? Can we get this passed expeditiously? Is he serious about this or not?

• (1300)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, we are the only party that has been serious about this for the last eight years.

This member, along with the NDP, has voted to release repeat violent criminals into his community. He has helped unleash a crime wave on Vancouver Island. NDP and Liberal policies have brought about tent cities, chaos and drug overdoses; the member's only solution has been to ban the hunting rifles of the decent, hard-working, law-abiding people who live on Vancouver Island.

The NDP is totally out of touch. Common-sense Conservatives will stand up against crime and for hunters on Vancouver Island.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I too want to congratulate my colleague opposite, the new Minister of Justice, and his parliamentary secretary. I look forward to working with them in the future to move things forward, particularly on the issue of criminal law—

The Deputy Speaker: I am going to take a minute to allow the members who are leaving the chamber to exit.

There we go.

Government Orders

The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord can now resume his speech.

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I started by saying that I wanted to congratulate the new Minister of Justice and his parliamentary secretary on their appointments. I will have the pleasure of working with them over the coming months and the coming years. I hope we can improve the lot of our people, in Quebec and in Canada, particularly in the area of criminal law.

It is no secret, as people have been saying for a while, that the Liberal government's lax attitude has allowed senseless situations to drag on. I find that unfortunate. I will come back to that.

I look this morning at what is happening with our colleagues in the official opposition and I find that just as unfortunate. What I see is that the official opposition is against everything, except the leader. They falsely claim that the Bloc Québécois supports the creation of a carbon tax when, contrary to the leader of the official opposition's claims, there is a carbon exchange in Quebec. We are not subject to the carbon tax.

For all kinds of good or bad reasons that are their own and that I do not wish to discuss, provinces have decided not to take part in a carbon exchange and prefer to see the carbon tax applied. That is a debate between the Prime Minister of western Canada, who invested in oil in order to be understood, and the leader of the official opposition. They can debate between themselves the rate at which they wish to impose the carbon tax but, in Quebec, we have a carbon exchange. However, the leader of the official opposition does not take that into account.

The leader of the official opposition says that it is thanks to him that hunting rifles were removed from Bill C-21. We will have to reread the transcripts of the House and committees. The official opposition opposed Bill C-21, just like it opposes anything that comes from anyone other than the leader of the Conservative Party.

Who worked on getting Bill C-21 passed and getting rid of the lists that prohibited hunting rifles? It was us, the Bloc Québécois. It was my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia who stepped up to ensure that the original version of Bill C-21 was not adopted. She did this extensive and exhausting work day and night for weeks and months. I commend her on that. I am truly grateful for her. The Conservatives kept filibustering to stop our work. It bothers them to see us work.

In the House, the Conservatives are prepared to say just about anything against the party in power, and against the Bloc Québécois and the NDP as opposition parties. I have not heard their thoughts on the Green Party, but I would not be surprised to hear the Conservative leader speak out against the Green Party. The Conservatives are against everything.

That is unfortunate, because there are some Conservatives I really respect. Some of them are excellent members, smart people who would be able to get things done and help us pass bills that would be good everyone and move Quebec and Canadian society forward. They are hamstrung, though. They have to support an ideological leader, a leader who is not interested in concessions and who is against any ideas but his own. What a shame. That is the Canada

we are stuck with, and we, the people of Quebec, hope to get out of it ASAP.

Let us get back to Bill C-48. It is not perfect by any means, but we have to take action. For years now, the Bloc Québécois has been asking the Liberals to make our streets safe and make things better for people in Quebec and the rest of Canada. Yes, the Conservatives supported us on that, but they were so incompetent and ideological about it, not to mention completely uninterested in compromise or discussion. It was unproductive and actually did more harm than good.

Yes, we have been fighting for that. We have been demanding it. We in the Bloc Québécois believe that having firearms in our streets is plain wrong, except in certain circumstances. I have no problem with armed police officers, but we do not want people walking around with illegal, restricted or prohibited firearms.

We have been asking the government to do something about this for a long time. Finally, today we have this bill. It was tabled last spring, just before the House rose for the summer, in late May or early June. I do not remember the exact date. Here we are, at any rate, with this bill before us today. It will not fix everything, but it somewhat does address the issue of offenders who are out on bail and who are not always adequately supervised.

● (1305)

I am more than willing to work on that, but that will not solve everything. It is only part of the problem. The real issue with firearms is that they go through the border as easily as going in and out of a Walmart.

We are asking for the creation of a joint task force to counter gun trafficking, made up of officers from the RCMP, the Sûreté du Québec, the OPP, the Akwesasne police service, or peacekeepers, and the American FBI. We believe we have to get serious about this because guns come in and out across the river and through Akwesasne's territory. The federal government does not seem to think it is that bad. Last year, Quebec invested \$6 million to create a surveillance task force to patrol the river and stop gun trafficking. The federal government has done nothing while guns keep circulating. How many more files like this one is the government failing to act on?

Regarding bail, the issue is what we do with people who get arrested before they are found guilty or not guilty. Do we keep these people behind bars, or do we let them go with or without conditions? The bill is looking to get tough on crimes committed with restricted or prohibited firearms. Offenders will be automatically held in custody unless they can show that they pose no threat to society and that they can be set free until their trial. The onus is reversed, which seems to me like a good idea. We are going to get tough on people who carry firearms, who commit robberies for the purpose of stealing firearms or who engage in acts of intimate partner or interpersonal violence. This seems reasonable to me. However, again, the government has done nothing about gun trafficking.

Government Orders

Nothing has been done about the appointment of judges either. We know that the justice system in Quebec and Canada has had to operate under rules set by the Supreme Court in the Jordan decision. Trials now have to take place within specific time frames. Are these time frames reasonable? The Supreme Court, in its wisdom, has decided that they were, and I accept that.

Saying so is just the beginning, though. Judges have to be appointed if those trials are going to be held within the reasonable time frame set by the Supreme Court. If judges are not appointed, if the provinces do not get funding for better administration of justice, then we end up where we are now. There are no courtrooms. There are no clerks. There are no judges. What then? People are being released before their trial even starts. Has the Liberal government saved us from gun-related problems on our streets? I think not. On the contrary, I think the Liberal government has been negligent for years. As people were saying earlier, the Liberal Party has been in power for eight years, but it has been ignoring these problems for years.

The joint task force must be created. Arms trafficking must be stopped. Judges must be appointed. That seems pretty straightforward to me. A selection committee does the lion's share of the work. It sends a list of five or six names to the Minister of Justice, and the minister picks one. How can that possibly take months? Sooner or later, judges have to be appointed and the government has to transfer money to the provinces for the administration of justice. If that does not happen, we wind up where we are now.

People are saying that Bill C-48 will solve the problem once it is passed, but it will not. It will solve part of the problem. It will deal with people who are released even though they should not be. The committee will rework the bill, and I am glad we have come this far, but I am really disappointed that this is as far as it goes.

• (1310)

I would like my colleague, the Minister of Justice, to tell us what he is going to do about judicial appointments. In the coming weeks, can we expect judges to be appointed and all vacant positions to be filled, not 10%, 50% or 80% of these positions?

That is all the federal government has to do. The administration of justice is a provincial responsibility. The only thing the federal government has to do is appoint judges. The other thing it has to do, in terms of substantive law, is to adopt the Criminal Code and amend it. Can it do some serious work on this?

I hope that my colleagues in the Conservative official opposition will finally stop filibustering and allow the work to unfold in committee. I hope it will not take 20 years to get Bill C-48 passed. We will not be here 20 years from now. This Parliament has only a year or two left to run, at most. It is really sad to see the Conservatives keep griping that the Liberals are doing nothing, but then turn around and filibuster when the Liberals do try to do something. I want to get going on this issue. Back home, in Rivière-du-Nord, people are fed up with crime. So am I, and I am sure that the same is true everywhere, across both Quebec and Canada. We need to address the situation.

Section 515 of the Criminal Code currently provides that an accused or someone who is charged with an offence will be detained

only if necessary to ensure their attendance in court, for the protection or safety of the public or to avoid undermining the public's confidence. These rules strike me as entirely reasonable and sensible.

However, now the government is going to modify these rules by saying that, in certain cases, such as crimes committed with firearms or involving the theft or manufacture of firearms, the crimes will trigger a reverse onus. In the future, the accused will have to prove that they are not a danger to society and that they can be released without fear of failing to return to court, presenting a threat to public safety or undermining public confidence.

I would like to dwell for a moment on the issue of undermining public confidence. It may seem trivial, but it is the basis of our democracy. If the people of Quebec and Canada no longer have confidence in the justice system, it opens up the possibility of serious disorder with lasting effects. I do not want to see people take the law into their own hands. We already have problems with people leaving hospitals without getting treatment because they are tired of waiting so long. They go home, which only makes their condition worse. The same thing must not happen with the justice system.

This is Parliament's job. We must ensure that the rules are reasonable and that everyone, or the vast majority at least, abides by them. We must ensure that the law is applied in a reasonable and satisfactory manner to prevent citizens from "revolting" against the justice system.

It is true that Bill C-48 will provide a better framework for bail and ensure that people at risk of reoffending are not released back into society while awaiting trial. That said, judges must also be appointed to ensure that these trials are held. Whether or not someone is detained pending trial, if there is no trial, the work will all have been for naught. Judges need to be appointed, and trials need to be held within a reasonable time frame. I think that is just as important.

It is important to recognize that not all accused persons are guilty, as we have already discussed. This is enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and other statutes. There are rules to indicate that people are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Section 6 of the Criminal Code affirms this, as does section 15 of the charter and, implicitly, section 7.

• (1315)

The principle of presumption of innocence must be respected. There are countries where that is not the case, and I would not want to live in those places. I am happy to live here, in Quebec, which is unfortunately in Canada, but at least the same rules of presumption of innocence apply. As we often say, and as the courts have even affirmed, it is better that a guilty person go free than that an innocent person be imprisoned. This can be very discouraging because, for victims, the fact that a guilty person is out on the street makes no sense. However, that is the choice our society has made, and I am willing to accept and uphold that principle.

Government Orders

The decision to release an accused person must be taken very seriously. Bill C-48 seems reasonable to me, but, I as I said, trials must also be held. This requires judges and funding. Is my colleague, the new Minister of Justice, serious about this? Does he intend to do his job properly and appoint as many judges as it takes over the next few weeks to fill all the vacancies? I hope so.

In closing, Bill C-48 responds to a request made by the 13 provincial and territorial premiers in January 2023. It is now September 2023. I know that things can sometimes take years. In this case, it did not take years because it is still 2023, but the bill has not yet been passed, and perhaps it never will be if my Conservative colleagues oppose it. Regardless, from January of one year to May of the following year is still a rather long time. The government could have acted more quickly, but I still applaud this decision.

I repeat that the Bloc Québécois will work seriously with the government any time its work supports Quebeckers' interests and values. I believe that Bill C-48 does just that, and we support it. We will see what happens after the bill is examined in committee, but we will support it.

However, that will not stop us from continuing to demand that this government get serious about appointing judges, among other things. It will also not stop us from asking our official opposition colleagues to stop obstructing the work of the House when a bill is in line with their interests and those of both their constituents and ours. We are asking the members of the official opposition to take their job seriously and to act responsibly.

The Deputy Speaker: As a reminder, the new Standing Orders require members to ask questions from their seats.

[*English*]

Continuing with questions and comments, we have the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I and many of my colleagues see the legislation as legislation that would ultimately make our communities safer places to be. We are anxious, after building upon a wide spectrum of consensus, whether with provincial governments or law enforcement entities that are very supportive, to see the legislation pass. My friend, toward the end of his comments, made reference to a potential filibuster taking place on the legislation.

It would seem that there is wide support for the legislation. Could the member expand on the Bloc's position on getting this legislation passed in a relatively quick fashion?

• (1320)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Mr. Speaker, as I said a while ago, my colleague can count on the Bloc Québécois to support any legislation that is consistent with the values and interests of Quebec, including Bill C-48.

That is not to say that I plan to give carte blanche. We will study the bill, and then we will see. Some amendments will probably be

necessary. I look forward to hearing what the minister and some of the experts have to say on the matter.

Obviously, this legislation is not immune to legal challenges. Detaining someone before their trial could be construed as an attack on the presumption of innocence. We will have to wait and see how the courts interpret this and whether such a course is acceptable in the kind of free and democratic society provided for in section 1 of the charter. We will work on the matter in committee and ensure that the legislation comes into force as quickly as possible. We need it.

Now, I would ask my colleague the same question again: Does he plan to work on judicial appointments?

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to see you and all my colleagues in the House again, especially the hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord. I greatly appreciate his contribution to the public debate based on his experience as a lawyer and parliamentarian for nearly eight years. We will soon be celebrating this anniversary.

My colleague spoke at length about the official opposition, and so I would like to set the record straight. The first Liberal carbon tax, with the support of the Bloc Québécois, gave the federal government the power to impose a price on carbon for the first tax. The hon. member also forgot that the second Liberal carbon tax, which his party supports, would also be imposed in Quebec and, more importantly, drastically increased. Those are his colleague's very words. As a third point, let us not forget that the Bloc Québécois voted in favour of legislation that gives the federal government veto power for a few hydroelectric projects, for example, those that Quebec could have.

Let us talk about the bill itself. Reference was made to last year's famous G-4 amendment on firearms, which was hundreds of pages long and covered several dozen hunting weapons. I would like to ask the hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord to tell us who, on November 24, 2022, said, "I almost get the impression that the definition in G-4 was written by the Bloc Québécois. I know that's not the case...but I must say that it meets the Bloc's expectations."

Who gave this enthusiastic support to amendment G-4?

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Mr. Speaker, it was I who said the words quoted by my colleague, whom I salute and also respect very much. I freely admit that it was me, but I was not talking about the list at that time. We were talking about the definition. We said that it was a good idea for the bill to define what was being prohibited.

The government cannot just prohibit whatever it wants. It must be specific. We wanted the bill to be even clearer. We were against the list. We worked so hard. Again, it was my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia who was working on it. It is a good thing she was there. Otherwise, if we had had to rely on our Conservative colleagues, Bill C-21 would have passed as is or would simply be defeated.

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That said, I will come back to the bill. I am not surprised that the Conservatives are opposed to it. The Conservatives are against reintegration and rehabilitation. We have heard it many times. We saw it in committee, at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, for example, which I have sat on for some time. They are against that and, as I said earlier, they are against anything that does not come from their leader. I will not dwell on that too much.

I just want to reiterate that this bill is essential and that the issue of its constitutional validity will probably be raised in committee. Then we will see whether the bill has to be amended, but, yes, we will work to make sure it is passed quickly and comes into force as soon as possible. We need it, just as we need judges. I look forward to hearing the new Minister of Justice tell me, before Christmas, that he has filled all those positions.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have heard broad support for the bill from all parties in the House. It is supported by premiers across the country, and it addresses urgent concerns in our communities. Given these points, would my colleague from the Bloc support swift passage through this place so that the bill can be brought into force and start to take effect as quickly as possible?

• (1325)

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. I would also be happy to work with him and anyone from the third opposition party who is on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights and who will be studying this bill with us.

To answer his question, yes, the process will go quickly, but we are not going to botch the job. It must be done right. I want to look at it. As I said, I have concerns about certain aspects of the bill from a constitutional perspective, such as the fact that, if someone has previously been charged with certain offences, that could be held against them at a bail hearing, even if they were acquitted. That is a bit questionable, in my view. I am not saying no to this bill, but it is not an automatic yes. We will need to look at it properly.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord for his brilliant speech. It is clear that the summer vacation did him good, because he is really in fine form today. His speech was really relevant and enlightening.

He raised one point several times in his speech that I would like to come back to. It is the issue of public confidence. Our justice system is based on public confidence. It is a key element. This immediately led me to reflect on something that my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord also mentioned. Right now, there is a problem with the justice system. It is that the federal government is not appointing enough judges. That is what led me to reflect on public confidence and judicial appointments.

It reminded me of some newspaper articles I saw this summer that said people with Liberal connections are very likely to be appointed judges, more so than people of other affiliations. It made me wonder. I am not saying that this is still the case, but if we have

a government that makes these kinds of decisions and sometimes appoints people on a partisan basis, what effect could that have on confidence in the justice system?

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. I saw him this summer, and I know he worked hard as well. He did not just kick back and relax. I am glad to see him here today for this debate on the issues that concern us, namely Bill C-48, which is no trivial matter.

My colleague is right. The Liberals have a lamentable habit of using something they themselves dubbed the “Liberalist”. That is appalling. This is neither desirable nor even reasonable in a self-respecting free and democratic society, a society governed by the rule of law. Judges must not be appointed based on their membership in a political party. That is the kind of thing that happens in what is commonly referred to as a “banana republic”. I should hope that the Canadian federation does not see itself as a banana republic. I can say that Quebec certainly does not. I want the federal government to get serious and not make partisan appointments.

Yes, judges must be appointed. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is calling for it, and so is the Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Quebec. Everyone has been worrying over the past few months and wondering what the government is waiting for. It has gotten so bad that people are being set free because there is no time to hold trials. Is that acceptable? Is anyone in Quebec or Canada okay with that? I can say that in Quebec, the answer is no. I cannot speak for Canada, but I would be shocked to find anyone in Canada who would say yes.

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to rise in support of Bill C-48 today.

I did not think we would get the bill to this stage as quickly as we have in this Parliament. One of the reasons we did so is that the justice committee recognized the public concern about repeat violent offenders and problems with bail. It conducted hearings last year and came up with a series of recommendations that helped inform this bill. Therefore, today, we have something before us that the justice committee has already considered, that the premiers have been calling for and support, and that has broad support in the law enforcement community.

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Today, we have heard many people talk about things other than bail reform. However, when we talked about bail reform, we heard the minister say that the government is prepared to proceed expeditiously. We have heard the Leader of the Opposition say that the official opposition supports the bill. I heard some more ambiguous things from the last speaker from the Bloc Québécois, but he still said that the Bloc supports the bill. Therefore, the question I have been asking in this session is this: Since we have this broad support for the bill, are we serious about moving expeditiously? Maybe the bill does not have everything that everyone wants, but certainly there is broad support, as well as an urgent need to make the public more confident in our bail-reform system.

Since the leader of the official opposition personally gave me credit for a crime wave on Vancouver Island, I have to take a moment to say that I have dedicated my entire life to working to help keep communities safe. I say that as someone whose professional career was in teaching criminal justice before I came here. Therefore, for him to say that I have somehow supported measures in a deliberate manner that provoke criminality or a crime wave is really quite personally offensive.

What we get from the Leader of the Opposition is talk about common sense. I want to point out a piece of common sense that contradicts most of what he was saying today. Over the last 30 years, we have tripled the number of people in pretrial detention in this country. If detaining more people caused a decrease in crime, we would have way less crime than we have today. Therefore, common sense would tell us that detaining three times as many people does not solve the problem.

Bill C-48 would not cast a broad brush, as the Conservatives are asking for. Rather, it has some narrow and targeted measures aimed at repeat violent offenders; New Democrats are in support of those measures. This means that it would insert a definition of “repeat violent offender” into the Criminal Code so that we would know whom judges should be looking at when it comes to denying bail. It would also create some additional reverse onus categories. “Reverse onus” is a technical term meaning that when it is proposed to put someone in pretrial detention, in certain cases, that person has to show why they should not be detained.

Therefore, the bill would add to the list of offences. It would not create a new category; there are already lots of reverse onus provisions in bail. However, it would add illegal weapons, including handguns. That is an important provision, which I definitely support. People have to go to a lot of trouble to possess an illegal weapon; they do not accidentally possess a handgun. Therefore, if someone has a charge that involves a handgun, they should have to show the judge why they should be released and why they are not a threat to the public.

In addition, the bill would increase the reverse onus in cases of intimate partner violence. Again, we know that when there has been intimate partner violence, it is usually not a one-time incident. When people are charged more than once, this bill would make it much tougher for the offender in an intimate partner relationship to get released, which is something that New Democrats definitely support. It goes along with our proposal, which is now a private member's bill, Bill C-332, sponsored by the member for Victoria.

Bill C-3s32 calls for making coercive and controlling behaviour in intimate partner relationships a criminal offence. That would move the goal posts in the Criminal Code; instead of having to wait for broken bones and bruises, a pattern of behaviour that leads to such violence would be a criminal offence. This would allow earlier intervention and prevent much of that violence from happening in the future.

Therefore, this bill goes together with our proposal on coercive and controlling behaviour to help provide better protections for those who suffer violence in intimate partner relationships. In this country, we continue to lose women to violence; every six days, one woman is killed by an intimate partner. This is part of the urgency of this bill and why I believe that we should deal with it expeditiously.

• (1330)

There is a third piece in this bill that I think no one else has talked about today. It is a piece that came up in the hearings we held at the justice committee. In addition to the real problem we have with repeat violent offenders getting bail, which this bill I believe will solve, we have the problem that we detain way too many people in Canada and at far higher rates than any comparable countries around the world. Why is this a problem? There are two reasons it is a problem.

One is the injustice. One-third of the people who are detained before their trial are never convicted but found innocent. What happens to people who are detained and held in jail before the trial? Most often they lose their job. Often they lose their housing. They lose custody of their kids. There are all kinds of negative impacts for people who are not found guilty of anything. Therefore, we need to improve our systems so we are detaining the people who need to be detained and not detaining other people. Who are the people who are over-detained? Disproportionately they are poor, women, indigenous or racialized Canadians.

This bill adds a provision that would require judges to look at community-based bail supervision programs, which are very successful. The John Howard Society has been running them in Ontario. I am looking through my notes, but I am pretty sure I am right. The success rate of the John Howard Society programs, as limited as they are in Ontario, is about 90%. What does a 90% success rate mean? It means that those people who are on community-based bail supervision have a caseworker assigned to them, they will not commit another offence while they are on bail and they will show up in court when they are supposed to. In the meantime, they can maintain their jobs, housing and custody of their kids. Even if they are eventually found guilty, they may not serve prison time. Therefore, having a community-based bail supervision program would help maintain that coherence of families.

Government Orders

Here is the kicker in all of this. Those who serve even limited time in custody before trial are far more likely to reoffend. If we are actually worried about public safety, one of the best things we could do is get people into community-based bail supervision programs where they are put in touch with the services they need, whether mental health services, substance abuse programs or upgrades to their education. If people are in a community-based bail supervision program, they can get that assistance, which will help lead them out of whatever problems they were in to begin with. When they are in pretrial custody, they are in the provincial system and there are no programs available to them. There are no mental health programs, no addiction programs and no education programs while they wait, with the current delays in our trial system, up to six months for a trial. If we are really interested in public safety, we need to put more people into community-based bail supervision programs, which Bill C-48 would now mandate as an option to be considered by the judge. That would require the Liberal government to provide the upfront funding to get community-based bail supervision programs more widely available across the country.

Now all members will say that the New Democrats are demanding more spending, but guess what? It costs about one-third the amount to put people into community-based bail supervision compared to putting them into custody. Therefore, we need upfront start-up funds for community-based bail supervision, which ultimately would produce huge savings in addition to better public safety outcomes and avoid injustice to those who are eventually found not guilty of the offence for which they were charged.

These are the reasons that I think we need to proceed expeditiously on this bill. We need to get a commitment from the government to help fund community-based bail supervision programs.

I know this bill is going to pass. We had the hearings. The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord who spoke before me said that he wants to examine the bill. The bill is the result of the hearings we already held at the justice committee, so I do not think there is a need for that detailed examination. Maybe the other opposition parties will decide we have to go to committee and do it all over again, and I am prepared to do that, but we could proceed expeditiously, get this bill passed and get a better start on making Canadians safer.

I am not saying that the concerns that Canadians have about repeat violent offenders are unjust. There are many tragic examples that all too often are exploited in this House for political reasons, and I have sympathy for those families, but we have to pass Bill C-48 to prevent the release of violent offenders.

• (1335)

Let me say the other part of this. New Democrats continue to call for on-demand mental health and substance abuse programs.

When the Conservatives like to talk about the 6,000 rolling, revolving-door incidents in Vancouver, those are not violent crimes. Those are people who are poor, who shoplift, who are drug-addicted or who have mental health issues. If we could get, first of all, better support in this time of increasing costs for all Canadians who are poor, if we could get better mental health programs and if we could get better substance abuse on-demand records, then we will have progress in making communities safer.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague's speech and I think it is important to underline where the fault line actually is in this debate. I think there would be agreement throughout the House that a young person who makes a mistake should have a second chance. Of course, there are many cases where it is legitimate for a person to have bail.

We have highlighted these cases of repeat violent offenders who continue to get bail. Somebody who commits a violent crime is on bail for that violent crime and then goes out and kills someone. Clearly, there is a problem in those cases of extremely violent offenders getting bail and committing those offences again. It is a problem that owes a great deal to a decision made by the government, supported by the NDP, to make changes to the bail system when it first took office.

We are not talking about the many instances where bail is legitimate. We are talking about these cases of repeat violent offenders.

I would like to hear from the member why he does not support our position of reversing those changes, to actually get back to somewhere we were previously on this.

• (1340)

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, once again, the member is mixing bail with all kinds of other questions in criminal justice and the Criminal Code. What I do have to say, and I want to emphasize it once again, is that while there are a few cases, and they are not very numerous, of repeat violent offenders reoffending, they are serious and we need to act and take care to make sure those do not happen again.

Bill C-48 addresses those. The police associations across the country say that it does. Premiers are satisfied that it does. I am not sure why the Conservative Party is not satisfied that it would deal with that problem.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed my NDP colleague's speech, which seemed to go beyond partisanship. He certainly made an effort to rise above partisanship in his speech.

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In it, he mentioned that he thinks too many people will end up in pretrial detention, also known as remand. That would have a major impact on the lives of potentially innocent people, who would no longer be able to pay their mortgage, who would lose their job, and who would lose their relationship with their family and children. Nevertheless, one of the consequences of Bill C-48 is that it would increase the number of people in pretrial detention.

We think that this bill is worthwhile and that it should be studied because there are some criteria that are worthy of consideration. However, as our justice critic, the member for Rivière-du-Nord, said, the fact remains that the lack of judges is one of the main reasons for how slow our justice system operates. All of these people in pretrial detention are waiting for a trial, but they are not getting one and, in some cases, they are being remanded unfairly. Sometimes, the solution does not necessarily involve changing laws. The government opposite also needs to appoint judges.

Does my NDP colleague agree with that?

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, I want to address something that the member said, which is that Bill C-48 would result in more people being in pretrial detention.

Precisely because it allows the option of community-based bail supervision, the opposite would be the case. This bill would actually result in fewer people being detained before their trials. That is the important aspect that New Democrats argued for and convinced the government to include in this bill.

If we are interested in public safety, as I said, yes, we need to deal with repeat violent offenders. We also need to deal with recidivism. The way one deals with recidivism is to keep people out of jail, keep them in their employment, keep them with their families and provide them the supports they need to be productive citizens in this country.

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my thanks to the member for his words today. I have had the pleasure of working with him on the justice committee for many years. I want to thank him for his hard work on intimate partner violence, and for his words today in support of this bill.

He has raised, a number of times today, the need to get this bill urgently passed. The leader of the official opposition has stated publicly that he is in favour of this.

What kind of message does it send to the public if the Conservatives do not follow through on that commitment?

• (1345)

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I do look forward to working with the hon. member as the new parliamentary secretary for justice.

I want to be a little less partisan. The question is not what the public will think about any one party here if we do not get this done. It is what the public will think about us as parliamentarians as a whole. I think we have a responsibility, when we see a large degree of consensus and these large public concerns, to act as expeditiously as possible.

As I said, the justice committee already held hearings and those hearings informed the bill before us today. There is no reason, in my mind, that we could not proceed expeditiously. If members have other things they want to see, let them bring forward private members' bills. Let the government bring forward additional bills.

However, we have a bill today that has broad support from premiers, law enforcement and the public, and seems to have support from all the parties. Let us get the job done.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to welcome everyone back after the summer to a new session. I thank the member for his great presentation.

One thing I am always asking people to be considerate about is indigenous issues. We all know that there are increased numbers of indigenous offenders.

Can the member describe how this bill would not increase barriers around access to justice for indigenous peoples?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the member for Nunavut, for her tireless advocacy on behalf of indigenous people and northern residents in Canada.

I want to point out that one of the areas where there is a severe lack of social services when it comes to things like addiction treatment and mental health services is Nunavut. By providing for community-based bail supervision, this bill would allow a lot of people who are maybe, for the first time, in conflict with the justice system, to find a way to keep their housing, their contacts with family and their employment, and not end up in further conflict with the law.

That means that the federal government would have to step up and help provide the funding to the Government of Nunavut to make those necessary social services available in communities across the north.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

We talk about reverse onuses and the member mentioned perhaps we should be looking at different things and different private members' bills if they are not in this legislation.

The issue of firearms and repeat firearms offenders is one of significant concern. Does he agree that those who have repeatedly used firearms should also be targeted by a differential reverse onus, perhaps one that is ramped up from the current one? As he said, those who go to acquire an illegal firearm are, themselves, going out of their way to commit crime.

Government Orders

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, once again, I am a bit perplexed by the question, since Bill C-48 specifically addresses the question around the use of illegal weapons in the commission of crimes and it creates an additional reverse onus.

That means there are additional requirements of those who have been found in possession of illegal weapons. They must demonstrate why they are not a threat to public safety and why they should not be detained before trial.

That is exactly what Bill C-48 is doing. That is exactly what the bill is responding to, which is the demand from the premiers. That is exactly what law enforcement asked for.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I did raise, with the minister, the same issue that my colleague has raised, which is the lack of services in pretrial detention. We should attend to that issue.

I want to know if he has more clarity than I do on the position of the official opposition. I appreciate he is exhorting us not to be partisan, but I am frankly confused. I thought the hon. leader of the official opposition said publicly we need to get this bill passed as quickly as possible, but on a direct question from the Minister of Justice, he seemed to duck the answer.

Does the hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke have more insight on whether we will have all-party collaboration today to get the bill passed today?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her concern about the lack of services in pretrial detention because it is a very important part of public safety.

I am no expert on the internal workings of the Conservative Party, but it does seem peculiar when its leader, who has said that he was prepared to get this done in a day, no longer seems prepared to do that.

• (1350)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I speak to what I believe is really important legislation. This legislation is being supported not only by me, but also by the minister and the government. From listening to the debate so far in the House, I understand that the principles of the legislation are being supported by all sides of the House, whether one is a New Democrat, a member of the Bloc, possibly a Green, and I have not heard the Greens speak to the bill yet, but I anticipate they will be supporting it based on other observations I have made, or even a member of the Conservative Party.

The leader of the official opposition gave an interesting speech. He has maybe taken a bit of a variation on reality to try to reflect things as being in a relatively negative state here in Canada, but the essence of what he was saying about this particular piece of legislation was in good part supportive, as the Minister of Justice pointed out when he introduced the legislation this morning.

Members have had the opportunity to go through the legislation to see the benefits of passing the legislation. The Leader of the Opposition was actually very supportive of the legislation to the degree that at one point he gave the indication that he would be pre-

pared to sit until midnight for the legislation to be passed. There were a couple of questions posed to the leader of the official opposition because there was a sense of the potential to see the legislation passed relatively quickly and whether he would still entertain that. One of his short answers implied yes. It would appear Bill C-48 has the support of all members of the House.

Before I go any further, I want to inform the House that I will be splitting my time. I will be sharing my time with the member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl.

It is not just members of Parliament who are in support of bail reform. Bail reform has been on the agenda of politicians of all political stripes and from all levels of government for a number of years now. A great deal of consultation has taken place on dealing with the issue of public safety as it relates to bail reform. The legislation before us has substantial support across the country. Provinces and territories have signed on in support of the legislation.

I understand ministers of justice and premiers from different regions of the country have all indicated very clearly that they would like to see this legislation ultimately become law. I heard there are a number of members who would like to see the legislation pass second reading so we can bring it to the committee stage to see if there might be potential changes made to reflect what the consultations led to.

The House is very much open to having the legislation pass. I am curious whether or not, at the end of the day, we will be able to see the legislation pass because we have had a fairly solid green light that the Conservatives would support its quick passage. Having been here for a while, I am going to remain a little optimistic on that point.

It is not just the politicians who support this legislation. I want to read a couple of quotes. Law enforcement officers are often the ones who are on the front line looking for changes, and I thought it would be good to share some of the things law enforcement officers are saying regarding Bill C-48.

• (1355)

Canada's police associations in general welcomed the government of Canada's action on bail reform. Associations representing Canada's frontline law enforcement personnel released the following statements welcoming the introduction of the bill, Bill C-48. I would like to quote a couple of them, if I may. The first reads:

Front-line law enforcement personnel have been asking the government to take concrete steps to address the small number of repeat violent offenders who commit a disproportionate number of offences that put the safety of our communities at risk, and we appreciate that [the former minister of justice] and [the former minister of public safety] have worked collaboratively with stakeholders and introduced this common-sense legislation that responds to the concerns that our members have raised.

This is something that was reported and commented on by Tom Stamatakis, who is the president of the Canadian Police Association.

Mark Baxter, the president of the Police Association of Ontario had something further to say—

The Deputy Speaker: I thought I would interrupt the hon. member for just a moment to say that, although it is great to be back in the House of Commons, seeing all of our friends again and talking about the summer, I would remind folks that, if they would like to have those kinds of conversations, they should take them outside or try out the new time out booths at the back to see how they work. Then we will be able to listen to the debate that is happening on the floor right now.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North does have the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if that lulled the volume, but let me go on with what Mark Baxter, the president of the Police Association of Ontario, had to say:

Police personnel haven't just been asking for a "tough on crime" approach, we have been advocating for a balanced approach that includes prevention and rehabilitation, but also recognizes that a small number of repeat, violent offenders need to be held accountable for their actions. Bill C-48 is a step in the right direction, and we sincerely hope the Courts will use these new measures that are being introduced by the government in cases where circumstances warrant.

The last quote I would like to refer to is from Jon Reid, the president of the Toronto Police Association. He said:

Our members recognize that our Charter ensures we all benefit from a presumption of innocence, but for too long the current balance has put the rights of an accused well above the rights our communities have to public safety and security. Ensuring the public maintains its confidence in the administration of justice is paramount, and I believe the introduction of Bill C-48, and the clear message being sent by the government that public safety remains a top priority, will help victims of crime, as well as all Canadians know serious, repeat violent offenders can and will be held accountable for their actions.

I believe that reinforces the messages we are hearing from politicians of all political stripes and at all levels of government that recognize we want our communities to be a safe environment for our constituents. Bill C-48 is a progressive piece of legislation that has had extensive consultations. It would make a profound and positive difference by ensuring the communities in which we live are safer. That is why I believe we should look to the Leader of the Opposition and hold him to his word when he spoke of it having a quick passage.

I believe the intent of the House of Commons is to see this legislation passed in a quick fashion to allow it to go to committee. I have not heard anyone say that the principle of this legislation is something they cannot support. With that type of support for Bill C-48, I would conclude that it is the type of legislation that should get passed through the House to allow the committee to do the fine work that it does.

We need to remember that this is all about keeping the communities that we represent safer. To me, that is so very important. That is why I stand today with my colleagues in support of the legislation with the hope of seeing it passed in a relatively quick fashion.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

COMMUNITY OF ORLÉANS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we commence this parliamentary season, our goals remain clear: to

Statements by Members

serve Canadians from all political backgrounds and effectively address their needs and concerns.

I also want to wish Orléans students a successful back-to-school experience.

[Translation]

May the school year be rewarding and successful for everyone.

[English]

Turning our attention to the vibrant community of Orléans, I want to thank the 400 people who came out to my corn roast and barbecue on August 24, as well as the organizations participating.

[Translation]

They all contributed to its success.

Lastly, I would like to express my support and my sincere condolences to the Moroccan community in Orléans and Canada, as well as to the people of Morocco, following the devastating earthquake that struck Morocco.

My thoughts go out to my parliamentary assistant, Mahdi, and his family, who are originally from Marrakesh.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I met with people across the country this summer, I heard the same message over and over again: young people locked out of the housing market who cannot find a place to rent and who now believe they may never be able to own a home of their own; families that have to renew their mortgages, thanks to the Liberal-NDP deficits, inflation and interest rate hikes, are afraid of losing their home; and seniors, thanks to the carbon tax, cannot afford healthy food and to pay their upcoming heating bills.

Canadian seniors, families and young people are the ones who are paying the price of the NDP-Liberal coalition and all their failures.

Canadians are hurting, and after eight years of inflationary Liberal-NDP spending and punishing carbon taxes on heating, eating and everyday life, it is easy to see that the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

To restore the Canada where young people could afford a home, to restore the Canada where seniors could afford to eat and heat their homes, to restore the hope of a better tomorrow, Canadians' only hope is a Conservative government.

*Statements by Members***TCXPO**

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure I state that TCXpo, the epic second annual day of dynamic and interactive Canadian smart mobility technology demonstrations, will be hosted by Nepean-based Area X.O on Wednesday, September 27 in partnership with the Government of Canada and other sponsors.

Area X.O is an all-weather R and D complex for next generation smart mobility, autonomy and connectivity technologies, founded and operated by Invest Ottawa.

The only national demo of its kind in Canada, TCXpo will bring together hundreds of innovators, entrepreneurs, technology developers, industry leaders, regulators, smart mobility partners and stakeholders from Canada's capital and across the country.

TCXpo will showcase Ottawa's thriving tech ecosystem and the organizations that contribute technology and intelligence to future vehicles and other smart mobility innovations.

* * *

[Translation]

MAHSA AMINI

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, one year ago, Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman, was arrested by the morality police on a street in Tehran. She was arrested for not wearing her hijab properly. Three days later, she succumbed to injuries sustained while in police custody.

Since then, she has become an icon. She inspired the Iranian people to rise up and call for justice from the mullah regime. Her face has since circled the globe as a symbol of solidarity with women fighting for their rights and freedoms in Iran.

One year on, Mahsa Amini still has a message for us, reminding us of our duty to demonstrate international solidarity and reminding us that women's rights are human rights. She inspires us to join all the Iranian women in making this heartfelt appeal to the Islamist regime: "Woman, Life, Freedom".

* * *

● (1405)

[English]

PHIL LIND

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the loss of Phil Lind.

Phil was a Rogers executive for 54 years, working alongside Ted Rogers to build a great Canadian company. Phil was also a tireless advocate for multilingual, multicultural and specialty programming.

[Translation]

In 1992, Phil had the vision to create CPAC, an independent broadcaster whose mission was to connect Canadians to their democratic institutions.

[English]

Phil remained steadfastly committed to CPAC and its mission as the indispensable voice of democracy in Canada for over 31 years.

[Translation]

He strongly believed that Canadian news should be told by Canadian producers.

[English]

As the founder of what is now Rogers Telefund, Phil spearheaded the process to ensure financing for Canadian film and television producers over four decades.

[Translation]

He was made a Member of the Order of Canada in 2002 and inducted into the Cable Hall of Fame in 2012.

[English]

He is survived by his children and partner Ellen. On behalf of all parliamentarians, join me in remembering this titan of Canadian business.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, crime, chaos and disorder, this is the Prime Minister's legacy after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government.

Violent crime is up 39%. Vancouver homicide is up 55%. B.C.'s London Drugs reports a 500% increase in violence in its stores. Vancouver's JJ Bean Coffee Roasters has closed for good due to crime.

Canadians are living in fear, businesses are closing and the new justice minister says that it is all in their heads.

Vancouver's Light Up Chinatown festival ended in a triple stabbing by an accused who had stabbed his own teenage daughter to death. Celebration turned into fear and tragedy. On top of this is the out-of-control release of government-funded free hard drugs. Overdose is the leading cause of death among B.C. youth.

We need jail, not bail, for violent repeat offenders; mandatory prison time for violent crimes; treatment and recovery for those struggling with addictions; common sense not nonsense. Let us bring it home.

*Statements by Members***FUTURPRENEUR**

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, whether people are in my home riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour or in any town in any city across Canada, young entrepreneurs are taking their smart ideas and turning them into viable businesses.

For over 25 years, Futurpreneur has assisted over 17,000 entrepreneurs aged 18 to 39 launch new businesses in communities from coast to coast to coast. It has even helped launched one of Canada's most successful companies, Knix, whose founder Joanna now gives back by sitting as a board member.

I am thrilled to welcome Futurpreneur as it takes part in meetings on Parliament Hill today, including young entrepreneurs from across Canada, like Nicholas LaValle from my riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour. Nicholas is the founder of Clean Valley CIC, an innovative clean technology company that specializes in biofiltration.

I ask all members of the House to join me today in celebrating these entrepreneurs and their big ideas. Let us all support Futurpreneur today and into the future.

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MAHSA AMINI

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to be back in beautiful Ottawa with all my hon. colleagues.

This weekend, members of the Iranian and Kurdish communities across Canada convened to mark the first anniversary of the death of Jina Mahsa Amini, a courageous Kurdish-Iranian woman.

Following Mahsa's murder, over 500 individuals were killed and over 23,000 individuals were detained and incarcerated, yet, despite the Iranian regime's brutality, women, minorities, musicians and cultural luminaries within Iran remain defiant.

As we honour the memory of Jina Mahsa Amini, I would ask all members to listen to members of the Iranian and Kurdish communities in their demands for justice and peace for their loved ones back home.

* * *

● (1410)

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been said about leaders that many communicate, but few connect. The tremendous address by the Leader of the Opposition about hope and home a couple of weeks ago connected with Canadians from coast to coast, so much so that even the Prime Minister lifted lines from it.

Home has been described as both a place of origin and a place of destiny, a familiar and safe place, and Canadians are feeling truly homesick. They are lost somewhere between where they once were and where they hope to be.

After eight long years of the tired Liberal-NDP government, they find themselves in a strange place where crime is on the rise, the

cost of living is soaring and the dream of home ownership is out of reach.

Canadians know that something has changed and it is not them. Canadians are longing for a place called home. As long and dark as Canada's night may be, I have hope that morning will dawn again in our country and with it the realization that our potential is still greater than our perils.

A common-sense Conservative government will bring home that promise for all Canadians. Let us bring it home.

* * *

HUGH SEGAL

Hon. Helena Jaczek (Markham—Stouffville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a great Canadian, the Hon. Hugh Segal.

A Conservative senator, who ran for the leadership of the PC Party of Canada, he was chief of staff to former Ontario premier Bill Davis and former prime minister of Canada, Brian Mulroney.

Committed to Canadians and the common good, Hugh was an author, a columnist, on the faculty of the Queen's School of Policy Studies, principal at Massey College and president of the Institute for Research on Public Policy.

Known for his generous conservatism and a champion of basic income, I came to know Hugh when I was Ontario's minister of community and social services, when I had the privilege of working with him on our basic income pilot, and we made it a reality. When the pilot was cancelled by the Ford government, Hugh remained positive, saying, "two steps forward, one step back."

To his widow Donna and daughter Jacqueline, who are with us here today, may his life's work inspire Canadians and may his memory be a blessing.

* * *

LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what do Canadians need to know about the leader of the official opposition and our next Prime Minister?

Many already know him as the common-sense leader Canada needs. His school teacher parents know him as the boy they adopted and raised in their modest home in the suburbs of Calgary. His dad knows him as the son he took to early morning hockey practice. His neighbours know him as the boy who delivered their newspaper. His two children, know him in *français*, *español*, and English as papa.

Statements by Members

Canadians need to know when he says, “It doesn't matter who you know or where you're from, but rather who you are and where you're going.” Those are not just empty words to secure votes; he has lived it. It is common sense. Let us bring it home.

* * *

CARBON TAX

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal carbon tax on farmers who grow the food and the tax on truckers who ship the food is a tax on people who buy the food, and they want to quadruple the tax.

The Conservative leader would axe the tax, so that people pay less and bring home more, and so that they pay less for gas, groceries and home heating.

Carbon tax 1 will add over 45¢ a litre to diesel fuel and carbon tax 2 will add 16¢ cents more plus HST. By 2030, farmers and truckers will pay an extra 69¢ per litre in carbon taxes for fuel they must buy.

I have a newsflash: Food does not transport itself to the grocery store shelves.

A grocer in Dawson City, Yukon told me that he paid an over 94% surcharge on top of the regular cost to get his groceries to the store. After eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, half of Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque and the government keeps raising taxes. The Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

The Conservatives will axe the tax, so Canadians pay less and bring home more.

* * *

[Translation]

HON. MONIQUE BÉGIN

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I wish to acknowledge the loss of a great woman in Canadian politics, the Hon. Monique Bégin.

She was member of Parliament for Saint-Michel in 1972, and for Saint-Léonard—Anjou in 1974, 1979 and 1980. Not only was she a pioneer, becoming one of the first three Quebec women elected to the Canadian Parliament, but she also defended her progressive family values with conviction and success.

As Minister of National Health and Welfare, she was instrumental in securing unanimous support for legislative reforms that strengthened and broadened the universality and accessibility of our public health care system.

I invite all my colleagues to pay tribute to her. Let us continue to honour the women who, like the Hon. Monique Bégin, have broken down barriers so that women parliamentarians can be here in the House and occupy their rightful place in our government and in our society.

• (1415)

[English]

WILDFIRES

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for hundreds of thousands of Canadians, it has been an anxious, stressful and even tragic summer. Wildfires have ravaged forests from Nova Scotia to Vancouver Island. Sixteen million hectares have been burned, and 200,000 Canadians have been evacuated from their homes.

I want to thank all the firefighting crews on land and in the air for the difficult and courageous work they have undertaken to keep all of us safe. Tragically, four firefighters have lost their lives in that work this summer.

We need to support the thousands of volunteer firefighters across Canada, and we need a national wildfire fighting force to augment the local and provincial teams that have been overwhelmed, a well-trained force that could be deployed quickly wherever needed.

We need to act to stem the climate crisis that has overwhelmed all of us. With skyrocketing temperatures on land and sea, the planet is warning us that we are in uncharted territory and must act with the urgency and strength that this catastrophe demands.

* * *

[Translation]

WILDFIRES

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this was a climate change summer in Quebec. For some, it was rain; for others it was tornado alerts; but for all of us, the worst part was fire.

Fire darkened our skies and polluted our air. Fire burned the forests in my region and threatened our municipalities. Fire forced families to flee with just the bare essentials in their car and no idea what was in store for them.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to thank all those who fought the fires in Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou and elsewhere in Quebec. I salute the work of the mayors, law enforcement agencies and communities that pulled out all the stops to protect our people. In my region and neighbouring ones, people were ready, willing and able to help those who were displaced. I would also remind the federal government that there are still desperate needs.

The Bloc Québécois will continue to stand by the victims, the workers and the forestry and seasonal industries that need government support now more than ever.

[English]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this summer, all members of the House have been inundated by messages from Canadians: Atlantic Canadians, Nova Scotians and, to me, most particularly, residents of the counties of Cumberland—Colchester in Nova Scotia who are in dire straits because of the punishing carbon tax. After eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, it is clear that Canadians can no longer afford to feed themselves, house themselves and, if they are lucky enough to have a dwelling, to heat it.

The number of calls, emails and letters with respect to the inability to afford to live is staggering. As a family physician for 26 years, I have never seen or heard of this amount of desperation in the lives of Canadians. The Liberal Prime Minister is asking more from Canadians than they can afford to pay. The Liberal Prime minister is not worth the cost. It is time to axe the carbon tax.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer was an incredibly challenging time for the Northwest Territories. Across our region, wildfires threatened the safety of our communities, with about 70% of NWTers being evacuated, including in the city of Yellowknife. The people of Hay River and K'atlodecche First Nation, who were hit by a flood last year, had to leave their homes twice this summer. The hamlet of Enterprise was 90% destroyed.

Words cannot express how grateful northerners are to the communities that opened their doors to the evacuees, and to the fire-fighters and emergency workers who put their lives on the line to keep us safe.

As we move forward, it is critical that all levels of government continue to work together to ensure that residents and small businesses will recover and that we can rebuild a healthier and safer future for NWTers.

The climate crisis is here, and the time to act is now.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1420)

[English]

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Ben Carr, member for the electoral district of Winnipeg South Centre.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Ben Carr, member for the electoral district of Winnipeg South Centre, introduced by the Right Hon. Justin Trudeau.

Routine Proceedings

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Ms. Gainey, member for the electoral district of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Anna Gainey, member for the electoral district of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, introduced by the Right Hon. Justin Trudeau.

* * *

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Khanna, member for the electoral district of Oxford.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Arpan Khanna, member for the electoral district of Oxford, introduced by the Hon. Pierre Poilievre.

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• (1425)

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Leslie, member for the electoral district of Portage—Lisgar.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Branden Leslie, member for the electoral district of Portage—Lisgar, introduced by the Hon. Pierre Poilievre.

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NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Majumdar, member for the electoral district of Calgary Heritage.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Shuvaloy Majumdar, member for the electoral district of Calgary Heritage, introduced by the Hon. Pierre Poilievre.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[Translation]***HOUSING**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after the summer the Liberals have had, even the Prime Minister must admit that he is not worth the cost.

Eight years after he promised to make housing more affordable, he doubled the cost. Then he said that housing was not his job, panicked when he plummeted in the polls, and recycled promises that he had broken more than six years earlier.

It took the Prime Minister eight years to cause this housing hell. How long will it take him to fix it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that Canadians across the country are feeling the effects of increased prices, particularly for groceries and housing.

That is why we are taking immediate action to build more apartment buildings by removing the GST on construction work, to support small businesses by extending their loan repayment deadlines and to invite the sector CEOs to a meeting today to make sure that they lower grocery prices.

Our priority is to build an economy that is focused on the well-being of all Canadians. That is what we are going to do every day in the House and in the government.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no well-being for people living in tents.

After eight years under this Prime Minister, the cost of housing has doubled. Interest rates are rising faster than at any other time in our country's economic history. Even former Liberal finance minister John Manley said that the Prime Minister's inflationary deficits are behind the rising interest rates, which are preventing people from building and buying homes.

Will the Prime Minister finally get rid of the inflationary deficits that are causing interest rates to go up and keep his promise to balance the budget?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words and we are taking action. We are building thousands of housing units in London and cutting red tape. We are encouraging cities like Calgary to present even more ambitious proposals and we are making sure that affordable apartments are built across the country by cutting the GST on construction.

If the CEOs of the big grocery chains do not make groceries more affordable then we will.

Those are the measures Canadians are looking for and that is what we are doing to build an economy that works for everyone.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after the summer the Liberals have had, even the Prime Minister must admit that he is not worth the cost. Eight years after

he promised to make housing more affordable, he doubled the cost: doubled the rent, doubled mortgage payments and doubled the needed down payment. Then he said that housing is not his job. Then he panicked when he plummeted in the polls, and he recycled promises he had broken six years earlier.

It took him eight years to cause this housing hell. How long will it take to fix it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we said we would work with municipalities to get housing built faster. That is exactly what we are doing right across the country, including, for example, with the city of London, where we have gotten a deal done that fast-tracks the creation of over 2,000 additional housing units over the next three years and builds thousands more in the years to come. We are doing this by cutting red tape, fixing outdated zoning policies and building more homes faster. This is our first deal but, I promise, not the last.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he is building bureaucracy, not building homes. In fact, his inflationary deficits drive up interest rates, according to former Liberal finance minister John Manley. That ensures that it is harder not only to buy homes but also to build them.

Today we got the devastating news that not only are we not increasing home building, but also home building was down in August, 18 months after the Prime Minister's accelerator was brought into place.

When will he realize that he is not worth the cost, get out of the way and build homes, not bureaucracy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition leader's bickering will not help get houses built. Our plan does. The Minister of Housing wrote to the mayor of Calgary, offering to partner with the city if it made necessary changes for more affordable housing. Just this Saturday, the City of Calgary approved a plan for reducing zoning red tape and building housing by public transit. This is a step in the right direction. We know that together we can build more apartments for students to rent and more homes for families to grow in.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all he has delivered is an economy that built fewer homes last year than were built in 1972. This year, housing construction is expected to drop further, by 32%. Data from August showed that home building was down again. His inflationary deficits drive up interest rates, which makes it harder for builders to finance their construction and harder for Canadians to afford a mortgage.

Will he finally do what he promised to do eight years ago, and that is to balance the budget to bring down interest rates and inflation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will focus on delivering real results while the leader opposite is focused on empty slogans and picking fights. In fact, when he was in charge of housing, he bungled projects like the Toronto Line 1 extension, which to this day has no housing near a number of its stations. In contrast, we are actually linking public transit dollars to apartments and housing density, and we are doing so without the Conservative plan to restrict access to abortion, to deny the impact of climate change and to put more assault weapons on our streets.

• (1435)

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the midst of a housing crisis, Quebecers want elected officials to find solutions. So far, elected officials in Ottawa have not found solutions; they have found scapegoats. They blame Quebec's cities for Ottawa's failures.

In a surprise move, the municipalities pointed out that the federal government is withholding \$900 million earmarked for housing in the midst of a housing crisis. Ottawa has been depriving Quebec of \$900 million in housing for the past six months.

Now is not the time for squabbling; now is the time for construction projects. It is time to be responsible. Will the government release our \$900 million immediately?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are here to build more housing, in partnership with the provinces and municipalities.

That is why we implemented a \$4-billion plan to speed up densification, improve zoning and help municipalities build more housing more quickly. We also eliminated the GST on the construction of new housing buildings because we know that we need to increase supply.

We will continue to be there to work hand in hand with the provinces and municipalities. We will fight this housing crisis by working together.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if housing is a priority for the Liberals, they should free up the \$900 million that is rightfully ours to build housing. It cannot get much simpler than that.

However, the Liberals are doing the opposite. They are withholding the \$900 million for housing. What message does that send to Quebecers who are struggling to find decent housing? It says that they are not the government's priority. They come second to jurisdictional squabbles. It is irresponsible. It is not what Quebecers expect from the federal government.

When is the government going to pay out the \$900 million for housing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we know very well that the Bloc Québécois is here to squabble. We are here to work hand in hand with the provinces and municipalities.

Oral Questions

That is why we have set up a \$4-billion plan to work directly with municipalities to increase the housing supply, increase densification and improve zoning to speed up the construction of new housing. We have also eliminated the GST on the construction costs of new housing because we know how important it is to increase supply.

It is just one part of what we have been doing for a long time, and will continue to do, to help people across the country.

* * *

[English]

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for 20 months, Canadians have been dealing with high grocery bills, and neither the Leader of the Opposition nor the Prime Minister has the courage to mention the true culprit, corporate greed, which is driving up prices. In fact, when they had the chance to publicly show up and hold these CEOs to account, neither of them even bothered to show up. The Leader of the Opposition even gave tax breaks to wealthy CEOs.

When will the Prime Minister stop the delay and disappointment? When will the government step up and force these CEOs to finally lower their prices?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our focus is on making life more affordable and ensuring that corporations pay their fair share.

The Minister of Innovation met today with the CEOs of the large grocery chains to reinforce the immediate need to stabilize food prices and improve competition. Indeed, we are introducing changes to competition here in Canada to address the rise in food prices, among others. We will, every day, continue to build an economy that works for all Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSING

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada has lost one million affordable housing units under the Liberals and Conservatives, and housing construction has been declining for the past five months. Removing the GST on affordable housing construction is important, but eight years too late. A lot more needs to be done.

When will the Prime Minister put a stop to the delay and announce that the federal government is going to start building affordable housing again?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our focus is on making life more affordable and ensuring corporations pay their fair share.

Oral Questions

The Minister of Innovation met today with the CEOs of the large grocery chains to reinforce the immediate need to stabilize food prices and improve competition. Indeed, we are introducing changes to competition here in Canada to address the rise in food prices, among others.

We will every day continue to build an economy that works for all Canadians.

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• (1440)

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP has now been in government for almost two years, during which time, by their own admission, both grocery prices and grocery profits have gone up. That is the result they get. Now they are supporting the Prime Minister's plan for a carbon tax that will rise to 61¢ a litre on the farmers who make food and the truckers who ship food. Their response to all this was to hold a big photo op today.

The Prime Minister claims food will be affordable by Thanksgiving, so by Thanksgiving, will lettuce be back down from its 94% increase because of today's meeting?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is coming from someone who advocated for crypto as advice to Canadians. I think Canadians watching at home understand not to follow his advice when it comes to groceries. The answer of Canadians is “thanks, but no thanks.”

We are going to continue to do the tough work on this side and fight for Canadians at every step of the way.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not just a single carbon tax. There is a second carbon tax that the Prime Minister wants to slap on Quebecers. Yes, it will apply to Quebecers—Quebec farmers and truck drivers who deliver our food. The Bloc supports that tax and wants to increase it “drastically”. This will only make food prices skyrocket.

Will the Prime Minister agree with the Bloc's request to drastically increase the carbon tax on the backs of Quebecers?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this being my first opportunity to rise since Parliament resumed, I want to offer my deepest condolences to every Canadian who has been impacted by forest fires, to the tens of thousands who have been evacuated this summer because of forest fires and floods. Thank God, tropical storm Lee did not hit as hard as it could have.

With the reality of climate change, any responsible government has to invest in climate action and support Canadians in these challenging times. That is exactly what we are doing on this side of the House.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal-Bloc carbon tax has caused food prices to soar. The cost of carrots alone has risen by 74%.

My mother always told me to eat my carrots. She said they were good for my eyes. I encourage the Bloc leader to eat more carrots to help him see the cost of his support for the Liberal-Bloc carbon tax.

The Prime Minister and his Bloc coalition are not worth the cost. Is there any hope that the Prime Minister's big meeting with grocery CEOs will eliminate this 74% price hike on carrots by Thanksgiving, yes or no?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, considering the forest fire season we had, not to mention the storms and heat waves happening here in Canada and around the planet, I think some would say that all hope is lost.

However, we must fight climate change. We must create good jobs in Canada. We must help Canadians in these difficult times. That is exactly what we on this side of the House are doing.

What does the Conservative Party have to suggest? It has absolutely no suggestions to make when it comes to fighting climate change. The Conservatives want to make it free to pollute again. For a party that hopes to form government one day, that position is irresponsible.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we want is for groceries to be cheaper for everyone. Contrary to the Bloc Québécois's claims, the Liberals' carbon tax 2 applies not only to Canadians but to Quebec too.

On June 1, a motion was moved in the House:

That...the House recognize the failure of carbon tax one and call on the government to immediately cancel carbon tax two (the “Clean Fuel Regulations”).

The Bloc Québécois voted against that motion. Worse still, the Bloc members want to drastically increase the carbon tax.

Will the Prime Minister reject the Bloc's request to drastically increase the carbon tax at Quebecers' expense?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my hon. colleague that his party's most recent election platform included a proposal for a clean fuel program.

That is exactly what we introduced. The program generates thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in investment across the country. The Canola Growers Association applauded the program, which will create jobs, particularly in the agricultural sector.

What does the Conservative Party have to offer in the fight against climate change? Unfortunately, the only thing it has to offer is hot air.

• (1445)

[English]

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the thing is, the Liberals can reduce the price of food right now if they abandon their failed carbon tax. However, instead of taking any meaningful action, they are having more meaningless meetings.

The price of diesel is already up 70¢ a litre, increasing the costs on farmers to produce the food, manufacturers to process it, truckers to haul it and certainly Canadians to buy it. When the price of lettuce is up 94%, clearly the Prime Minister's NDP government is not worth the cost.

Will the Prime Minister's big meetings reduce the cost of lettuce by Thanksgiving, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, instead of talking and talking, they should look at what we have done today. This is the first time in Canadian history that the grocers have come to Ottawa. We had difficult discussions, but at the end of the day, those were discussions we needed to have in order to stabilize the price of food in Canada.

We have been very clear with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance. We are going to work with them to stabilize prices in Canada. That is what Canadians expect at home. That is what we are going to deliver.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Prime Minister's NDP government, Canadians cannot afford to put food on the table, and it is getting worse. The Parliamentary Budget Officer's report on Friday stated that by 2030, Canadian farmers will pay close to \$1 billion in carbon taxes alone.

Lettuce is up 94% because of these increases in carbon taxes and the costs being put on farmers, processors and truckers, and it is Canadians who are paying the price at the grocery store shelves. Now the Liberals want to quadruple that tax.

How much will Canadians pay for a head of lettuce?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to read an extract from a press release from the Canola Growers Association. It says, "We're pleased to see the CFR provides options that would minimize regulatory burden and allow canola to be used to reduce [greenhouse gas] emissions through biofuel production." There is a "[r]ecognition of the sustainable production practices of Canadian growers that help sequester and store carbon". Agriculturists are in favour of what we are doing to fight climate change and create a strong and vibrant Canadian economy.

* * *

[Translation]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the climate breakdown has begun. That is the damning assessment delivered by the UN Secretary-General.

July was the hottest month on record. There have been marine heat waves with global averages of 21°C. There were so many for-

Oral Questions

est fires that it seemed like everything between Ottawa and Quebec City was burning. That is huge. The situation is affecting everyone. Things are not getting any better because we are not acting responsibly.

When is the government going to take global warming seriously?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question.

Unlike the Conservative Party of Canada, I share her concerns about global warming. I would like to remind her that, between 2019 and 2021, Canada had the best record in the G7 in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We cut our emissions by 55 million tonnes, which is 25% of our 2030 target.

However, I agree with my colleague that we need to do more, and we need to do it even faster. That is why I will be going to New York this week with the Prime Minister and several colleagues to work with all the countries in the world to speed up the fight against climate change.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government claims that fighting climate change is a priority, but that is not true. While the UN is talking about climate ambition, three ministers from this government could not wait to get to Alberta for the World Petroleum Congress.

I imagine they are going to talk about green oil, just to demonstrate how much they respect our intelligence. The sad truth is that Canada is an oil-producing country and that warming the planet pays off in this country.

When will this government start acting responsibly and take real action to fight global warming?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we take climate change and the work we need to do very seriously. Regarding the World Petroleum Congress, it is true that the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources is there. He is there to tell everyone how important it is that we do everything we can to decarbonize our energy systems. We need clean energy. We know that, and we are working hard to get it.

Oral Questions

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the unprecedented wildfires in Quebec, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and the Atlantic provinces are disastrous for the planet, for the people affected, for biodiversity and even for the economy.

This sort of disaster is bound to keep happening. However, there has been no conference on the wildfires or the energy transition. No, here in Canada, oil magnates are welcomed with open arms. It is completely irresponsible. How many more thousands of hectares will have to burn before the government wakes up?

• (1450)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. That is why, when faced with the issue of climate change and the increase in natural disasters, we presented the first national climate change adaptation strategy in partnership with the provinces, territories, municipalities and indigenous peoples.

This climate change adaptation strategy was applauded by institutions such as Impact Assurance, which said that this was one of the best strategies in the world. The Insurance Bureau of Canada said the same thing. We need to be better prepared for the impacts of climate change. Unlike the Conservative Party, which still believes that climate change does not exist, we have a plan to combat and adapt to climate change.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, gas, diesel and home heating costs are spiking because Liberal MPs voted to implement and increase the carbon tax.

The Prime Minister and his NDP coalition are not worth the cost to Canadians. After eight years of raising carbon taxes on the farmers and truckers that bring us our food, lettuce is up 94%. Now he wants to quadruple that tax to 61¢ a litre. How much more will that add to the price of lettuce?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians across the country and in Atlantic Canada need right now is for more homes to be built faster. That is why, last week, the Prime Minister announced that we are removing the GST on purpose-built rental.

Do members know what the Conservative leader said about our housing plan? He said that we do not need more spending. I guess he thinks homes are going to get built by magic.

We know we need home builders to invest more and to build faster. That is what our government is going to do in Atlantic Canada and across the country.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, Nova Scotians are hurting because of the NDP-Liberal carbon tax.

It increases the cost to produce food, to process the food and to transport the food. One example is that the price of cabbage has

gone up 70% because of the actions of the Liberals. The Prime Minister and his Liberal-NDP government are not worth the cost.

Will the Prime Minister's big meeting with grocery CEOs reverse this 70% price hike by Thanksgiving, yes or no?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague well knows that Nova Scotians are hurting for a number of reasons, including that we are on the front lines of the fight against climate change.

Over the course of the past year, we have seen hurricane Fiona devastate our communities. We have seen floods sweep our neighbours away. We have seen wildfires as we have never seen them before. These things come at a cost. One of the interesting things about this argument is that my colleague ignores the fact that one of the driving costs behind the increase in produce is climate change itself. Jurisdictions that produce food cannot do it for the same price.

We will put measures in place to help Nova Scotians struggling with affordability, and we will fight climate change at the same time.

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the price differential today for gasoline between the state of Maine and my province of New Brunswick is 60¢ a litre.

For eight years, Liberal MPs have voted to bring in and raise taxes on energy. They also voted to triple the carbon tax between now and 2030. The Prime Minister is not worth the cost. His carbon tax on farmers has raised the price of carrots by 74%.

Will the Prime Minister's big meeting with grocery CEOs bring down the 74% increase before Thanksgiving, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that Canadians watching at home are feeling insulted by what they are hearing from that side. At a time when Canadians are hurting, at a time when this nation needs to come together to fight food price inflation and at a time when we have called CEOs to come to Ottawa with concrete solutions to stabilize prices, the Conservatives are choosing to be on the sidelines. We are acting on behalf of Canadians.

Oral Questions

I invite every member of this House to work with us, stabilize prices and help Canadians at this time of need.

* * *

• (1455)

[Translation]

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, all summer long we heard about how people cannot afford groceries. Prices are skyrocketing. Grocery chains are making record profits, and CEOs are cashing in big time. What did the Liberals do about it? They held a meeting. They told those CEOs to be nice or else. Or else what? What a joke.

The NDP leader is going to introduce a bill to give the Competition Bureau real teeth. It is a real, practical solution.

When will the Liberals take action to help people put food on the table?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for my colleague, but maybe he missed part of the morning. That is exactly what we are doing.

Last week, we announced that we are carrying out the country's most comprehensive competition law reform to give the head of the Competition Bureau the power to compel the production of information and file court applications. Second, we want to remove the notorious efficiencies defence for mergers that are not in the interest of Canadians. Lastly, we want to tackle collaborations that stifle competition.

What we are offering Canadians is a plan for more competition, less consolidation and lower prices.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, too many northern communities saw little to no housing projects or repairs this summer. Too many Nunavummiut are being denied their right to a home. When I visited Baker Lake this summer, I saw housing conditions well below acceptable standards. Last year, the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated submitted a joint budget request to build more homes. They are still waiting.

When will the government invest properly in housing that will make a difference in people's lives?

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, housing is the number one priority in the north and in the Arctic.

In budget 2022, we moved \$4 billion for distinctions-based housing, including \$800 million for Inuit Nunangat. In budget 2023, we have \$4 billion for northern, rural and urban housing.

We know that we are making progress, but there is a lot of work to do. We will get it done.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spoke with many residents in Brampton this summer, and I heard a lot about the need to build more homes faster in Canada. We know that increasing supply is just one of the major solutions to the housing crisis.

Can the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities tell us how removing the GST on rental construction can help drive down the cost of housing?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague, the member of Parliament for Brampton South, for her advocacy for her community. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to the city of Brampton, where we worked directly with the mayor and members of council in the city to uncover some of the plans that they might advance to help grow the supply of housing in their community.

One of the things we have been hearing about over the course of this summer is that we need to change the financial equation for builders to build. They are dealing with higher costs as a result of increased costs of supplies and materials, and they are operating in a higher interest rate environment. That is why I was thrilled when we were able to advance last week that we will be getting rid of the GST on apartment construction in Canada to build more homes for Canadians.

What is more, we have seen provincial governments follow suit and—

The Speaker: I am sorry, but the time is up.

The hon. member for Thornhill.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the Prime Minister and his coalition with the NDP are not worth the cost.

Housing is worse than ever and worse than anywhere; after years of inflationary deficit, Canadians are getting crushed with housing costs. Mortgage payments are up 151%. That is more than 3,500 bucks a month. In Toronto, it used to take 25 years to pay off a mortgage; now it takes 25 years to save for a down payment.

Will the Prime Minister end the wasteful spending and eliminate the inflationary deficit so that Canadians can keep a roof over their heads?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mike Moffatt said that the housing plan announced by the Prime Minister last week is “hugely important.... This will make the numbers work.”

The governments of Ontario, B.C. and Newfoundland have already followed suit, but what do the Conservatives say about this practical plan to get more homes built? They say that we do not need more spending. How do they think we are going to get homes built in Canada? Is it by magic?

We need home builders to invest more and build faster. That is what our government is making possible. That is what is going to fix the housing challenge.

• (1500)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us play back the tape. In 2015, the Liberal Prime Minister said that Canada needs “real change” and “affordable housing.” Eight years after he created this housing hell, he says that he is not responsible for housing.

Housing prices have doubled. Rents have doubled. Higher taxes and more government spending equals higher inflation and higher interest rates.

Canadians can see it. Why is it that the NDP-Liberal government is the only one that cannot?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it fascinating to watch the Conservatives' line of questioning. They certainly seem to think they have the solutions to Canada's housing crisis, but when we actually look at what they are proposing, they are just tinkering around the edges with half measures that would not make a meaningful difference.

We are getting rid of the GST on apartment construction in this country, and provincial governments are following suit. We are advancing measures to change the way that cities build houses, so they build them next to transit stations, colleges and universities. We are going to require that they build them more densely.

We have much more to come over the course of the fall, but if we put our plan against theirs, it will win seven days a week.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years with this Prime Minister, Canadians are in double jeopardy. The price of housing has doubled, and the Bank of Canada is warning that mortgage payments could increase by more than 40%.

Let us remember that, before the tabling of budget 2023, the Minister of Finance said, “that is one of our primary goals in this year's budget: not to pour fuel on the fire of inflation.”

When will the Prime Minister put an end to his inflationary policies so that Canadians can keep a roof over their heads?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the lowest deficit in the G7. Last week, DBRS Morningstar reaffirmed our AAA credit rating.

At the same time, we know that we need to work for Canadians. That is why the Prime Minister announced last week that the GST on new rental construction will be eliminated.

That is why this morning, with my colleague, the Minister of Industry, we held a meeting with the CEOs of all grocery stores.

We are here, we are working for Canadians, and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Finance know that mortgage payments for an average home are now \$3,560 a month? That represents a 151% increase since the Prime Minister took office.

In the Liberal ridings of Montreal, people need to earn at least \$113,500 a year to even hope to buy a home. These increases are the direct result of this Liberal government's inflationary policies.

Will the government commit to stop running inflationary deficits so that home ownership is not just a dream?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we want to add housing units in Canada, then we have to invest in building homes.

[*English*]

The reality is that the Conservative Party likes to point out the problem. It likes to assign blame, but when it comes time to advance solutions, it is nowhere to be seen. The Conservatives are advancing half measures that would not make a meaningful lick of difference on the need to build housing at a rate that we have never built at before. We have removed taxes on home construction. We are changing the way cities build homes, and we have made years' worth of investments in affordable housing.

We are going to continue to advance policies that make a difference. It is what Canadians deserve.

* * *

[*Translation*]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, here is another example of how far Ottawa can go to push Quebec aside. The federal government held a competition to design a monument to commemorate the role of our soldiers in Afghanistan. A jury of experts decided that the Daoust team in Quebec won.

However, the Liberals rejected the advice of experts. They are publicly admitting that Quebec won, but that they are giving the contract to Ontarians anyway.

Who in this government ordered that the Quebec team be pushed aside at any cost, even if it meant breaking its own rules?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the memorial to Canada's mission in Afghanistan recognizes the commitment and sacrifice of our soldiers. More than 40,000 people participated in this mission.

The Department of Veterans Affairs received input from more than 10,000 Canadians, particularly veterans, people who participated in the mission. The majority wanted to ensure that the concept would truly meet their needs.

In the end, the concept of the Stimson group more accurately reflected what veterans want. We will always be there to listen to our veterans.

• (1505)

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to believe. The worst part is that they admit it. This is what they wrote to the Daoust team: “Despite the fact that the jury designated your concept as the winning concept of the competition...the Government of Canada has decided to select the concept developed by [another team] and, consequently, to award the contract to that team.”

Too bad for the jury, too bad for the architects, too bad for the artists who worked for months on end. Even worse, too bad for our own rules.

Will the government rectify this injustice and give the contract back to the firm that earned it and won this competition?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Veterans Affairs, I think it is very important to make sure that we listen to veterans, veterans who served in the Afghanistan mission.

During this process, we heard from 10,000 Canadians. Most of them are people who served during the Afghanistan mission. They told us clearly that the Team Stimson design really represented what they wanted the monument to look like.

We thank the committee for doing an amazing job, but we want to make sure we respect the veterans' wishes.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has some of the most unaffordable housing in the world, and that is after eight years of this Liberal Prime Minister. Mortgage rates are up over 151% with payments of over \$3,500 a month.

With eight years of inflationary Liberal deficits driving up interest rates, homes have become completely unaffordable in Canada. When will the Liberals end their reckless inflationary deficits so that Canadians can once again afford a place to live?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agen-

Oral Questions

cy for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, why should Canadians trust the Leader of the Opposition on housing? When he had the file, he failed hard. In fact, a \$300-million fund to build housing in first nations, set up by the leader himself, built 99 houses. For every one house he and the Harper Conservatives built on reserve, we have renovated or built nine. We cannot afford his broken ideas.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Liberal-NDP coalition can deflect and make all the excuses they want, but the fact remains that after eight years of massive Liberal deficits driving up interest rates and driving up inflation, Canadians can no longer afford a place to live. In 2015, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment was just over \$1,100 a month; eight years after these Liberals, it is \$2,300 a month. That is the reality Canadians are facing under that Liberal minister.

When will the Liberals end this costly NDP-Liberal coalition and allow Canadians a place to live?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the lowest debt and deficit in the G7, and our AAA rating was reaffirmed by a ratings agency last week.

However, what we need to ask is: What would Conservative austerity do to Canada? Do the Conservatives propose to cut our \$200-billion investment in health care? Maybe they propose to cut our investment in early learning and child care, which has already cut fees for parents by 50%. Maybe it is dental care that they would go after.

What we know for sure is that Conservative austerity hurts Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this government, mortgage rates have jumped by 151% to \$3,560 a month.

Back in 2020, the Prime Minister said, “We took on debt so Canadians wouldn't have to”. Today, however, Canadians and Quebecers are finding it harder than ever to make ends meet.

When will the Prime Minister stop his wasteful spending and eliminate the inflationary deficit so that Canadians can keep a roof over their heads?

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me to thank the Prime Minister for his trust. This is the first time I rise in the House as a minister. I thank him.

Oral Questions

What Quebeckers need is a Prime Minister who keeps them in mind and who works collaboratively with the municipalities. They do not need a condescending, arrogant Leader of the Opposition who treats municipal officials like incompetents. As a former municipal councillor for Montreal, I am deeply offended by the Leader of the Opposition's disregard for elected municipal officials, people who are duly elected—

• (1510)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Châteauguay—Lacolle.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past few months, Canadians have experienced a series of extreme events, including forest fires, drought, heat waves, floods and violent storms that have caused incredible destruction. This has affected the lives of many people in our country.

This week, Canada will be represented in New York at the United Nations for climate week. Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change tell us what Canada will be proposing at the United Nations General Assembly?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question and her advocacy on this issue.

This summer I had the pleasure of spending time with her and citizens who are concerned about the issue of climate change, protecting and conserving our natural habitats and fighting pollution, including pollution caused by plastics.

That is precisely why the Prime Minister, some of my other colleagues and I are going to New York to work with our colleagues from the international community in order to find solutions to these three major international crises. In 2023, we cannot claim to be a serious government if we do not address economic development, job creation, affordability and pollution.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, throughout the summer, I heard heartbreaking stories from families across Oxford who are struggling to put food on their tables. After eight years of this Prime Minister, this Liberal-NDP government is not worth the cost. Its carbon tax has raised the cost of food. For example, the price of onions is up 69%.

Will the Prime Minister's big meeting with grocery CEOs reverse the 69% hike by Thanksgiving, yes or no?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by congratulating the hon. member on taking his spot in the House.

Having only recently arrived, he can be forgiven if he is not aware that the party he now is a member of voted against many of the measures that, in fact, make a direct impact on having life more affordable for his constituents.

This includes investments in the Canada child benefit. This includes new investments that reduce the cost of child care. This includes new benefits to provide dental care for low-income families. This includes a rebate that leaves eight out of 10 families in the province of Ontario better off as a result of putting a price on pollution.

We can fight climate change and make life more affordable. It is what we have been doing for eight years and we are going to—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Heritage.

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for my neighbours across Calgary, seniors' savings are going up in smoke. Single moms may not be in the homes of the doors that I knocked on. The dreams of young couples and newcomers are devastated.

The Prime Minister and his NDP government have not been worth the cost. After eight years of raising carbon taxes on the farmers and truckers who bring us our food, potatoes are up 68%. Now he wants to quadruple the carbon tax to 61¢ a litre.

How much more will that add to the price of potatoes?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is irresponsible to a weary planet that is going through some of its darkest days is that although Canada has some of the lowest food inflation and some of the lowest inflation in the world, there is so much more that we have to do, but saying to people who are facing the global challenge of inflation that cutting dental care, that taking away dental care from vulnerable families, is a solution to global inflation and the crises that we face shows—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

It is the hon. member for Calgary Heritage's first day here. I am sure he wants to hear the answer to his question.

We really cannot hear it with all the shouting that is going on. I am going to ask the hon. Minister of Health to start from the top so that the hon. member can hear the answer.

Oral Questions

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, in all times of great challenge globally, there is a responsibility for all of us to focus on solutions and answers. Yes, it is incredibly easy on the other side to point out what is wrong in the world and what is happening, but their solutions are cutting support and services from the most vulnerable. Let me just talk about dental care for a second. The number two cause of children in the hospital is oral health, all of which is preventable. We could stop people from getting ill. We could take action to make our world better or we can throw around slogans, like what is being done on the other side. Let us focus on real answers.

• (1515)

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I was talking with friends and neighbours this summer, I heard loud and clear that people cannot afford the Liberal-NDP government's carbon tax. The average farm family will spend an extra \$150,000 each year. The people who make the food cannot afford that and the people who buy the food cannot afford that. The Prime Minister is simply not worth the cost. After eight years, the Prime Minister has driven up the cost of everything and Canadians have had enough.

When will the Prime Minister listen to Canadians and finally axe the tax?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we look at what happened in our area of the country, Fiona alone destroyed barns and killed cattle. It destroyed wharfs. The fact is that if we do not deal with the economy the cost of everything will go up. We have invested in climate change and this government will continue to invest in climate change so we will have a place to live.

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer the challenges climate change and extreme weather are presenting have become abundantly clear to Canadians. In Kings—Hants, we sadly lost four individuals in our communities to flash floods, which have not been seen in 50-plus years. The importance of real-time emergency alerts to cellphones is so important, but cell reception in some of the communities in my riding is simply non-existent.

Will the Minister of Emergency Preparedness commit to working with the Minister of Industry to push the CRTC and telecoms to improve cell service for communities where no service exists, in the interest of their safety and well-being?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to pass on my sincere condolences to families who lost loved ones during the flash floods in July.

Every second counts in an emergency and Canadians need to be informed as quickly as possible when there is a threat to their safety. A public alerting system is an absolute priority for our government. We will be speaking to the appropriate agencies. I will be

working with the provinces and territories and especially municipalities to make sure we have the right system for Canadians.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this summer over 16 million hectares of forests burned; more than 200,000 Canadians were forced to flee their homes. To call this wildfire season unprecedented is an understatement, and with off-the-charts global temperatures, we can expect climate change to deliver even more extreme wildfires.

It is clear Canada's wildfire response was overwhelmed. Waiting for help from overseas costs valuable time and money, and the Liberals do not seem to be rushing to fix the system.

Will the minister support our call for a national wildfire-fighting service, which can be deployed immediately where needed?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that climate change is having a devastating impact across the country, and especially in British Columbia. The member opposite and I toured Osoyoos together and saw the impacts directly, where a wildfire was close to a neighbourhood. It was just one metre away. We thank all the firefighters for their amazing work. We need to make sure we have the right resources at the right place at the right time, and that is what we are committed to doing.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member for emergency preparedness, we have to do far more. We know that, not only as the member for Kings—Hants says, the cell service is inadequate, cell service goes down even where we have it during climate emergencies. We lose power. We lose land lines. We need a national firefighting force, a national water bomber fleet and a permanent national task force for climate emergency preparedness for better warnings, better communications and better response time.

Will the minister set up such a task force immediately?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with my colleague on this. I look forward to meeting with her and listening to her ideas.

Every time we have had an emergency and disaster across this country, year after year our folks have continually learned and applied those lessons regularly. This year in particular, we have had floods, wildfires and even hurricanes at our doorsteps. We will learn from them and put the appropriate resources in place. I will be focusing on making sure we have the right resources at the right place at the right time.

Routine Proceedings

● (1520)

[Translation]

HON. MONIQUE BÉGIN

The Speaker: Following discussion among representatives of all parties of the House, I understand there is an agreement to observe a moment of silence in honour of our former colleague, the Hon. Monique Bégin.

[A moment of silence observed]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to paragraph 90(1)a) of the Parliament of Canada Act, the annual report of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner in relation to the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(a), this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Pursuant to paragraph 90(1)(b) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to lay upon the table the annual report of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner in relation to the Conflict of Interest Act for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

[English]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

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HEALTH

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the report on the procurement and distribution of COVID-19 rapid tests.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 34 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am rising to inform the House of an extremely serious matter. I just informed the leaders of the opposition directly, but I want now to speak with all Canadians.

Over the past number of weeks, Canadian security agencies have been actively pursuing credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the Government of India and the killing of a Canadian citizen, Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Canada is a rule-of-law country. The protection of our citizens and the defence of our sovereignty are fundamental. Our top priorities have therefore been, one, that our law enforcement and security agencies ensure the continued safety of all Canadians, and two, that all steps be taken to hold perpetrators of this murder to account.

Canada has declared its deep concerns to the top intelligence and security officials of the Indian government. Last week, at the G20, I brought them personally and directly to Prime Minister Modi in no uncertain terms. Any involvement of a foreign government in the killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil is an unacceptable violation of our sovereignty. It is contrary to the fundamental roles by which free, open and democratic societies conduct themselves.

● (1525)

[Translation]

As one would expect, we have been working closely and coordinating with our most important allies on this very serious matter. In the strongest possible terms, I continue to urge the Government of India to co-operate with Canada to get to the bottom of this matter. I also expect it to reiterate that its position on extrajudicial operations in another country is clearly and unequivocally in line with international law.

I know that many Canadians, particularly members of the Indo-Canadian community, are feeling angry or perhaps frightened right now. Let us not allow this to change us. Let us remain calm and steadfast in our commitment to our democratic principles and our adherence to the rule of law. This is who we are and what we do as Canadians.

● (1530)

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, moments ago, the Prime Minister made me aware of intelligence from his authorities linking the Indian government to the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Before going any further, let me offer my condolences to the family of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in the loss that this represents and the outrageous murder that brought it about.

If these allegations are true, they represent an outrageous affront to Canada's sovereignty. Our citizens must be safe from extrajudicial killings of all kinds, most of all from foreign governments. Canadians deserve to be protected on Canadian soil.

We call on the Indian government to act with the utmost transparency as authorities investigate this murder, because the truth must come out. We must know who performed the assassination and who was behind the assassination. The Conservatives will continue to work to get these answers.

Routine Proceedings

All Canadians now stand with diaspora communities of Indian origin. It is now in this time that the official opposition makes an appeal for calm. We are all Canadians. This is our country. We must be united for our home and for each other.

Let us all lock arms and join hands in condemning this murder, standing with the family and friends of its victim. Let us all put aside our differences to stand up for the rule of law, one law for all of our people, a law made in this chamber by Canadians for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have just learned what happened. We are stunned and shocked. This is unacceptable; I am sure we all agree.

First and foremost, I would like to offer my condolences to all the family and friends who are suffering through this unacceptable ordeal.

Foreign countries must respect our borders. Our law enforcement agencies are responsible for intervening on our territory, in compliance with our laws. We are a country governed by the rule of law. Everyone must respect that, at all times, without exception. Parliament must make that message clear to the perpetrators, to those to whom we are addressing our remarks today. We must remain calm. We must watch carefully and see how the case develops.

In the meantime, the Bloc Québécois is offering the Prime Minister its full co-operation, because this situation is unacceptable.

[*English*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what we have just learned today in the House is something that shocks the safety and security so many Canadians rely on. It is outrageous. It is shocking and it is going to have deep and devastating impacts for Canadians.

I want to also begin by acknowledging the family of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a family that is now learning that the loss of its loved one was potentially directly related to Indian government involvement. I spoke with Hardeep Singh Nijjar's son, and I could hear the pain of that loss in his voice. I can only imagine how much more painful it is going to be, knowing this potential connection.

On a personal reflection, I want to share what this means to the Sikh community. I grew up hearing many stories that said that if someone raised concerns about human rights violations in India, they might be denied a visa, or that if they went back India, they could suffer violence, torture and even death. I grew up hearing those stories, but to hear the Prime Minister of Canada corroborate a potential link between a murder of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil and a foreign government is something I could never have imagined.

To understand what that means to the community, this is a place that so many people around the world have sought as a refuge. People have fled persecution in their home countries, where they were threatened by torture, violence and death, to come to Canada, a beacon of safety, a place where they could be safe and free from violence, and where they would be able to speak their thoughts, speak their minds and not worry that they would wake up dead the next

day or that someone they loved would be tortured or killed. The safety and security so many Canadians feel has now been rocked. It has been shocked and destabilized.

I want to send a message directly to activists across our country who have fled persecution and who speak truth to power, knowing of the real, dire consequences to themselves and potentially to their families. I want to speak directly to people of Indian descent who have come to Canada and who spoke justice and spoke truth to power, and who challenged the oppressive practices of India: caste violence, violence against women, systemic abuse of minority communities and systemic abuse of the poor. I want to speak directly to those activists. Governments around the world are trying to silence them. The Indian government, and the Modi government specifically, is attempting to silence them, but truth cannot be silenced. Justice cannot and will not be silenced.

We know that the practice of the Indian government has been one of division, violence, persecution and attacking those who are critical of the government. It is now an important time to send a clear message as a democratic country and a country that respects the rule of law. What will be our response?

I want people to know that, as leader of the New Democratic Party, I will use every tool at my disposal to ensure that Canada uses every tool and every power of a democratic nation to bring those responsible to justice. We will ensure that no rock is unturned, that every possible link will be examined and that a public inquiry should also turn its eye to this with the full rigour of that public inquiry. We need to know the truth. We need to know all potential links, and anyone and everyone responsible should be brought to justice using the full power of a democratic nation.

I call on our allies to condemn this violence, this direct violation of a sovereign nation's rights, and to condemn this act in the harshest terms possible. This will require all democratic nations to come together to send a clear message about what it means that a foreign nation killed a Canadian on Canadian soil. This is something all democratic nations have to stand up and denounce clearly.

Finally, I want to send a clear message to many people who are still learning of this and will be angry and are going to be afraid. I understand why they would be angry and afraid. I call for everyone who is hearing this news now to come together, not in anger but in love of justice. There is a Sikh practice that the love of justice is what we should focus on, not the anger, the frustration and the fear. We should focus on the love of justice, and I will do my part. We will do our part in the chamber to ensure that justice is served, using every tool a democratic nation can.

• (1535)

[*Member spoke in Punjabi*]

[*English*]

Tribute

I want Canadians to know that they can trust that New Democrats and everyone in the House will fight with everything we have to ensure that this serious, reprehensible matter is treated with the utmost seriousness and focus, and that we bring justice.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I seek unanimous consent to join my colleagues in response to the horrific and chilling news that the Prime Minister has shared with us. I was particularly grateful for the tone taken.

The first person to speak after the Prime Minister was the Leader of the Opposition. I heed his words to link arms and join hands in the quest for justice, which was so passionately and eloquently spoken of by the hon. member for Burnaby South, the leader of the New Democratic Party.

On behalf of all Greens, we pledge to join with our colleagues in a non-partisan fashion, support our—

• (1540)

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HON. MONIQUE BÉGIN

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we pay tribute to the tremendous contributions of a woman who helped blaze a trail for all the other women who followed her into the House of Commons, none other than the Hon. Monique Bégin. Her deeply Liberal values of feminism, social justice and equity guided her career and her vast political achievements, which have shaped modern-day Canada.

We begin with a look back at her early days in politics.

In 1968, only one woman was elected to the House of Commons. In 1972, Monique Bégin courageously became one the first three women members of Parliament from Quebec.

[*English*]

My friend and colleague, the hon. member for Parliament for Toronto—St. Paul's, said it best in the piece she wrote in the Star, "she had titanium in her spine."

[*Translation*]

When she entered the House of Commons for the first time back then, a guard stopped her at the entrance along with another woman MP. It never crossed his mind that women could be members of Parliament. Thanks to her, my fellow women MPs and I pass through the door today without any problem.

[*English*]

A huge piece of her Canadian identity and pride came from her work as health minister. The principles of our universal health care system were made real in the Canada Health Act, which she brought forward.

Before that, many Canadians could not get the care they needed simply because they could not afford it.

[*Translation*]

Now our health care system is built on the promise that, no matter where they live or how much money they earn, everyone is entitled to receive the health care they need. What made her the proudest of all was the adoption of the child tax credit, which paved the way for the current Canada child benefit. That policy is still helping families make ends meet.

[*English*]

She was a formidable minister of national health and welfare, as well as national revenue in the Liberal government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Her politics were led by her fierce feminism.

Before being elected as executive secretary to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, Monique Bégin helped bring 167 courageous recommendations on reducing gender inequality. The policies that she introduced later in Parliament were inevitably based on her commitment to improving women's lives in Canada. A true feminist pioneer and trailblazer.

[*Translation*]

Monique Bégin embodied the best that the Canadian government has to offer: a country where legislation and programs seek to create greater fairness and more opportunities for everyone, regardless of gender, background, beliefs or economic status; a place where the Canadian government is doing positive things, building a better future for the generations to come and strengthening the democratic institutions put in place by those who came before us; a country that fundamentally believes that women and men are equal.

At a time in our history when some are questioning the role of the state, Monique Bégin's legacy reminds us that the government is forged first and foremost by the hopes carried by everyone in this place and that, if we can dream of justice, equity, sharing and empathy, we have the capacity to make them a reality.

To her loved ones, we offer our deepest condolences and our thanks for sharing her with Canada and with Parliament.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Monique Bégin figures among the Canadian women who had a positive impact on the course of our country's history. Not only was she a positive force in politics, but she also had a brilliant academic career and was a dedicated activist.

She was born in Rome, but her family emigrated to Canada after the Second World War. A bright student, she earned a master's degree in sociology and a doctorate in the same field from the Sorbonne. Very early on, she became involved in the feminist movement and joined the Fédération des femmes du Québec, among others.

She was an impressive woman who made her mark, and that is why the Government of Canada gave her the delicate task of being the secretary general of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Status of Women in Canada. As my ministerial colleague mentioned earlier, that important commission made 167 recommendations, which still serve as a source of inspiration today, since women are still facing many challenges 50 years later.

Ms. Bégin was elected for the first time in 1972.

• (1545)

[English]

Let me be clear. That was a very good election for women at that time. My colleague talked about three Quebec women. There were also people who were very involved in this election who played a major role in our democracy. I think about the Right Hon. Jeanne Sauv e.

[Translation]

She was the first female Speaker of the House of Commons and Governor General.

[English]

Let me also pay my respects to the Hon. Flora MacDonald, who was elected for the first time in 1972. She was the first Canadian woman, in 1979, to be the external affairs minister and the first woman in that role among G7 countries.

[Translation]

In Pierre Trudeau's cabinets, Ms. B egin occupied a number of prominent roles, including Minister of Health. She was the driving force behind the creation of the child tax credit, the increasing of the guaranteed income supplement and the unanimous passing, in this very House in 1984, of the Canada Health Act, which reinforced the universality and accessibility of Canada's health system.

As a Quebecker who had a passion for politics in my teen years, I remember vividly the Hon. Monique B egin's vigorous, sometimes even ferocious involvement in the 1980 referendum campaign. There is something else I remember from her departure in 1984 after 12 years of exemplary service in the Canadian government. A journalist with very pointed questions asked her if she had any regrets. Immediately, she replied "the UFFI file". UFFI was a home insulation product that sadly turned out to be poison. It was also a bit of a poisonous issue for the government of the day. Ms. B egin, with all her bluntness and candour, acknowledged that when she left.

In 1998, she was appointed an officer of the Order of Canada for having had such a positive influence on the advancement of social sciences at the national level, especially in health and education.

[English]

Last year, the Order of Canada promoted her to the rank of companion, highlighting her "made a decisive contribution to several causes, including the respect for human rights and the enhancement of the quality of life of disadvantaged and marginalized communities both in Canada and abroad."

Tribute

[Translation]

Many people made statements in response to the death of the Hon. Monique B egin. The Hon. Ed Broadbent, known to many as Canada's social conscience, was quoted as follows in the Montreal Gazette:

[English]

Canada has lost an exceptional woman. Monique B egin was a leader in the cause of gender equality, a leader in bringing universal healthcare to Canada and in general a leader in almost all aspects of concerns about inequality.

[Translation]

On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to offer the family of the Hon. Monique B egin, a great parliamentarian, a great intellectual, a great advocate, and above all, a great woman, our deepest condolences.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec feminist Monique B egin chose politics as the path to achieve great things not only for herself, but for everyone. Her fight for women moved an entire society forward.

A founding member of the F d eration des femmes du Qu bec, executive secretary of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, a member of the first cohort of women to sit in the House of Commons in 1972, and a rare female voice in a male cabinet, she advanced the cause of women. She did not want women to be treated like men; she wanted effective equality and a level playing field. She proved that everyone benefits from the strongest possible representation of women in politics.

She did not win all her battles, and some of them did not fall under this government's jurisdiction, but she fought great battles for women. I am thinking in particular of the family allowance and the freedom to choose when it comes to abortion. That was decades before the Morgentaler ruling. I am also thinking of the battles for the guaranteed income supplement for seniors, for universal access to health care and for the affordable child care network, to name just a few. Not everything has yet been won for women, far from it. That is why it is essential to look at how far we have come from time to time to remind us that we are making progress, just as it is essential to remember those who came before us who shaped, built and paved the way we have come. It is essential to thank them, the women who paved the way for us. I thank Ms. B egin.

We were not on the same side, but in many ways we were sharing our struggles, which are still to be won. We are still under-represented in the House of Commons. Pay equity still needs to be achieved. Reducing violence against women must always be a priority so that it does not happen anymore. We must remain vigilant in emphasizing that our bodies belong to us. Poverty still exists among women and seniors. However, we continue to stubbornly move forward. That is what Ms. B egin did, because that is what women do.

• (1550)

[English]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of Canada's New Democrats to honour the life and legacy of the Hon. Monique B egin, who sadly passed earlier this month.

Routine Proceedings

Madam Bégin was a feminist trailblazer, a passionate advocate for social justice and a tireless champion for public health care.

In 1966, she served as vice-president of the Fédération des femmes du Québec and was a signatory of the organization's founding charter. She was then appointed secretary-general of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, where she carried out groundbreaking work to advance women's equality.

In 1972, Madam Bégin, along with Albanie Morin and Jeanne Sauvé, became one of the first women from Quebec elected to the House of Commons. She was appointed to cabinet in 1976, where she served as minister for national revenue and then as minister for national health and welfare.

In Parliament, she advanced a number of critical measures to support vulnerable Canadians, including the child tax credit and the guaranteed income supplement, but perhaps her greatest legislative achievement was securing unanimous support for the Canada Health Act in 1984, something extremely near and dear to New Democrats' hearts in this country.

At the time, Madam Bégin warned the chamber, "An erosion of medicare is taking place" and called on all parliamentarians at that time "to consolidate medicare by fixing the loopholes and bad habits that have developed to make it work for years to come."

Unfortunately, today Canadians are once again witnessing an erosion of this cherished national institution, as she warned so presciently of those decades ago. Decades of underfunding, creeping privatization, inadequate enforcement of the Canada Health Act and the continued exploitation of legal loopholes represent profound and ongoing threats to our universal public system.

Madam Bégin was known as a fierce defender of public delivery, and she never hesitated to wield a big stick at any province that threatened that principle. Let us learn from Monique Bégin's inspiring example by turning these words of tribute today into action for tomorrow. Let us honour her legacy by recommitting ourselves to protecting, strengthening and expanding public health care for all Canadians.

New Democrats cherish her vision. We will carry it on today in the House and for decades to come.

• (1555)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, as someone who knew Monique Bégin, I ask for unanimous consent to add some words to the tributes that have been made so eloquently by my hon. colleagues, the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, the member for Vancouver Kingsway and all those who have spoken about the extraordinary legacy of a champion woman, parliamentarian and trailblazer, the Hon. Monique Bégin.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I wish to inform the House that, because of the ministerial statements, Government Orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources entitled "Federal Assistance to Canada's Natural Resources Sectors".

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is not surprising that on the natural resources committee the only party that actually supports the expansion and thriving future of the Canadian oil and gas sector along with the development of alternative energies and fuels of the future is the Conservative Party. We do dissent from the final report for a number of reasons.

One is because neither the government nor its agencies nor any of the witnesses who participated could actually define the word "subsidy", which is a point that the government has admitted in recent days. However, it became clear that the motion was an effort to lay the groundwork for the government to find yet another excuse to attack the oil and gas sector.

Conservatives recognize that, despite the eight years of anti-energy and anti-private sector policies, laws and taxes in this country, the Canadian oil and gas sector remains the number one private sector investor and the top export for the Canadian economy, as well as being responsible for 75% of private sector investment in clean tech.

Therefore, we Conservatives believe that instead of spending their time arguing over a term they cannot even define and failing to actually capture the fact that oil and gas companies are treated with benchmark-standard corporate tax treatment in this country, the Liberals would be better placed to actually fix the permitting and regulatory mess that they have created, and to attract private sector capital and ongoing development of oil and gas as well as all natural resources, as those private sector developers also build the alternative energy and fuels of the future.

For those reasons and many others, the Conservatives dissent from this final report.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, also known as the mighty OGGO, in relation to Bill C-290, an act to amend the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House, with amendments.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is wonderful to be back here in the House.

I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on International Trade, entitled “Canadian Mining and Mineral Exploration Firms Operating Abroad: Impacts on the Natural Environment and Human Rights”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

* * *

• (1600)

[Translation]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-351, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (maximum security offenders).

He said: Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to introduce a private member's bill.

Canadians were shocked to learn that Paul Bernardo, a dangerous criminal, had been transferred from a maximum-security prison to a medium-security prison. This bill amends the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to require that inmates who have been found to be dangerous offenders or convicted of more than one first-degree murder be assigned a security classification of maximum and confined in a maximum security penitentiary or area in a penitentiary.

A similar bill was introduced in the spring by my colleague from Niagara Falls, whom I would like to thank for his work. My bill includes a coming into force provision that, once the bill is passed, will speed up the process and ensure that such a situation never happens again. I would also like to thank my colleague from Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles for his contribution and hard work in support of a justice system that puts victims first. I look forward to discussing this further at second reading.

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

* * *

[English]

LOWERING PRICES FOR CANADIANS ACT

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-352, An Act to amend the Competition Act and the Competition Tribunal Act.

He said: Madam Speaker, Canadians are hurting with record-high grocery bills. For 20 months in a row, food prices rose faster than inflation and the Liberals did nothing about it. They protected the profits of rich CEOs and let everyone end up paying the price. The Leader of the Opposition let food prices rise by 25% when he was in power and let big grocery stores pay less taxes. CEOs got big breaks while everyone paid more. It does not have to be this way. Today, I introduce the lowering prices for Canadians act. This bill will increase fines and make it easier for the Competition Bureau to crack down on price-gouging, price-fixing and other abuses of Canadian consumers. It will stop the mergers that hurt Canadians. It is time that we end the free ride of CEOs and big corporations.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

Today I am introducing the lowering prices for Canadians act. It will increase the fines issued to companies that abuse consumers, and it will make it possible to stop corporate mergers that hurt Canadians.

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

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam 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. I move that Standing Order 28(1) be amended by adding the following: “and when those days fall on a Saturday or a Sunday, the House shall not meet on the following Monday.”

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed to the hon. parliamentary secretary moving the motion will please say nay. It is agreed.

[Translation]

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

An hon. member: Nay.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, to the best of my information, it has not been passed to us to consider whether we are in favour or not. We would require—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Could the hon. member please turn on her camera if she wants to speak?

• (1605)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, as is the usual practice, I would have assumed the right to have unanimous consent for non-contentious motions as the previous two times the Conservatives just blocked me from speaking in honour of Monique Bégin.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We do not have unanimous consent for the motion.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is a second motion that I would like to bring forward.

Again, there have been some discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

Routine Proceedings

That in relation to the broadcasting of committee proceedings, the House authorize televising or webcasting of up to seven simultaneous meetings, provided that no more than two of the meetings are televised.

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would like to try one more time with the first motion that I proposed for unanimous consent.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary may table his motion.

* * *

STANDING ORDERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties very recently and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion. I move:

That Standing Order 28(1) be amended by adding the following: “and when those days fall on a Saturday or a Sunday, the House shall not meet the following Monday”.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed to the hon. parliamentary secretary 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. Hearing none, the motion is carried.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to table today.

The first petition is from constituents of mine who want the Government of Canada to conduct a full, open, independent public inquiry into Beijing's foreign interference in our elections.

[*Translation*]

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, my second petition is on behalf of Gerry and the Hema people in my riding.

The Hema civilians in the Ituri, Democratic Republic of Congo, are facing extreme daily violence from armed groups, forcing about 2 million people to flee their homes. Various armed groups, includ-

ing Codeco-Lendu, FRPI-Ngiti, FPIC-Chini ya Kilima-Bira, and ADF Nalu terrorist groups are attacking ethnic Hema villages in the area.

Citizens and constituents from my riding are calling on the government to create a time-limited commitment to resettle Hema refugees in Canada due to the humanitarian crisis in the DRC; to create a time-limited commitment to resettle Hema refugees in Canada due to the humanitarian crisis in the DRC; to ask the United Nations Security Council to create a special court for the Ituri Province to prosecute the perpetrators of crimes against humanity and war crimes committed against the Hema community since 2017; and to fulfill international obligations, in accordance with the UNCHR 1951 Refugee Convention, and prioritize the Hema refugees in Uganda due to the dangerous situation the Hema community is experiencing.

[*English*]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition that identifies the fact that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned us repeatedly that rising temperatures over the next two decades will bring widespread devastation. The impacts in Canada will include increased flooding, wildfires and extreme temperatures.

The signatories to this petition call upon the Government of Canada to move forward quickly to implement bold emissions caps for the oil and gas sector that are comprehensive in scope and realistic in achieving the necessary targets that have been set to reduce emissions by 2030 in Canada.

JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by Canadians expressing their profound concern with the Supreme Court of Canada's Bissonnette decision, the effect of which is to significantly reduce the parole ineligibility period for some of Canada's worst murderers.

The petitioners call on the government to use all tools at its disposal to respond to the Bissonnette decision, an unjust decision, including overriding it by invoking the notwithstanding clause.

● (1610)

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise for the ninth time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of crime.

The common people of Swan River are demanding a common-sense solution to repeal the Liberal government's soft-on-crime policies that have fuelled a surge in crime throughout their community. A surge of robberies by repeat offenders has forced nearly every business to install bars on their windows and buzzers on their doors, and now many local businesses are considering closing their doors for good. To say that crime has significantly impacted the local economy is an understatement.

The people of Swan River demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies that directly threaten their livelihoods and their communities. I support the good people of Swan River.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, on our first day back I rise to present an urgent petition signed by almost 6,400 folks in my community and across the country who recognize that people with disabilities continue to live in poverty across the country. They recognize that the Canada disability benefit, we are being told, might be up to 18 months until it is in place. Poverty did not take a break over the summer even though Parliament did.

The petitioners are calling for a disability emergency response benefit from the Government of Canada to address legislated poverty for people living with disabilities, and to do it now.

JUSTICE

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Madam Speaker, on behalf of dozens of Canadians, I present this petition.

The Supreme Court of Canada in *R. v. Bissonnette* struck down section 745.51 of the Criminal Code, which allowed parole ineligibility periods to be applied consecutively for mass murderers. As a result of that decision, some of Canada's most heinous mass murderers will have their parole period reduced, now being eligible to apply for parole after only 25 years. This decision is unjust. It puts the interests of some of Canada's worst criminals ahead of the rights of their victims.

Recurring parole hearings can retraumatize the families of victims of mass murderers, and the Government of Canada has tools at its disposal to respond to *Bissonnette*, including invoking the notwithstanding clause. Therefore, the undersigned urge the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to invoke the notwithstanding clause and override *Bissonnette*.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, across British Columbia this summer, and in other regions of Canada, we experienced a record number of wildfires. Many of those were in the riding of Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon. Petitioners in my riding are still suffering from the 2021 fires and subsequent floods that damaged critical infrastructure across our province.

The petitioners are calling upon the government to do what it said it was going to do, which is to provide disaster relief funding for the immediate repair of critical infrastructure across our province. Right now, only 20% of the \$5 billion committed by the federal government has been issued. The petitioners are calling upon those funds to be released as soon as possible so we can get the critical infrastructure we need to prevent further floods and forest fires and to ensure that people have electricity, clean water and the ability to build the homes they need.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of many Canadians who are concerned about the situation in India.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners say that, according to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, various actors are supporting and enforcing sectarian policies in India. The petitioners say that Christians in India are being targeted by extremists who are vandalizing their churches, attacking church workers and threatening and humiliating their congregations. The petitioners also say that there are crimes being committed against the Dalit group, including Dalit women and girls. The petitioners also say that the Indian Muslim community is at risk of genocide, assault and sexual violence.

The petitioners are asking the government to ensure that all trade deals with India are premised on mandatory human rights provisions, that extremists are sanctioned and that the government promotes a respectful human rights dialogue between Canada and India.

● (1615)

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition I have to present is from Canadians from across the country, including many of my own constituents.

The petitioners are concerned about the age of consent and the age verification of those depicted in pornographic material. They are asking that the government follow recommendation 2 of the 2001 Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics report on MindGeek, which required all content hosted on these platforms to be verified in age and consent prior to uploading it.

Bill C-270, the stopping internet sexual exploitation act, would add two offences to the Criminal Code. The first would require age verification and consent prior to distribution, and the second would require the removal of that material if the consent is withdrawn. As such, the petitioners are calling on the House of Commons to rapidly pass Bill C-270, the stopping internet sexual exploitation act.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition is from Canadians across the country who are concerned about charitable organizations targeted in the 2021 Liberal platform. The petitioners are calling on the House and MPs to ensure that charities that hold views different from the government do not lose their charitable status.

Routine Proceedings

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition is from Canadians from across the country who are concerned about the comments of Louis Roy from the Quebec college of physicians, who recommended that euthanasia be expanded to babies from birth to one year of age who come into this world with severe deformities. This proposal for the legalized killing of infants is deeply disturbing to many Canadians, and they want to point out that infanticide is always wrong. The undersigned of this petition, who are all residents of Canada, call on the Government of Canada to block any attempt to allow the killing of children.

FIREARMS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the final petition I have today is from Canadians across the country who support the health and safety of Canadian firearms owners.

Petitioners recognize the importance of owning firearms. They are concerned about the impacts of hearing loss caused by the damaging noise levels of firearms and about the need for noise reduction. These petitioners acknowledge that sound moderators are the only universally recognized health and safety device that is criminally prohibited in Canada. Moreover, the majority of G7 countries have recognized the health and safety benefits in allowing them for hunting, sport shooting and reduced noise pollution.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to allow firearms owners the option to purchase and use sound moderators for all legal hunting and sport shooting activities.

* * *

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. 1525 to 1528, 1531, 1533, 1534, 1536, 1543, 1548 to 1550, 1562, 1565, 1568, 1570 to 1572, 1575, 1576, 1580, 1581, 1583, 1587, 1588, 1597, 1602, 1603, 1605, 1607, 1612, 1614, 1617 to 1619, 1623 to 1625, 1630, 1634, 1638, 1640, 1646, 1653, 1659 to 1661, 1664, 1669 to 1671, 1677, 1680, 1686 and 1691.

[Text]

Question No. 1525—**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:**

With regard to national sport organizations (NSOs) with contribution agreements with Sport Canada (SC), and that have or had non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) with employees and coaches: (a) is SC monitoring which NSOs have NDAs with employees and coaches; (b) for each NSO, what are the details of each NDA, broken down by the year or years in place; and (c) for each NSO in (a), has the agreement ever been used, and, if so, when, and for what purpose?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), at this time, Sport Canada is not monitoring which national sport organizations have non-disclosure agreements with employees and coaches. However, in her May 11, 2023, announcement to foster a safe and sustainable culture change in sport, the previous minister for sport reiterated that non-disclosure agreements or non-disparaging clauses should never be used to prevent athletes and other sport participants from disclosing maltreatment they have experience or witnessed. Consis-

tent with national efforts to this end, Sport Canada will include a clause in its funding agreements with national sport organizations that will prohibit any national sport organization contracts, policies, procedures or actions that restrict participants' rights under the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport.

With regard to part (b), at this time, Sport Canada does not monitor non-disclosure agreements and therefore is not able to confirm which national sport organizations might have them and what the details might be.

With regard to part (c), as per the answer to part (b) above, these details are not available.

Question No. 1526—**Mr. Kevin Vuong:**

With regard to the proposed redesign of the Canadian passport: (a) which minister and government department initiated the passport redesign project; (b) what public consultations were held on the new illustrations to be contained on the redesigned passport pages; (c) who determined, and on what basis, the replacement of the former pages of the passport; and (d) how much did the redesigned passport project cost?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the proposed redesign of the Canadian passport, the development of the new passport began in 2013 following the launch of the last passport design. The new theme was approved by the Minister of IRCC on July 4, 2019, and the final images were approved by the minister on November 16, 2020.

The theme of the passport was first identified more than 10 years ago from surveys of passport applicants conducted by the passport program. Subsequent consultations, including with the Government of Canada's forensic specialists at the Canada Border Services Agency and with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canadian Heritage and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, were conducted to provide additional insight and inclusivity.

Industry standard and best practice is to refresh security features and passport booklet design every five years. This aligns with the recommendations set forth by the International Civil Aviation Organization. Changing the theme and the design of our passport is an important step in preventing counterfeiting by integrating new and more advanced security features and design techniques. The change also ensures that there is a clear distinction of imagery between each passport in the old and new series, which ensures ease of validation of the travel document and security features by border services agencies globally.

The passport redesign is a milestone from the ePassport Next Generation project. An expenditure authority in the amount of \$161 million has been provided by the Treasury Board Secretariat to design, develop and deploy Canada's ePassport Next Generation suite of travel documents and all related printing equipment, software and infrastructure by October 2024. This initiative is fully funded from the passport program revolving fund. Costs specific to the redesign cannot be provided, as the vendor costs for this milestone were combined with other project implementation deliverables.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1527—Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:**

With regard to the passport design unveiled on May 10, 2023: (a) what are the details of all spending related to the redesign of the new passport, broken down by item and type of expense; (b) who were the artists and companies that were used for the design and images in the new passport, and how much was each paid for their work; (c) what are the details of the consultations related to the redesign, including, for each consultation, the (i) names of organizations or individuals consulted, (ii) date, (iii) form (roundtable, online questionnaire, etc.), (iv) outcome, recommendation, or feedback provided; (d) during consultations, did anyone support removing Terry Fox from the passport design, and, if so, who; (e) during consultations, did anyone voice support for removing Nellie McClung from the passport design and, if so, who; (f) during consultations, did anyone voice support for removing the Vimy Ridge Memorial from the passport design, and, if so, who; (g) during consultations, did anyone voice support for removing Quebec City from the passport design, and, if so, who; (h) what is the total cost of all consultations which have occurred to date; (i) what is the breakdown of consultation costs by date and line item; (j) have any outside consultants or service providers been involved in the development of the new passport's design, and, if so, what are the details of each consultant or service provider's involvement, including the (i) name of the individual or firm, (ii) contract value, (iii) date of the contract, (iv) description of the goods or services provided; (k) how many government employees or full-time equivalents worked on the redesign and consultations; and (l) what are the (i) travel, (ii) hospitality, costs associated with the redesign and consultations incurred to date, in total, and broken down by year and type of expense?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the newly unveiled Canadian passport was delivered as part of a comprehensive project led by IRCC to replace the passport booklet and all related production printing equipment and infrastructure to produce this new passport. The Treasury Board of Canada has approved a project budget of \$161 million for this project, which began in 2016, and it includes costs payable to the Canadian Bank Note Company, CBN, for various project deliverables.

With regard to part (b), as part of the project, Canada launched a competitive procurement process in June 2016, and on May 24, 2019, a contract was awarded to the CBN to deliver this solution for the Government of Canada. CBN was responsible, per the contract, for the development of the designs for the new passport following the decision on theme by the Minister of IRCC. The contract was awarded for \$284 million, as posted at https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/request-your-own-supplier-contract-history-letter/canadian-bank-note-company-limited?order=award_date&sort=desc#award_date, for printed matter, including books, newspapers, pictures, manuscripts and forms.

With regard to part (c), the new passport design has undergone consultations, including with the Government of Canada's forensic specialists at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canada Border Services Agency, and with Canadian Heritage and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. The theme was selected following a series of annual surveys conducted by the passport program. These were conducted by phone with a statistically relevant sample size for that year of Canadian passport holders.

With regard to parts (d), (e), (f) and (g), consultations with forensic specialists were focused on the security features of the new passport. The surveys were conducted on broad themes for the design of the new passport, and not on the inclusion of images or representations of specific individuals or events.

With regard to parts (h) and (i), at this point in time and due to time constraints, the cost specific to this question is not known, as

this was included as part of a broader survey conducted on passport operations with Canadian passport holders on an annual basis.

With regard to part (j), yes, CBN is under contract with the Government of Canada to redesign the Canadian passport as part of the full ePassport Next Generation solution and infrastructure procurement. The contract was awarded for \$284 million, as posted at https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/request-your-own-supplier-contract-history-letter/canadian-bank-note-company-limited?order=award_date&sort=desc#award_date, for printed matter, including books, newspapers, pictures, manuscripts and forms.

With regard to part (k), approximately 2.5 IRCC full-time equivalents, FTEs, worked on the passport redesign as part of the ePassport Next Generation project.

With regard to part (l), there were no travel or hospitality costs incurred to redesign the Canadian passport.

Question No. 1528—Mr. Don Davies:

With regard to the government's treatment of Egyptian refugees: (a) does the Minister of Public Safety consider (i) Canadian citizens, (ii) permanent residents, (iii) foreign nationals, who joined or participated in Egypt's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) after the 2011 Egyptian revolution, to participate in Egypt's democratic elections to be a danger to the security of Canada; (b) why has the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) deemed FJP-affiliated refugees inadmissible to Canada; (c) will the Minister of Public Safety grant ministerial relief to those Egyptian refugees who have been deemed to be inadmissible to Canada because they joined or participated in the FJP after the 2011 Egyptian revolution to participate in Egypt's democratic elections; and (d) will the Minister of Public Safety issue a directive to resolve the CBSA's inconsistent treatment of Egyptian refugees with FJP affiliation to ensure that all refugees are treated equally, impartially, and consistently?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada Border Services Agency, CBSA, officials are legally required to apply legislation, including the membership provisions of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, IRPA, passed by Parliament. They do so in an equal, impartial and consistent manner, in line with the law and the guidance of the courts, as well as based on comprehensive national guidance and management oversight to ensure objectivity. The CBSA's role is to gather evidence and to present allegations, but for serious inadmissibility allegations that require an admissibility hearing, they are not the decision-maker; the Immigration Refugee Board is the decision-maker, based on an assessment of the evidence presented by the CBSA and by those who are alleged to be inadmissible.

With regard to (i) to (iii) of part (a), Canadian citizens are not subject to inadmissibility provisions under IRPA. Only permanent residents and foreign nationals can potentially be inadmissible to Canada. All cases, including persons affiliated with the Freedom and Justice Party, are assessed and reviewed on a case-by-case basis for inadmissibility concerns, and only those for which there is a sound evidentiary basis may end up being reported as inadmissible. The CBSA role is to conduct admissibility investigations, gather evidence and, if well founded, present the allegation.

Routine Proceedings

No such case has led to concerns related to the specific inadmissibility provision for danger to the security of Canada. Instead, they relate to inadmissibility for being a member of an organization for which there are concerns that it engaged in impugned acts, which is in paragraph 34(1)(f) of IRPA. Of note, when determining inadmissibility relating to membership in any such organization, IRPA does not require that an individual be found to pose a threat or danger to Canada.

With regard to part (b), like most of the serious inadmissibilities, the membership inadmissibility allegation requires the decision of an impartial, quasi-judicial tribunal, in this case the immigration division, ID, of the Immigration and Refugee Board, IRB. This means that the IRB is the final decision-maker where these matters are at issue and that the CBSA cannot deem any person inadmissible in these circumstances unilaterally.

If an officer determines that there is robust evidence to support an allegation of inadmissibility, they may report the person as inadmissible. Subsequently, a different officer must then review that report to determine whether the report is well founded. If that officer so concludes, the report can then be referred to the ID of the IRB for adjudication at an admissibility hearing.

Finally, in any case where a person is found inadmissible, that person can pursue a judicial review before the Federal Court of Canada, which did occur in one of these cases. The court upheld the finding of inadmissibility at that time, thereby dismissing the judicial review.

With regard to part (c), if a person is found to be inadmissible for certain provisions, including membership inadmissibility as in these cases, they may make an application for ministerial relief to the Minister of Public Safety. In order to be eligible to submit an application for relief, an individual must have a final determination of inadmissibility, such as a removal order issued by the IRB or an application for temporary or permanent residence refused by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, and must satisfy other requirements as set out in the immigration and refugee protection regulations. The Minister of Public Safety assesses the merits of eligible applications to determine whether or not a grant of relief would be contrary to Canada's national interest. If the minister decides to grant relief, it would mean that the person would not be considered inadmissible thereafter on the basis of the grounds for which relief was provided. Each ministerial relief application is assessed on its own case-specific facts and circumstances. As such, it is not possible to predetermine the outcome of any pending or anticipated requests for relief.

With regard to part (d), the CBSA treats any case before it on a case-by-case basis, in a dispassionate and impartial manner, and based on the facts before it at that time. The agency prioritizes serious inadmissibility matters from an investigative perspective and provides its officers an array of functional, operational and program guidance to support and assist them in the execution of their mandate and duties. All guidance is updated to reflect the evolving jurisprudential environment. Any possible enforcement action taken must comply with the law and existing operational and program policies, and is subject to rigorous and independent review at multiple steps, including by CBSA officers and the IRB, which is the in-

dependent adjudicating tribunal, with the availability of judicial review by the Federal Court of Canada against any decision taken.

Question No. 1531—Ms. Michelle Ferreri:

With regard to the new passport design unveiled on May 10, 2023: (a) what is the detailed timeline of all actions (calls for proposals, designs reviewed, ministerial approval, etc.) associated with the development of the new passport from when the government first considered changing the passport; and (b) for each action in (a), who was responsible for overseeing that particular part of the process?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to parts (a) and (b), please find the timeline concerning actions associated with the new B series passport design below.

In January 2013, the current passport, the A series, was launched. Research and development efforts began, to document specifications for future passport contracts based on lessons learned from the 2011 contract. The office of primary interest, OPI, was Passport Canada's security bureau.

There are survey results from 2016, 2017 and 2018. Passport program surveys are conducted to collect data from recent applicant passport holders on a range of questions, including possible themes for the design of the next passport. The OPI was Passport Canada's security bureau and program integrity branch.

In June 2016, the request for information was posted on buyandsell.gc.ca. The OPI was IRCC, citizenship and passport programs branch.

On June 13, 2017, the invitation to qualify was posted on buyandsell.gc.ca to select pre-qualified bidders. The OPI was IRCC, citizenship and passport programs branch.

On April 27, 2018, the request for proposals was posted to pre-qualified bidders. The OPI was IRCC, citizenship and passport programs branch.

Other government departments, OGD, were consulted in 2019 and 2020. Consultations were conducted with forensic experts at the CBSA and the RCMP, and with Canadian Heritage and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, CIRNAC.

On May 24, 2019, the contract was awarded to the Canadian Bank Note Company Ltd. The OPI was IRCC, citizenship and passport programs branch.

On July 4, 2019, the Minister of IRCC approved the theme of the design. The OPI was IRCC, citizenship and passport programs branch.

On May 20, 2020, the Minister of IRCC approved a preliminary version of the design and provided suggestions for adjustments. The OPI was IRCC, citizenship and passport programs branch.

On November 16, 2020, the Minister of IRCC approved the final design of the passport. The OPI was IRCC, citizenship and passport programs branch.

Routine Proceedings

Following ministerial approval of the aesthetic design, content was converted into detailed security features, and the design went through several manufacturing and testing steps involving multiple international suppliers. The pandemic, health restrictions, staff illnesses and supply chain issues had repercussions on the project as a whole, adding two years to the original one year that should have been required to complete this work.

Question No. 1533—Mr. Clifford Small:

With regard to the government's decision to remove the images of the Vimy Ridge Memorial and Billy Bishop from the Canadian passport: (a) were any veterans groups or The Vimy Foundation consulted about the removal of the images prior to the unveiling, and, if so, which ones, and what feedback did they provide; and (b) if the answer to (a) is negative, why was the decision made not to consult veterans groups and who made the decision?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the passport program conducted annual client satisfaction surveys with Canadians beginning in 2011. This included possible themes for the new Canadian passport. A new design is required in order to maintain the integrity of the new passport and to align with international security best practices of a five-year passport redesign cycle. Based on the survey results, a new passport theme, “The four seasons in Canada”, was proposed and subsequently approved by the Minister of IRCC.

With regard to part (b), consultations on the new theme and images occurred, including with the Government of Canada's forensic specialists at the Canada Border Services Agency and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and with Canadian Heritage and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. Due to the secrecy of the passport design and security features, there were limitations to the number of groups that could have access to the design.

Question No. 1534—Mr. Damien C. Kurek:

With regard to costs associated with the new passport design unveiled on May 10, 2023, as well as the accompanying news conference: (a) what were the total costs associated with the new passport, broken down by type of expense; and (b) what are the details of all contracts signed by the government related to the new passport, and the unveiling and promotion of the new design, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount, (iv) description of the goods or services, (v) details of whether the contract was sole-sourced or awarded through a competitive bidding process?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the passport redesign is a milestone from the ePassport Next Generation project. An expenditure authority in the amount of \$161 million has been provided by the Treasury Board Secretariat to design, develop and deploy Canada's ePassport Next Generation suite of travel documents and all related printing equipment, software and infrastructure by October 2024. This initiative is fully funded from the passport program revolving fund.

With regard to part (b), as part of the project, Canada launched a competitive procurement process in June 2016, and on May 24, 2019, a contract was awarded to the Canadian Bank Note Company, CBN, to deliver this solution for the Government of Canada. CBN was responsible, per the contract, for the development of the designs for the new passport. The contract awarded was for \$284 million, as posted at <https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/request-your-own-supplier-contract-history-letter/canadian-bank->

[note-company-limited?order=award_date&sort=desc#award_date](https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/request-your-own-supplier-contract-history-letter/canadian-bank-note-company-limited?order=award_date&sort=desc#award_date), for printed matter, including books, newspapers, pictures, manuscripts and forms.

Question No. 1536—Mr. Tako Van Popta:

With regard to judicial vacancies: what is the number of vacancies, as of May 16, 2023, broken down by province or territory and level (Federal Court, Superior Court of Justice, etc.)?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada updates the data pertaining to judicial vacancies shortly after the beginning of each month. It can be found at the following link: <https://www.fja.gc.ca/appointments-nominations/judges-juges-eng.aspx>.

Question No. 1543—Mrs. Dominique Vien:

With regard to the \$25 million announced in budget 2022 for the Menstrual Equity Fund: (a) how much of the \$25 million has been spent to date; (b) what is the breakdown of spending by province and territory; (c) what is the breakdown of spending to date, by line item and type of expenditure; and (d) what are the details for all funding recipients to date, including, for each the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) recipient, (iv) location?

Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the menstrual equity fund, MEF, is a pilot project intended to provide menstrual products to those most in need by addressing barriers related to affordability and stigma that some Canadians face when accessing menstrual products. Through extensive consultation in 2022-23 with grassroots organizations, and bilateral and group discussions with the indigenous women's circle, not-for profit organizations, the private sector and provinces and territories, the Department for Women and Gender Equality, WAGE, discovered the complexity of the menstrual equity landscape across Canada. The pilot project is a first step to address challenges many menstruators face as they go about their daily lives. The pilot project will serve as a precursor in laying groundwork for future national solutions to menstrual equity in Canada, using key research results and data as made available through the first menstrual equity fund.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to part (a), none of the funding for the national pilot for a menstrual equity fund committed in budget 2022 has been spent to date. The Department for Women and Gender Equality dedicated time in the 2022-23 fiscal year to undertake research, engagement and analysis to inform the design of the pilot, which centres on selecting one national not-for-profit organization to distribute menstrual products to grassroots organizations in select yet-to-be determined pilot sites, and to partner with several grassroots organizations already advancing menstrual equity to scale up their education and awareness activities. A targeted call for proposals was launched on May 29, and will close on June 23, to solicit applications from national organizations. Funding will only be allocated to the successful national organization once the final agreement is in place.

With regard to part (b), through the MEF pilot project, WAGE will test a pan-Canadian approach to menstrual product distribution and increase education and awareness on menstruation. One national organization will be selected to implement the pilot across Canada, in diverse geographical contexts with high concentrations of low-income populations disproportionately impacted by period poverty, including high-density urban areas; rural, northern and remote locations; and indigenous and two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex plus, 2SLGBTQI+, communities. While it is expected that the pilot will have locations in most of the provinces and territories, the estimated breakdown of spending by province and territories will not be known until the agreement with the selected national organization is finalized.

With regard to part (c), no funds have been spent to date.

With regard to part (d), the funding has not yet been allocated.

Question No. 1548—Mr. Sébastien Lemire:

With regard to the national sport organizations (NSOs) that have signed an agreement with the Office of the Sports Integrity Commissioner and have a contribution to pay for signing on to the "Abuse-Free Sport" program: (a) how many participants are covered; (b) what is the detailed description of those participants; (c) how much did each NSO pay out in 2021-22, in 2022-23 and for the current year 2023-24; (d) how was this calculation (formula) arrived at, and what is the value of each of the parameters of the formula that applies to each NSO; and (e) how many complaints have been received for each quarter in English and French?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the information requested is not available in Canadian Heritage databases or tracking systems. The data is the property of the office of the sport integrity commissioner. The questions should therefore be referred to the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada's Abuse-Free Sport program.

Question No. 1549—Mr. Sébastien Lemire:

With regard to each of the complaints received by the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner: (a) on what date was the complaint filed; (b) which sport organization was the complaint filed; (c) how long did it take the Office of the Commissioner to render a decision; (d) what is the status of the complaint; (e) what is the name and title of the person responsible for addressing the complaint; (f) was the person in (e) a public servant or a contractor; (g) if the person in (e) is a contractor, how much did the services of this person cost and what was the hourly rate; and (h) was any paid travel required to handle this complaint?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the information requested is not available in Canadian Heritage databases or tracking systems. The data is the property of the office of the sport integrity commissioner. The

questions should therefore be referred to the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada's Abuse-Free Sport program.

Question No. 1550—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to the processing of refugee travel documents, broken down by fiscal year since 2015-16: (a) what service standards exist for the processing of refugee travel documents and for those documents identified as urgent; (b) what is the total number of applications processed; (c) of the applications in (b), how many were identified as urgent; (d) what is the current backlog of (i) normal, (ii) urgent, applications; (e) what is the total number of employees dedicated to processing (i) urgent, (ii) non-urgent, refugee travel documents; and (f) what measures does the government have in place to ensure that applications are processed in the order in which they are received?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, insofar as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is concerned, the response to part (a) of the question is as follows.

The service standards for the processing of refugee travel document applications from 2015-16 to 2019-20 consisted of four service levels: for applications received by mail, 20 days; for applications received in person via mail-out or pickup, 10 days; for applications submitted in person with express service request, two to nine business days as required for pickup; and for applications submitted in person with urgent service request, within two business days for pickup.

In response to parts (b) and (c) of the question, the total numbers of applications processed for each calendar year, with urgent cases in parentheses, are as follows: for 2015-16, 2,957 (249); for 2016-17, 11,773 (357); for 2017-18, 15,716 (387); for 2018-19, 17,476 (369); for 2019-20, 23,121 (701); for 2020-21, 10,364 (2); for 2021-22, 12,248 (1,067); for 2022-23, 15,567 (1,596); and for 2023-24, 2,281 (109).

In response to part (d) of the question, the backlog of applications in the certificate of identity section does not differentiate between applications for certificates of identity and refugee travel documents. The total inventory was approximately 38,300 applications as of June 6, 2023, with 29,800 considered backlog, having been received prior to February 1, 2023. The backlog was expected to be cleared by September.

The volume of urgent applications as of June 6, 2023 was 1,600. Urgent service fees are not being charged, but applications are being treated as priority for the purpose of meeting immediate needs.

With respect to part (e) of the question, the total number of passport officers for this line of business is approximately 18-20: 15 passport officers are working on urgent requests and current files that fall under the Service Fees Act; three to five passport officers are working on files from the backlog, that is, pre-February 1, 2023, files; and an additional 20 passport officers from across the department are processing applications during overtime, focusing on the backlog.

Routine Proceedings

In answer to part (f) of the question, a first-in, first-out method is used unless the files are urgent. However, since the Service Fees Act came into effect, applications in the backlog and those received post February 1, 2023, are treated separately.

Question No. 1562—**Mr. Gerald Soroka:**

With regard to judicial vacancies in the province of Alberta as of June 1, 2023: (a) how many vacancies are there in Alberta, broken down by level and type of court; (b) of the vacancies in (a), how long has each position been vacant for; (c) does the government have a timeline to fill each vacancy, and, if so, (i) when will all of the vacancies be filled, (ii) how many of the vacancies will be filled by the end of 2023; (d) what is the current backlog in the court's calendar, broken down by level and type of court; and (e) what is the government's reason as to why the vacancies have not yet been filled?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to judicial vacancies in the province of Alberta as of June 1, 2023, the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada updates the data pertaining to judicial vacancies shortly after the beginning of each month. It can be found at the following link: <https://www.fja.gc.ca/appointments-nominations/judges-juges-eng.aspx>.

Any information regarding judicial vacancies in Alberta's provincial courts should be sought from the Alberta Ministry of Justice.

The current vacancy number presents an incomplete picture. Despite the significant number of appointments made this year, there has been a high number of judges retiring or electing to become supernumerary. This means they have opted to work part-time, which despite their continuing to hear cases is noted as a vacancy that needs to be filled. Vacancies have also been created by elevating trial judges to an appellate court.

I will continue to make high-quality, diverse appointments, and the number of vacancies will decline. A total of 18 appointments have been made across the country since July 26, 2023. The government has also added 116 new judicial positions since 2015.

The new judicial appointment process, announced in October 2016, is showing real results for Canadians and is fostering a judiciary that reflects the rich diversity of Canadian society. For the first time, we are tracking how many new judges identify as indigenous, visible minorities, people with disabilities, members of ethno-cultural groups and 2SLGBTQI+.

We have also heard from diverse bar associations and others within the legal community to reach new networks of potential candidates and encourage them to put their names forward for consideration.

Under the new process since 2016, more than half, nearly 54%, or 308 out of 569, of judges appointed or elevated by our government are women, 4% are indigenous, 14% are visible minorities, 6% identify as 2SLGBTQI+ and 33% are functionally bilingual, meaning they are able to fulfil four core competencies in both official languages.

By contrast, from 2007-2015, 32%, or less than one-third of new judges appointed by the previous government were women.

Our government has appointed more than 645 judges since November 2015. These exceptional jurists represent the diversity that strengthens Canada.

We look forward to continuing to work together with the legal community to achieve a judiciary that truly looks like Canada.

Question No. 1565—**Mr. Kelly McCauley:**

With regard to the April 11, 2023 announcement by the Prime Minister that Canada would send 21,000 assault rifles and 2.4 million rounds of ammunition to Ukraine: (a) what are the details of the 2.4 million rounds of ammunition, including the (i) amount of rounds by each caliber, (ii) amount being spent per round by caliber or type, (iii) names and addresses of the vendors and whether they are also the manufacturers; (b) were any of the manufacturers in (a) not Canadian, and, if so, who made this decision and what was their rationale; (c) what are the details of the 21,000 assault rifles, including the (i) manufacturer, (ii) quantity of each model and type, (iii) cost per unit, (iv) location where the rifle was manufactured; (d) if the government is paying Colt Canada a markup for any rifles or rounds of ammunition, what is the (i) manufacturer's, (ii) marked up, price; and (e) what is the total amount which will be spent on the (i) 21,000 assault rifles, (ii) 2.4 million rounds of ammunition?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada stands firmly with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people as they fight to defend their sovereignty, freedom and independence in the face of Russia's illegal invasion. National Defence has been unwavering in its support and will continue to supply Ukraine with the tools and equipment it needs to defend its sovereignty and security and win this war.

Since February 2022, National Defence has committed over \$1.5 billion in military aid to Ukraine, including armoured vehicles, heavy artillery, body armour, gas masks, helmets, drone cameras, funding for high-resolution satellite imagery, anti-armour weapons systems, rocket launchers and small arms and ammunition, as well as other highly specialized pieces of military equipment. The announcement of April 11, 2023, of 21,000 rifles and 2.4 million rounds of ammunition, as part of a total package valued at approximately \$59 million, is a further example of Canada's steadfast support.

With the exception of items sourced directly from the Canadian Armed Forces inventory, the Canadian Commercial Corporation is the contracting authority for equipment purchased by the Government of Canada from Canadian industry for donation to Ukraine. In regard to the current purchase, the Canadian Commercial Corporation awarded the contract for both rifles and ammunition to Colt Canada Corporation, a Canadian company.

The 21,000 rifles purchased are all variants of the Canadian Armed Forces C7/C8 platform chambered in 5.56 mm, manufactured by Colt Canada Corporation. The 2.4 million rounds of ammunition are a variety of calibres, including 5.56 mm, 7.62 mm, .308 calibre, and .50 calibre. Specific details regarding the rifles and ammunition, such as number of rounds broken down by type and by calibre or the number of rifles broken down by model, cannot be disclosed for reasons of operational security. Colt Canada Corporation was contracted to provide this ammunition but does not manufacture it. Instead, Colt Canada sourced the ammunition from its supply chain, which spans North America. The Government of Canada is not paying Colt Canada Corporation a marked-up price on either the rifles or the ammunition.

Routine Proceedings

In accordance with a request from the Government of Ukraine and in order to maintain operational security for Canadian personnel and Ukrainian forces, Canada does not publicize the details of contracts related to military assistance to Ukraine.

More information about Canada's military support to Ukraine can be found at the following link: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/campaigns/canadian-military-support-to-ukraine.html>.

Question No. 1568—Mr. Michael Kram:

With regard to the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence: on what date did the government sign a bilateral funding agreement with the Government of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, negotiations are under way with the provinces and territories, including Saskatchewan, to establish bilateral funding agreements to support the implementation of the national action plan to end gender-based violence. A bilateral funding agreement with the Government of Saskatchewan concerning the national action plan to end gender-based violence has not been signed at this time.

On February 28, 2023, I announced that a bilateral agreement had been established with the Government of Saskatchewan in the amount of \$1,000,000 to support crisis hotlines across Saskatchewan. Supporting crisis hotlines is an important initiative that is part of the ongoing efforts by the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan to address gender-based violence in the province. This funding is helping crisis hotlines offer more robust services, resources and support to serve the urgent needs of all survivors of gender-based violence and their families, no matter where they live in Saskatchewan.

Question No. 1570—Mr. Michael Barrett:

With regard to government protection for whistleblowers: (a) what specific protection is provided for whistleblowers who publicize wrongdoing by ministers or ministerial exempt staff; and (b) what mechanisms, if any, are in place to ensure that ministers, exempt staff, or other government officials do not punish such whistleblowers?

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, public servants who disclose wrongdoing within or relating to the public sector, under either the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act or under any other act of Parliament, are protected from reprisal for having made that disclosure. They may not be fired, demoted, disciplined or subjected to any other measure that adversely affects their employment or working conditions because they have made a protected disclosure.

The Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act provides that public servants may make a disclosure to their supervisor, or to the senior officer designated by the chief executive of their organization, or to the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner. In circumstances where there is not sufficient time to make the disclosure in one of these ways, and the disclosure is related to a serious offence under an act of Parliament or of the legislature of a province, or there is an imminent risk of a substantial danger to the life, health and safety of persons or the environment, the public servant may make a protected disclosure to the public.

Under section 42.3 of the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act, anyone who takes a reprisal against a public servant, or who

directs that a reprisal be taken, commits an offence and is guilty of either an indictable offence and is liable to a fine or imprisonment, or both; or is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction and liable to a fine or imprisonment, or both.

Question No. 1571—Mrs. Karen Vecchio:

With regard to Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the Mission Cultural Fund: (a) why, (ii) on what day, did the program cease operations; (b) did the government conduct any study on the effectiveness of the program, and, if so, what are the details, including, (i) who conducted it, (ii) when it was completed, (iii) what the findings were; (c) is there any other program or proposed program at GAC that will provide funding for celebrity chefs' airfares or the telling of seniors' sex stories abroad, and, if so, what are the details of the replacement program?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

With regard to part (a) of the question, as scheduled, the mission cultural fund, or MCF, sunsetted on March 31, 2023, and ceased activities.

Regarding part (b), a departmental evaluation of the MCF was conducted in 2020 by the diplomacy, trade and corporate evaluation division of Global Affairs Canada. The evaluation is publicly accessible on the departmental website at <https://www.international.gc.ca/gac-amc/publications/evaluation/2020/mcf-fcm-final-evaluation.aspx?lang=eng>.

With regard to part (c), there is no replacement program or proposed program to replace the MCF.

Question No. 1572—Mr. Eric Melillo:

With regard to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and shrinkflation: (a) will the government be lowering the size or volume threshold for items which are subject to GST when they are under a certain level (e.g., 500 ml of ice cream); (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, (i) on what items will the threshold be lowered, (ii) what will be the new threshold, (iii) when will the new threshold take effect; and (c) if the answer to (a) is negative or unconfirmed, how much additional GST revenue is the government expected to receive as a result of shrinkflation, and what will the additional revenue be used for?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at this time, there are no plans to change the existing, long-standing size thresholds used in respect of basic groceries and snack foods.

Under the goods and services tax and harmonized sales tax, or GST/HST, suppliers of goods and services in Canada report and remit the total amount of GST/HST collected on their taxable supplies to the Canada Revenue Agency. Neither the Canada Revenue Agency nor the Department of Finance Canada collect data on the GST/HST collected, or not collected, on types of specific goods and services, by particular methods of sale or by types of packaging. The Department of Finance does not have any public estimates that it is able to share on the potential amount of additional tax revenue from changes in the packaging or size of basic groceries.

Routine Proceedings

When the goods and services tax and harmonized sales tax, or GST/HST, was introduced, it was determined that basic groceries should be zero-rated or fully relieved of tax, reflecting a widely held view of Canadians that staple grocery items should not be taxed. Accordingly, under the GST/HST sales of many beverage and food items for human consumption are tax-relieved, including fruits and vegetables, eggs, breakfast cereals, most milk products, and fresh meat, poultry and fish.

The Canada Revenue Agency is responsible for the administration of the GST/HST system, including the determination of the tax status of specific food and beverage items.

Question No. 1575—Mr. Dan Muys:

With regard to applications submitted to the Universal Broadband Fund program that have not been selected for funding within Hamilton, Ontario: (a) how many applications have not been selected for funding for projects located within Hamilton, Ontario; (b) what are the names of the interested parties whose applications have not been selected for funding; (c) what is the location within Hamilton of projects whose applications have not been selected for funding; and (d) what is the amount of funding requested by each interested party that have not been selected for funding?

Hon. Gudie Hutchings (Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there were 17 applications submitted to the universal broadband fund program that have not been selected for funding within Hamilton, Ontario.

In processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act. Therefore, information regarding applications that are under review, withdrawn or rejected is being withheld on the grounds that the information may constitute third party information.

Question No. 1576—Mr. Dan Muys:

With regard to applications submitted to the Universal Broadband Fund program that have not been selected for funding: what (i) are the names of interested parties, (ii) are the locations of the projects, (iii) is the amount of funding requested for each project?

Hon. Gudie Hutchings (Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been applications submitted to the universal broadband fund program that have not been selected for funding in all provinces and territories except for the Yukon.

In processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act. Therefore, information regarding applications that are under review, withdrawn or rejected is being withheld on the grounds that the information may constitute third party information.

Question No. 1580—Mr. Rick Perkins:

With regard to statistics recorded by Health Canada pertaining to its Medical Assistance in Dying Program (MAID), since June 2016: (a) how many veterans have made a request for MAID, broken down by year; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by province or territory; (c) what is the median age of veterans who have requested MAID, broken down by year; (d) of the requests in (a), how many were (i) granted, (ii) denied; and (e) what is the median age of veterans whose request for MAID were (i) granted, (ii) denied?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada supports Health Canada by collecting data related to the medical assistance in dying program, MAID. Aggregate statistics on the state of

MAID in Canada are published annually by Health Canada. The “Third annual report on Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada 2021” is available on the Health Canada website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/health-system-services/annual-report-medical-assistance-dying-2021.html>.

However, Statistics Canada does not specifically collect or record data pertaining to veterans and their use of the program.

Question No. 1581—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to the government's plan to increase the mandatory security fees at airports by 33 percent: (a) will the fee increase lead to faster security screening for passengers, and, if so, by how many minutes on average will passenger wait times decrease; and (b) what methodology was used to determine and quantify the decrease in the average wait time?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the air travellers security charge came into effect in April 2002 to fund the air travel security system, including the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, which is the federal authority responsible for the security screening of air passengers and their baggage. Also included in the air travel security system are Transport Canada's related regulatory oversight and the contracting of Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers on selected flights. The air travellers security charge is generally paid by passengers when they purchase airline tickets. The Government of Canada has committed to balancing air travellers security charge revenues with air travel security system expenses over time.

Budget 2023 proposed to provide \$1.8 billion over five years, starting in 2023-24, to maintain and increase the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority's level of service, improve screening wait times, and strengthen security measures at airports. To support financing of this proposal, budget 2023 proposes to increase air travellers security charge rates by 32.85%. The air travellers security charge rates were last increased in 2010, at which time they were raised by 52.4%.

Routine Proceedings

The cost of the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority's operations has grown along with traffic volumes over the past 12 years, whereas its annual, fixed appropriations have not. As a result, the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority has been receiving annual top-ups to help it meet increased volumes. The vast majority of the incremental revenues generated by the air travellers security charge increase will go toward a three-year top-up versus the historical one-year. A portion of the incremental revenue will be used to improve wait times. The Canadian Air Transport Security Authority's current wait time target is based on meeting a service level where on average 85% of all passengers wait less than 15 minutes to be screened at Canada's top eight airports on an annual basis. This means that longer wait times may occur during peak periods, when checkpoints experience higher traffic volumes. Details on the proposed changes to wait times are being worked out with the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority.

Question No. 1583—**Mr. James Bezan:**

With regard to media reports that Canadian soldiers in Latvia have had to purchase their own modern ballistic helmets equipped with built-in hearing protection: (a) why was such equipment not provided by the government to all Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) soldiers serving in Latvia; (b) will the soldiers who had to purchase these helmets with their own funds be reimbursed; and (c) what is the timeline for when these helmets, or ones of a similar quality, will be provided to all CAF soldiers participating in theatre or live fire exercises?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ensuring that our soldiers are equipped with modern and effective equipment is a top priority for National Defence. This includes safe, modern ballistic helmets.

The following is a response to parts (a), (b) and (c).

All members of the Canadian Armed Forces, CAF, are provided with the required operational equipment, whether serving at home or abroad.

When deploying, CAF members are provided with an authorized list of clothing and equipment specific to that mission. The operational headquarters, in collaboration with the task force and supported by the respective technical and functional authorities, creates and amends this list as required. Prior to their deployment, all CAF members are provided the clothing and equipment on this list, should they not already have it. For those deployed to Latvia, this would include a helmet.

Per CAF policy, the unauthorized procurement and use of weapons, personal protective equipment, and clothing is not allowed in any form.

As such, no CAF member deployed to Latvia was forced to purchase their own helmet for safety or operational reasons. Should a member buy their own equipment, it is based on their preference, and it is not due to shortages. Members are not reimbursed in such cases.

Question No. 1587—**Mr. Fraser Tolmie:**

With regard to delays in the reimbursement of meal expenses for Canadian Armed Forces members serving in Poland: (a) what was the total number and total value of meal expense reimbursements (i) requested between January 1 and June 1, 2023, (ii) issued as of June 7, 2023; (b) what was the average number of days between when the reimbursement was requested and when the payment was issued; (c) what are the reasons why reimbursements were delayed; and (d) on what date were or will each of the reasons in (c) be rectified?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the sustainment and support of deployed troops is always a top Canadian Armed Forces, CAF, priority. This includes ensuring the provision of food for our members, no matter where they are deployed around the world.

With regard to (a)(i)(ii), (c) and (d), over the past year, Canada has rapidly expanded Operation Unifier with a focus on providing immediate training support to Ukraine as it fights for its sovereignty and security. In most cases, the CAF provides food for its members through CAF military cooks or those of our allies. However, given the geographically dispersed nature of the training cadres, this was not logistically feasible for most training locations in Poland. In such cases, members were authorized to receive a per diem in line with Treasury Board policies. This resulted in an unprecedented number of claims submitted.

To address this issue, the Department of National Defence extended the deployment duration of administrative personnel who volunteered to stay and support the mission. Their efforts, along with those of newly deployed personnel in March 2023, cleared the backlog.

Between January 1 and June 1 of 2023, 316 meal allowance claims were submitted for reimbursement by soldiers deployed to Poland on Operation Unifier for a total value of \$683,076. As of June 7, 2023, 290 of these claims had been settled for a total value of \$569,780.

All claims have since been settled, with the last from this period paid out on June 24, 2023.

With regard to (b), in March 2023, the average time between meal allowance claim submission and payout was four to six weeks. Since then, the payout time for these claims has steadily reduced, such that the current average is now two to three weeks.

Finally, the CAF has also since expanded the number of administrative staff positions for future deployments to ensure this situation does not reoccur.

Question No. 1588—**Mr. Fraser Tolmie:**

With regard to Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members having to purchase their own equipment in the last two years: (a) how many instances is the CAF aware of that were a result of shortages in what the CAF provides to its members; (b) what is the estimated value of the purchases in (a); (c) what are the details of all such purchases that were eventually reimbursed by the government, including, for each, the (i) item description and quantity, (ii) amount of reimbursement, (iii) month of purchase, (iv) month of reimbursement; (d) what measures were taken by the CAF to ensure that members serving abroad had all of the equipment needed prior to their arrival abroad; and (e) were there any instances where CAF members arrived in a country without being equipped with all of the necessary equipment, and, if so, what are the details, including, for each, the (i) country, (ii) number of CAF members impacted, (iii) details of what was not provided, (iv) date members arrived, (v) status of whether the equipment has since been provided, (vi) reason the equipment or gear was not provided?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ensuring that our soldiers are equipped with modern and effective equipment is a top priority for the Department of National Defence.

With regard to (a), (b) and (c), all members of the Canadian Armed Forces, CAF, are provided with the required operational equipment, whether serving at home or abroad. Should a member buy their own equipment, it is based on their preference and is not due to shortages. Members are not reimbursed in such cases, and details regarding equipment purchased by members are not centrally tracked. When deploying, CAF members are provided with an authorized list of clothing and equipment specific to that mission. The operational headquarters, in collaboration with the task force, and supported by the respective technical and functional authorities, creates and amends this list as required. Prior to their deployment, all CAF members are provided the clothing and equipment on this list, should they not already have it.

Per CAF policy, the unauthorized procurement and use of weapons, personal protective equipment and clothing is not allowed in any form.

If a shortage does occur, the technical authority responsible for the equipment will either allow the concerned unit to purchase what is missing, using a short list of pre-approved items, or initiate an emergency procurement to ensure that no deployed and/or deploying member of the CAF is without proper operational equipment.

In November 2022, the Operation Unifier training element, based in the United Kingdom, identified a deficiency with the CAF-issued wet weather clothing. In December 2022, deployed members were authorized to procure suitable wet weather clothing from an approved list. To date, approximately 400 CAF members deployed over three rotations from August 2022 to January 2024 have received this authorization.

Question No. 1597—Mr. Brad Redekopp:

With regard to the Canada Border Services Agency: what is the spending by governmental and non-governmental organizations on settlement services for people (immigrants, refugees, asylum claimants and other individuals) who have entered Canada at official and irregular border crossings, broken down by the (i) organization, (ii) fiscal year, since 2015-16, (iii) projected spending for the 2023-24 fiscal year, (iv) province and territory, (v) program spending?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the CBSA has not incurred any spending on settlement services for immigrants, refugees, asylum claimants and other individuals in the indicated time frame.

Question No. 1602—Mr. Randall Garrison:

With regard to Canada's trade relationship with China, the Tibetan Autonomous Region's (TAR) recent GDP growth in the first quarter of 2023, and the general economic forecast of the region: (a) what role do Canada's trade offices in China, the consulates and embassies that offer Trade Commissioner Services, or the embassy in Beijing, play in the relationships between Chinese and Canadian companies; (b) is there a guide, guidelines, model or other document that outlines what Canada considers as good governance and best practices, used in Canada's trade, and, if so, have there been instances where good governance and best practices were found to be in violation of or against the spirit of the guide, guidelines, model or outline; (c) since 2020, has there been an increase in interest or communications at Canada's trade offices in China from companies about exporting or importing goods or conducting business in the TAR, and, if so, from which companies; (d) are there plans for Canada to open a trade office in Lhasa, TAR, and, if not, under what circumstances would Canada make such plans; (e) have Canada's trade offices in

China promoted trade in the TAR; and (f) did Canada attend the one-day Tibet Development Forum held in Beijing on May 23, 2023, and, if so, (i) what was the program of the forum, (ii) what events did Canada attend, (iii) did Canada speak or raise questions at the forum, and, if so, what was said by Canada and who were the guests present?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

With regard to (a), Canada's Trade Commissioner Service, TCS, helps Canadian businesses grow with confidence by connecting them with our funding and support programs, international opportunities, and our network of trade commissioners in over 160 cities worldwide, including with our network in greater China, including Canada's embassy in Beijing, its consulates in Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chongqing and its trade offices across 10 secondary markets. The TCS helps companies find key local players that have the knowledge needed for clients to refine and carry out their international strategy. This may include connecting Canadian companies with potential local Chinese business partners.

With regard to (b), the Government of Canada expects Canadian companies active abroad to abide by all relevant laws, to respect human rights in their operations and to adopt best practices and internationally respected guidelines on responsible business conduct, such as the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. In support of these objectives, Canada's responsible business conduct, or RBC, strategy – "Responsible Business Conduct Abroad: Canada's Strategy for the Future"—was launched in 2022. This five-year strategy, 2022-2027, sets out priorities for the Government of Canada, through the TCS and partners, to provide guidance and tools in order to support Canadian companies to uphold Canada's RBC expectations. The TCS provides advice to Canadian companies to identify and mitigate risks and to strengthen their responsible business conduct practices. If there is a legitimate concern and there is credible information of a Canadian company's misconduct or wrongdoing abroad, the TCS can withhold all services and support from the company.

With regard to (c), available records show no such interest or inquiries to Canada's trade offices.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (d), there are no plans for Canada to open a trade office in Lhasa in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, TAR. Canada makes plans to open trade offices in a given location based on market potential for Canadian clients and based on broader international commercial strategies. The 10 trade offices currently operating in China were established when two separate Canadian strategies were executed. The first six offices were established under Canada's global commerce strategy in 2007, while the final four were added as part of the Global markets action plan in 2013.

With regard to (e), Canada's trade offices in China have not promoted trade in the TAR. The current trade offices do not deal with any matters related to the TAR.

With regard to (f), Canada did not attend the event.

Question No. 1603—Mr. Randall Garrison:

With regard to Canada's trade relationship with China and the activities of Canadian companies involved in development projects in China, specifically those that have been involved with mining, hydroelectricity, and rail, including, but not limited to, Bombardier Inc., SNC Lavalin, Nortel, Eldorado Gold Corp., Power Corp., RailPartners, Continental Minerals, GobiMin, MinCo Capital Corp., Sterling Group, Inter-Citic Minerals, Tri-River Ventures, China Gold International Resources, and Roctest LTD between 2000 and 2020 in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and Tibetan areas in Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan: (a) has Canada ever facilitated contact or participated in the meetings between Chinese companies and Canadian companies involved with development projects, and, if so, what are the details, including, for each, (i) who participated, (ii) on which dates, (iii) at what locations; (b) has Canada ever provided funding for development projects in the TAR and Tibetan areas, such as those in Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan, and, if so, what are the details, including, for each, (i) for which projects, (ii) the amounts, (iii) the source of these funds; (c) was there a guide, guidelines, model, or other document that outlines what the government considered as good corporate governance and best practices for Canadian companies operating in the TAR and Tibetan areas of China; (d) what mechanisms exist in the case where there are complaints as a result of violations on the part of Canadian companies of the policies, norms or official guidelines delineated in (c); and (e) if such mechanisms exist, (i) what complaints have been made, (ii) how were these complaints addressed?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

With regard to part (a), based on available records, Canada has not facilitated any such meetings between Canadian and Chinese companies involved in development projects.

With regard to part (b), Global Affairs Canada does not disaggregate the geographic scope of international assistance projects beyond the country level. Therefore, data specific to development projects in the Tibetan Autonomous Region or the other Tibetan areas referenced are not available. Canada's bilateral aid program to China expired in 2013.

With regard to part (c), Canada's responsible business conduct expectations, including Canada's Responsible Business Conduct Strategy, applies to all Canadian companies active abroad, regardless of the region in which they operate.

With regard to part (d), the Government of Canada provides two non-judicial dispute-resolution mechanisms: Canada's National Contact Point, or NCP, for Responsible Business Conduct and the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise, or CORE. Canada's NCP has a mandate to facilitate dialogue/mediation to

help resolve issues raised about the observance of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct, or the Guidelines, by multinational enterprises operating in or from Canada, in any economic sectors. The NCP can receive complaints related to any of the areas covered in the eleven chapters of the Guidelines, including those dealing with human rights, employment and industrial relations, and the environment. Outcomes of the NCP process can include agreement on remedy, changes to company policy, as well as relationship-building between companies and communities where they operate.

The CORE has a mandate to review allegations of human rights abuses arising from the operations of Canadian companies abroad in the mining, oil and gas, and garment sectors. The CORE can undertake a review on its own initiative or in response to a complaint received, offer informal mediation services, and issue recommendations at the end of a review. The CORE is required to report publicly throughout the process. The office of the CORE began accepting complaints on March 15, 2021. The Government of Canada expects Canadian companies involved in a dispute-resolution process to participate in good faith. If a Canadian company fails to act in good faith during a review or follow-up process, recommendations can be made to implement trade measures such as the withdrawal of Trade Commissioner Service support, and recommending that Export Development Canada and the Canadian Commercial Corporation withdraw future support.

With regard to part (e), Canada's NCP has closed 25 cases since 2000. The NCP publishes a Final Statement at the conclusion of each case. These Final Statements, as well as other information on past NCP cases, can be found on the NCP's website. The CORE publishes a quarterly report on complaints received and is required to publish reports on its reviews. CORE publications are available on the CORE's website.

Question No. 1605—Mr. Michael Barrett:

With regard to Order in Council 2023-0524 dated June 1, 2023: (a) who is named in Schedule A; and (b) what offences and convictions were listed in Schedule B?

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Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Royal Prerogative of Mercy, or RPM, also known as clemency, is the discretionary power of the Crown to grant pardons, remit sentences, and exercise other forms of clemency. Clemency can be exercised either by the Governor in Council under sections 748 and 748.1 of the Criminal Code, or by the Governor General under the Letters Patent, which is the document that bestows power to the Governor General. In practice, the granting of an act of clemency by the Governor in Council or by the Governor General will occur only after receiving the advice of a Minister of the Crown. In most cases, it is the Minister of Public Safety who makes the recommendation.

As outlined in the Order in Council 2023-0524, the Governor General in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister of Public Safety, ordered the remission of all outstanding fines and a conditional pardon to the person named in Schedule A. A conditional pardon can be ordered prior to eligibility, or due to ineligibility, under the Criminal Records Act, or prior to eligibility under the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, or CCRA. There are criteria that must be met in order for a conditional pardon to be granted, including the aforementioned evidence of substantial injustice or undue hardship.

In the case of clemency pardons under the RPM, there is no framework for disclosure because the over-riding principle and convention has been to guard the privacy of the individual in receipt of clemency, other than the notification in the Canada Gazette concerning the fact of the pardon or remission of fines.

As such, the request to disclose the name listed in Schedule A and offences including convictions listed in Schedule B for Order in Council 2023-0524, cannot be fulfilled.

Clemency is granted in exceptional circumstances in deserving cases involving federal offences, where no other remedy exists in law to reduce severe negative effects of criminal sanctions. Clemency can be requested for numerous reasons, including employment, perceived inequity, medical conditions, immigration to Canada, compassion and financial hardship.

The Parole Board of Canada, or PBC, reviews applications, conducts investigations at the direction of the Minister of Public Safety, and makes recommendations to the Minister regarding whether to grant the clemency request.

There are several guiding principles regarding the exercise of clemency which are assessed and reviewed by the PBC in accordance with section 110 of the CCRA: there is evidence of substantial injustice or undue hardship that exceed the normal consequences of a conviction and sentence; the application is examined on its own merit, taking into consideration the circumstances solely of the applicant; the applicant has exhausted all other avenues available under the Criminal Code or other pertinent legislation; the independence of the judiciary shall be respected; and the RPM does not result in an increased penalty.

Question No. 1607—Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:

With regard to revenue collected by the government from the federal carbon tax: (a) does the revenue collected go into the government's general revenue fund or a separate fund; (b) if the revenue goes into a separate fund, what are the details, in-

cluding the name and balance of such a fund; and (c) how much revenue did the government collect from the carbon tax in the 2022-23 fiscal year, in total and broken down by province?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all proceeds collected from the federal fuel charge go into the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Under the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, or GGPPA, all proceeds from the federal fuel charge assessed must also be returned from this Fund back to the jurisdiction of origin.

Pursuant to section 270 of the GGPPA, the Minister of the Environment must table a report in Parliament annually with respect to the administration of the act, which includes details of proceeds assessed and how they were returned.

The most recent annual report was tabled in March 2023, in respect of a pollution price of \$40 during the 2021-22 fuel charge year. For reference, that report is published here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/climate-change/pricing-pollution-how-it-will-work/greenhouse-gas-annual-report-2021.html>.

Detailed information in respect of the 2022-23 fuel charge year will be available in the next annual report, which is required to be tabled by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change by the end of the current fiscal year. Note that these data have yet to be fully assessed and audited as part of the 2022-23 year end Public Accounts process.

In provinces where the fuel charge applies, the majority of proceeds are returned to households through climate action incentive, or CAI, payments while the balance of proceeds is to be returned to small and medium sized businesses and Indigenous groups. Proceeds relating specifically to the use of natural gas and propane by farmers are returned directly to farmers via a refundable tax credit.

Over time, any difference between proceeds assessed and disbursed in each jurisdiction is corrected through adjustments to future CAI payment amounts, such that all proceeds are returned to the jurisdiction of origin. These differences are reported upon in the annual reports.

Question No. 1612—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:

With regard to VIA Rail's passenger service: what was the operating revenue and the operating costs for each year between 2018 and 2022 for (i) the Toronto—Québec City corridor, (ii) each VIA Rail passenger service route outside of the Toronto—Québec City corridor?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, VIA Rail Canada's operating revenue and costs for each service route are reported in the annual reports available at <https://media.viarail.ca/en/reports#annual-reports>. For fiscal year 2018, this is available in Annual Report 2018 on page 9; for fiscal year 2019, in Annual Report 2019 on page 9; for fiscal year 2020, in Annual Report 2020, section 4, on pages 3-4; for fiscal year 2021, in Annual Report 2021 on page 14; and for fiscal year 2022, in Annual Report 2022 on page 18.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1614—Ms. Laurel Collins:**

With regard to the government's Carbon Management Strategy: what are the details of all consultative bodies formed by the government, including the (i) name of the consultative body, (ii) names of individuals or organizations included, (iii) government officials and ministers involved, (iv) dates of each meeting held, (v) reports or recommendations put forward by the consultative body?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, reducing emissions remains the top priority of Canada's climate plan, recognizing that the best way to tackle climate change is to stop new emissions from entering the atmosphere. Carbon management technologies will be a critical tool for heavy industry sectors to reduce their emissions and permanently remove existing historical emissions from the atmosphere. Carbon management is one of many innovative technology areas helping to advance climate action in support of Canada's net-zero targets.

The name of the consultative body formed in spring 2021 by the government to provide strategic advice and input to the Carbon Management Strategy, previously called the Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage, or CCUS, Strategy, was the CCUS Thought Leaders' Senior Reference Group.

The group was comprised of thought leaders external to the federal and provincial governments selected because of their knowledge of carbon management technologies and their use or development in the Canadian context or their ongoing leadership in fields relevant to carbon management technology development and deployment. These leaders were expected to bring the sum of their relevant experience to the group, rather than representing one single organization. The senior reference group's various perspectives were captured at these three meetings but were not compiled into formal reports nor were there formal consensus recommendations.

The individuals included in the CCUS Thought Leaders' senior reference group were Ed Whittingham, Clean Energy Consultant and former Executive Director, Pembina Institute, and a fellow at the Public Policy Forum; Marcius Extavour, Executive Director of the NRG COSIA Carbon XPRIZE; Maria Nsouli, Vice President, Impact Investment Fund at BMO; Sandra Odendahl, Vice President, Social Impact & Sustainability at Scotiabank; Robert Niven, Chief Executive Officer of CarbonCure; Anna Stukas, Vice President, Business Development at Carbon Engineering; Claude Letourneau, Chief Executive Officer of Svante; Adam Auer, Vice President, Environment and Sustainability at the Cement Association of Canada; Tim Wiwchar, General Manager of Carbon Capture and Storage in Canada at Shell Canada; Beth Hardy Valiaho, Vice President, Strategy & Stakeholder Relations at the International CCS Knowledge Centre; Richard Chalaturnyk of the University of Alberta; Jeff Pearson, President of Wolf Carbon; and Chris Grant, Vice President, Regional Development at Suncor.

The senior reference group was convened by Drew Leyburne, Assistant Deputy Minister of Energy Efficiency and Technology Sector at Natural Resources Canada to meet on three occasions in 2021: on April 14, June 3, and July 13, 2021.

Question No. 1617—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to the government's thought-leaders senior reference group referred to in a February 2022 briefing note prepared for Natural Resources Canada deputy minister John Hannaford: (a) what were the criteria for selecting members of this group; (b) what is the membership of this group, including the names of individuals

and organizations represented; (c) what are the details of all former members of this group, including the names of individuals and organizations represented; (d) what are the details of all meetings held by this group, including (i) the date of the meetings, (ii) the minister and government officials in attendance, (iii) whether minutes of the meetings were recorded; (e) what recommendations did the group make regarding the government's Carbon Management Strategy; and (f) what are the details of all reports, including draft reports, prepared by this group, including the (i) date they were prepared, (ii) recommendations included, and (iii) recipients of the reports?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, reducing emissions remains the top priority of Canada's climate plan, recognizing that the best way to tackle climate change is to stop new emissions from entering the atmosphere. Carbon management technologies will be a critical tool for heavy industry sectors to reduce their emissions and permanently remove existing historical emissions from the atmosphere. Carbon management is one of many innovative technology areas helping to advance climate action in support of Canada's net-zero targets.

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The senior reference group was convened by Drew Leyburne, Assistant Deputy Minister of Energy Efficiency and Technology Sector at Natural Resources Canada to meet on three occasions in 2021: on April 14, June 3, and July 13, 2021.

Question No. 1618—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to the handling of cases and claims pursuant to the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement by the Department of Justice Canada, Indigenous Services Canada and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada: how much has been spent on settled cases, request for direction, and other proceedings where Canada has been either the plaintiff or defendant before the appellate courts (such as the Ontario Superior Court or the Supreme Court of British Columbia), related to survivors of St. Anne's Residential School between 2013, and June 1, 2023 (i) in total, (ii) broken down by year?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the expenditures incurred between 2013 and June 1, 2023, in legal proceedings pursuant to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement related to survivors of St. Anne's Residential School, to the extent that the information that has been requested is or may be protected by any legal privileges, including solicitor-client privilege or settlement privilege, the federal Crown asserts those privileges. In this case, it has only waived solicitor-client privilege, and only to the extent of revealing the total legal costs, as defined below.

The total actual and notional legal costs associated with legal proceedings pursuant to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement related to survivors of St. Anne's Residential School, for the period of January 1, 2013, to May 9, 2018, was provided in response to an earlier question and amount to approximately \$2,314,000. The total legal costs for the subsequent period, from May 10, 2018, to June 1, 2023, amount to approximately \$1,939,200. These costs cover all types of court proceedings, including actions, requests for direction, motions, costs proceedings and appeals. In most of these files, the Crown did not initiate the proceedings but rather acted as a defendant or respondent. The total legal costs are with respect to litigation and litigation support services, which were provided, in these cases, by the Department of Justice. Department of Justice lawyers, notaries and paralegals are salaried public servants and therefore no legal fees are incurred for their services. A "notional amount" can, however, be provided to account for the legal services they provide. The notional amount is calculated by multiplying the total hours recorded in the responsive

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files for the relevant period by the applicable approved internal legal services hourly rates. Actual costs are composed of file related legal disbursements paid by the Department and then cost-recovered from the client-departments or agencies, as well as the costs of legal agents who may be retained by the Minister of Justice to provide litigation services in certain cases.

The total amount mentioned in this response is based on information contained in Department of Justice systems, as of July 5, 2023.

Question No. 1619—Mr. Tony Baldinelli:

With regard to memorandums and briefing notes sent to the Minister of Public Safety or the minister's office concerning prisoner transfers since January 1, 2019, about prisoner transfers or potential prisoner transfers: what are the details of all such documents, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) type of document, (vi) subject matter, (vii) summary of contents, (viii) file number?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since January 1, 2019, the Minister of Public Safety or the Minister's office has not received any memorandums or briefing notes from Public Safety branches concerning prisoner transfers.

The Correctional Service of Canada has a process in place to provide advanced notification to the Minister's office about transfers involving high profile offenders. While this can include verbal briefings, often notifications are sent via email. Dating back to January 1, 2019, 39 transfer notifications have been issued to the office of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and the office of the Minister of Public Safety.

Typically, the titles of these email briefings and the contents of the email contain identifiable information, such as the name of an offender or the name of the receiving institution, and is therefore protected information under the Privacy Act.

Question No. 1623—Mr. Matthew Green:

With regard to the \$3.7 million in budget 2022 allocated for the implementation of a Mental Health Fund for Black federal public servants: (a) how much of the funding allocated for fiscal year 2022-23 remains unspent; (b) how many full-time equivalent employees are working on the implementation of the fund; (c) what tools and programs have been created since the implementation began; (d) how many employees have accessed support through the fund; and (e) what are the details of all reports or briefings regarding the status of ongoing initiatives through this funding, including the (i) title of the report, (ii) author, (iii) target audience, (iv) recommendations or conclusions arrived at?

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is working to create a diverse and inclusive public service, free from racism, harassment and discrimination, where everyone has a sense of belonging. Budget 2022 proposed \$3.7 million over four years, and Budget 2023 proposed to provide a further \$45.9 million over three years, starting in 2023-24, to the Treasury Board Secretariat to create a Mental Health Fund for Black public servants and establish dedicated career development programs, including to prepare Black public service leaders for executive positions.

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With regard to (a), Budget 2022 committed \$3.7 million over four years for a Black-led engagement, design, and implementation of a Mental Health Fund for Black federal public servants. In 2022-23, the Treasury Board Secretariat accessed \$1.1 million of the \$3.7 million and will access the remaining \$2.6 million starting in 2023-24. Of the \$1.1 million that was accessed, \$787,207 was spent.

With regard to (b), during the first phase of work, the Treasury Board Secretariat focused on developing an action plan for Black employees in the public service, working with Black employee networks. The Treasury Board Secretariat hired several Black employees on temporary assignments from several departments on secondment to develop and design proposals for a mental health fund for Black employees and dedicated career development programs. This included hiring 5.5 full-time equivalents using the \$1.1 million from Budget 2022. That work resulted in new Budget 2023 commitments. A total of 5.5 full-time equivalents, or 11 employees, were hired in 2022 to accomplish this work. When the work was done, the secondments were ended, and the employees returned to their organizations.

With regard to (c), the second phase of work is underway to meet the Budget commitments and it will build on the foundational work started in phase one, including taking stock of existing programs, consultations with employee and subject matter experts. A dedicated team will be established to design, develop and implement programs that support the mental health and career development of Black public servants. The Treasury Board Secretariat plans to re-engage with Black employee networks and more broadly, consult Black employees in the public service to ensure that the initiatives developed will respond to their needs. The Treasury Board Secretariat is also working with partners, such as Health Canada, which delivers the Employee Assistance Program, and the Canada School of Public Service, which offers a suite of leadership development programming for leaders at all levels. We will build upon what exists and develop new programming to meet the needs of Black employees. Experts from the Black community will be engaged throughout this process.

With regard to (d), Budget 2022 committed \$3.7 million over four years to support the Black-led engagement, design, and implementation phase of the Mental Health Fund. The funding was not intended to provide direct support to public servants. The work completed in 2022-2023 led to the Budget 2023 commitment of \$45.9 million over three years, starting in 2023-24. This funding will provide direct support to employees for mental health and career development.

With regard to (e), following Parliament's approval of Budget 2023, the Treasury Board Secretariat began the work to deliver on the Budget 2023 commitment. More information on the Mental Health Fund initiatives will be made available once they are designed and launched.

Question No. 1624—Mr. Matthew Green:

With regard to the handling of cases and claims pursuant to the Black Class Action Lawsuit launched in December 2020: how much has been spent by the Department of Justice and the Attorney General in legal fees and court fees in their requests to dismiss the lawsuit?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice undertook a preliminary search to determine what information would fall within the scope of the question and the time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. Producing and validating a response to this question would require a manual collection and careful analysis of individual transactions that is not possible in the time allotted, and which cannot be completed with the precision and detail necessary to ensure a complete and accurate response.

Although it is not possible to provide a response to the specific question posed, the Department of Justice can provide a summary of the total legal costs to respond to this class action, which includes but is not limited to legal services to support the preservation of records covering 99 departments and agencies, the motion for certification, the motion to strike, examinations, as well as various other steps required of Canada in the context of the litigation. To the extent that the information is, or may be, protected by any legal privileges, including solicitor-client privilege, the federal Crown asserts those privileges. In this case, it has only waived solicitor-client privilege, and only to the extent of revealing the total legal costs, as defined below.

The total actual and notional legal costs associated with the Black Class Action, the Thompson lawsuit, amount to approximately \$7.85 million. This amount covers the costs associated with all aspects of the litigation. The services targeted here are litigation services as well as litigation support services. Department of Justice lawyers, notaries and paralegals are salaried public servants and therefore no legal fees are incurred for their services. A "notional amount" can, however, be provided to account for the legal services they provide. The notional amount is calculated by multiplying the total hours recorded in the responsive files for the relevant period by the applicable approved internal legal services hourly rates. Actual costs represent file related legal disbursements and legal agent fees, as the case may be. The total amount mentioned in this response is based on information contained in Department of Justice systems, as of July 5, 2023.

Question No. 1625—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to statistics recorded by Health Canada pertaining to its Medical Assistance in Dying Program (MAID), for the year 2022: (a) how many Canadians have made a request for MAID, broken down by those for whom natural death is reasonably foreseeable and those for whom natural death is not reasonably foreseeable; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by province or territory; (c) what is the breakdown by age of those who have requested MAID; (d) of the requests in (a), how many were (i) granted, (ii) denied; and (e) what is the breakdown by age of those whose request for MAID were (i) granted, (ii) denied?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, data for the year 2022 will become available in fall 2023 and can be provided upon request at that time. In the meantime, we are pleased to present data for 2021 below. More information can be found in the "Third Annual Report on Medical Assistance in Dying".

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In response to (a), there were 12,286 written requests for medical assistance in dying, or MAID, in 2021. Of the total number of MAID provisions, or 10,064 individuals, 2.2%, or 219 individuals, were individuals whose natural deaths were not reasonably foreseeable, or non-RFND, with the remainder of provisions, or 9,845 individuals, or 97.8%, being individuals whose deaths were reasonably foreseeable. Data does not support the calculation of the number of requests not ending in a MAID provision by RFND vs non-RFND status.

In response to (b), the breakdown of MAID requests and outcomes by jurisdiction is provided in Table 7.1 from the “Third Annual Report on Medical Assistance in Dying”. Due to small numbers, some data have been suppressed to protect confidentiality. The majority of written requests, or 9,950 requests, or 81%, resulted in the administration of MAID based on reports received. The remaining 2,336 requests, or 19%, resulted in an outcome other than MAID: 231 individuals withdrew their request, or 1.9% of written requests; 487 individuals were deemed ineligible, or 4% of written requests; and 1,618 individuals died prior to receiving MAID, or 13.2% of written requests. These details are found in Annex A of the report.

In response to (c), the average age at the time MAID was provided in 2021 was 76.3. The breakdown by age of individuals who received MAID is as follows: 139 individuals aged 18 to 45, 353 aged 46 to 55, 1,165 aged 56 to 64, 1,462 aged 65 to 70, 1,572 aged 71 to 75, 1,621 aged 76 to 80, 1,364 aged 81 to 85, 1,200 aged 86 to 90, and 1,074 aged 91 or older.

The average age for outcomes not ending in MAID is 76.5 for ineligible cases, 75.4 for cases that were withdrawn, and 73.7 for patients who died. The data does not support the calculation of the age range of individuals who did not receive MAID.

In response to (d), and as per the response in answer (b) above and in Table 7.1 from the “Third Annual Report on Medical Assistance in Dying”, of the 12,286 written requests for MAID in 2021, 9,950, or 81%, resulted in the administration of MAID based on reports received, and 487 individuals were deemed ineligible, or 4% of written requests. In addition to these 487 individuals, of the 2,336 requests, or 19%, that resulted in an outcome other than MAID, 231 individuals withdrew their request, or 1.9% of written requests, and 1,618 individuals died prior to receiving MAID, or 13.2% of written requests.

In response to (e), the breakdown by age of individuals who received MAID is provided in part (c). The data does not support the calculation of the age range of individuals who did not receive MAID.

Question No. 1630—Ms. Heather McPherson:

With regard to funding from FinDev Canada for CASEIF IV, a regional private equity fund managed by LaFise Group in Central America and the Caribbean: (a) how does FinDev track the specific companies and projects that CASEIF IV and similar financial intermediaries fund with FinDev’s contribution; (b) how do CASEIF IV and similar financial intermediaries report to FinDev about the results of the end-use of their funds; (c) what projects and companies does FinDev fund through CASEIF IV; (d) how does FinDev vote, recommend, or advise the administrators of the CASEIF IV about how FinDev wants its contributions used; (e) how does FinDev follow up to ensure that its requests are respected; and (f) to what extent have they been respected to date?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), funds like CASEIF IV submit drawdown requests to all the Limited Partners specifying the application of funds including details on the portfolio companies that will be supported with the funding request. Application of funds are allocated based on the drawdown request. CASEIF IV and other similar financial intermediaries provide quarterly and annual reporting that includes portfolio updates, Financial Statements and a Capital Account Statement with the value attributable to each Limited Partner.

With regard to (b), CASEIF IV and other similar financial intermediaries provide quarterly and annual reporting that includes portfolio updates, Financial Statements and a Capital Account Statement with the value attributable to each Limited Partner.

With regard to (c), CASEIF IV is a generalist growth equity fund for small and medium sized enterprises in Central America, Panama, Dominican Republic and Colombia. CASEIF IV supports companies within key target sectors, namely the agribusiness value chain, renewable energy (up to 25MW generation), food and beverages processing, manufacturing, education and IT, that promote development and fight poverty by enhancing sustainable growth in alignment with FinDev Canada’s development impact goals. As of today, the CASEIF IV investment portfolio consists of two entities, a loan to a retail company and an equity investment in a food and beverage processing company.

With regard to (d), in accordance with FinDev Canada’s Development Impact Framework, eligible transactions are assessed for their current and potential development impact on women’s economic empowerment, climate action and local market development. Contributions from FinDev Canada and other Limited Partners towards investments administered by CASEIF IV are governed by a Limited Partners Agreement (LPA) that includes an Investment Policy with each of the Limited Partners participating pro rata in each of the underlying investments unless a predefined opt out criteria is communicated upfront.

Compliance with the LPA and other Fund Documents are monitored via the quarterly and annual reporting and compliance undertakings provided with each drawdown request. The Limited Partners Advisory Committee meets at least annually or more frequent when required for decisions that required Advisory Committee approval. Deviations from the Investment Policy requires Advisory Committee approval. As a limited liability partner, FinDev Canada does not participate in the management of the Fund.

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With regard to (e), FinDev follows up to ensure that its requests are respected through review of quarterly and annual reporting, quarterly valuation review, monitoring reports, request for additional information if required.

With regard to (f), CASEIF IV is in good standing with all requirements having been respected to date.

Question No. 1634—Mr. Brad Redekopp:

With regard to Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and international students, broken down by year the international student arrived in Canada, for each of the last five years: (a) how many times was IRCC notified that the student was changing the designated learning institution; and (b) of the changes in (a), in how many instances did IRCC receive notice within (i) one week, (ii) 30 days, (iii) 90 days, (iv) six months, (v) one year, of the student arriving in Canada?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when students change institutions, they are to report it through their MyAccount profile. This data, however, is embedded within the student's Global Case Management System case file in such a way that it is not possible to extract for reporting purposes within the timeframe of a written question.

Question No. 1638—Mr. Todd Doherty:

With regard to government advertising being flagged for being partisan, since January 1, 2016: (a) what are the details of all ads which were flagged, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) type of advertisement, (iii) subject matter, (iv) description of the content, (v) government response to the flag, including whether the advertisement was edited or removed?

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2016, the Government of Canada established a mandatory non-partisan external review process as part of a commitment to strengthen the oversight of government advertising. Ad Standards, the independent, not-for-profit, self-regulatory body that administers the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards was contracted to undertake this work.

At that time, advertising campaigns with budgets over \$500,000 were subject to the process. In April 2020, the threshold for a mandatory review was reduced to \$250,000. Departments may also submit campaigns that fall below the threshold for review.

All information on the advertising oversight mechanism, including the criteria used to evaluate advertising creatives and the two-stage review process, is publicly available on the Advertising oversight mechanism page: <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/government-communications/advertising-oversight-mechanism.html>.

All results of the reviews by Ad Standards are posted on the Review results and decisions page: <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/government-communications/advertising-oversight-mechanism/review-results-decisions.html>

The results are broken down by fiscal year, department, campaign name and details on modifications made following an initial review. As outlined on the Review results and decisions page, all flagged issues must be addressed, and the modified ad creatives must pass a final review from Ad Standards before being published or aired.

In addition to the non-partisan external review process, a complaints mechanism was established in 2020 to allow the public to flag any Government of Canada advertising that they perceive to be

partisan. TBS is responsible for reviewing and reporting details of the complaints publicly on [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/government-communications/advertising-oversight-mechanism/submitting-complaint-about-partisanship-in-gc-advertising.html) here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/government-communications/advertising-oversight-mechanism/submitting-complaint-about-partisanship-in-gc-advertising.html>

To date, TBS has reviewed a total of five complaints. The advertisements in question were deemed to meet the review criteria and no action was required.

Question No. 1640—Mrs. Tracy Gray:

With regard to the government's commitments on the completion of the Okanagan Rail Trail project and the federal Addition to Reserve (ATR) process for the Duck Lake Indian Reserve No. 7 (IR#7): (a) what is the status of the ATR to Duck Lake IR#7 of former CN Rail land; (b) what are the exact areas of negotiation which have (i) been resolved, (ii) not yet been resolved, to complete the ATR; (c) how many meetings or briefings have the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations or the Minister of Indigenous Services had regarding the Okanagan Rail Trail project or the ATR to Duck Lake IR#7 since November 26, 2022, and what are the details of each meeting or briefing, including the dates and names or titles of participants; (d) when was the last communication sent by the government to the Duck Lake IR#7 or the Okanagan Indian Band regarding the ATR and what is the summary of contents or other details about the last communication; and (e) what is the estimated timeline for the completion of the ATR?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, insofar as Indigenous Services Canada, or ISC, is concerned, the response to part (a) is that ISC continues to support the Okanagan Indian Band with the Addition to Reserve of the former Canadian National Rail corridor lands bisecting Duck Lake Indian Reserve No. 7. Canadian National Rail is currently the registered owner of the lands in fee simple and Canada has previously provided Canadian National Rail with a draft Agreement of Purchase and Sale to support the transfer of lands to Canada for the use and benefit of the Band. Negotiations around the Purchase and Sale Agreement are ongoing between Canadian National Rail, Okanagan Indian Band and Canada.

With regard to (i) of part (b), since the parties are in confidential negotiations on terms of land instruments such as permits under the Indian Act, it is not appropriate for the department to comment.

With regard to (ii) of part (b), Okanagan Indian Band continues to work to resolve third-party interests including property rights required by telecommunications providers, electrical transmission and distribution services, sewer utility interests, and access agreements for on-reserve developments. Okanagan Indian Band has taken the lead on these negotiations and has the support of legal and technical experts working to satisfy Additions to Reserve requirements. Canada has offered to support the Band with their negotiations and has assisted with providing template documents.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (c), there have been no meetings or briefings on this project with the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations or the Minister of ISC since November 26, 2022. At their request, Okanagan Indian Band has been leading these discussions with support from ISC Meetings occur approximately every six weeks, the last meeting occurring on May 16, 2023, with regular communication occurring between ISC and Okanagan Indian Band between meetings. Okanagan Indian Band is aware that ISC officials are available to meet at any time to progress this addition to reserve.

With regard to (d), the last communication between ISC and Okanagan Indian Band regarding the Addition to Reserve was sent on June 15, 2023. The email communication was regarding natural gas and electrical distribution permits. The permits are currently being drafted by respective legal counsels of the third-party interest holders, Canada, and Okanagan Indian Band as a requirement of the Additions to Reserve process.

With regard to (e), it is difficult to estimate timelines for completion as completion of the Addition to Reserve is subject to the readiness and willingness of third-party interest holders to terminate or negotiate and execute federal replacement interests with Okanagan Indian Band. This is an ISC priority file and the department continues to work in collaboration with Okanagan Indian Band to complete the Additions to Reserve. The estimated timeline for this submission is within the second quarter of 2023-2024, however, this timeline is dependent on the timely and successful execution of the utility agreements. Once this former railway line can be formally confirmed as added to Duck Lake Indian Reserve No. 7, it will be Okanagan Indian Band's discretion on how the land will be used.

Question No. 1646—Mr. Ryan Williams:

With regard to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's 2022 Business Accelerators and Incubators Performance Measurement Framework Survey: (a) how many accelerators and incubators (i) were invited to respond, (ii) responded; (b) for each respondent in (a), what were their responses to questions in Part A of the survey, broken down by question; (c) how many companies (i) were invited to respond, (ii) responded; and (d) for each respondent in (c), what were their responses to questions in Part B of the survey, broken down by question?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Small Business, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (i) of part (a), business accelerators and incubators, or BAIs, are organizations that provide business support and advisory services to start-ups. The Business Accelerator and Incubator Performance Measurement Framework, or BAI PMF, was co-created by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, or ISED, and the BAI community and, since 2020, it is delivered in partnership with the Canada Accelerator Incubator Network, or CAIN, and the Mouvement des accélérateurs d'innovation du Québec, or MAIN. The survey is composed of a part A and a part B. Part A of the survey is intended to be filled out by the BAI, while part B of the survey is meant for the companies supported by that BAI. A single BAI could support anywhere from just a handful to thousands of companies per year. For each BAI participant, there will be more than one company supported. Part A of the survey represents the BAI, while Part B represents the companies supported by the BAI. CAIN and MAIN promote this project and invite the participation from their networks and the wider BAI community to participate to the survey. CAIN's community includes more than 125 BAIs and MAIN's network consists of 167 organizations ranging from BAIs, universities and researchers, municipalities, and in-

vestors. The exact number of BAIs invited to respond to the 2022 survey is unknown.

With regard to (ii) of part (a), 20 BAIs responded to the survey in 2018, increasing to 31 in 2019, 28 in 2020, and 33 in 2021. The BAI PMF collects survey data for the previous calendar year, that is to say data collected in 2018 was for companies receiving BAI programming in 2017. The 2022 survey data has been submitted to Statistics Canada for analysis.

With regard to (b), ISED does not have the 2022 list of BAI participants yet. As per project parameters, identifiable micro-data, i.e. the response provided by each BAI and company to each question, will be available only to Statistics Canada researchers and will be governed by strict confidentiality measures. As a general rule, public reports assessing the economic impact of BAIs in Canada will only include aggregated descriptive statistics, and only in cases in which there are sufficient observations to maintain firm level confidentiality. ISED does not have permission to share survey data publicly. Further details are available online at <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/sme-research-statistics/en/business-accelerators-and-incubators/bai-performance-measurement-framework/2019-bai-performance-measurement-framework-20#Toc4579868>.

With regard to (i) of part (c), ISED does not have that information. Each BAI participant is responsible for selecting which companies to survey and for implementing the survey.

With regard to (ii) of part (c), the number of companies per year reflected in the analysis are: 539 companies in 2018, 2,461 in 2019, 2,116 for 2020, and 1,877 in 2021. The 2022 survey data has been submitted to Statistics Canada for analysis.

With regard to (d), ISED does not have that information. As per project parameters, identifiable micro-data will be available only to Statistics Canada researchers and will be governed by strict confidentiality measures. As a general rule, public reports assessing the economic impact of BAIs in Canada will only include aggregated descriptive statistics, and only in cases in which there are sufficient observations to maintain firm level confidentiality. ISED does not have permission to share survey data publicly. Further details are available online at <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/sme-research-statistics/en/business-accelerators-and-incubators/bai-performance-measurement-framework/2019-bai-performance-measurement-framework-20#Toc4579868>.

Question No. 1653—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to the targets in the Food Policy for Canada: (a) does the government believe that keeping the price of food low will help ensure Canadians have access to food and contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of ending hunger by 2030; (b) what efforts has the Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council made to ensure that affordability is included and measured as a target of the Food Policy for Canada; and (c) what are the details of all community-based initiatives that have been invested in, including the (i) name of the project, (ii) amount of funding received, (iii) expected outcomes?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the Government of Canada recognizes that rising inflation is challenging many Canadians to meet their essential needs, including accessing food.

The Food Policy for Canada has a suite of measures to strengthen food systems and improve Canadians' food security through an initial investment of \$134.4 million, and an additional \$10 million in Budget 2023 for community-led infrastructure projects to promote access to nutritious food.

The Government of Canada is working to make life more affordable for Canadians and contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of ending hunger by 2030. The government delivered important improvements to a range of income supports, such as the Canada Child Benefit, old age security, guaranteed income supplement, and tax credits for low-income workers and their families. The 2023 federal budget included a new, one-time Grocery Rebate to offer inflation relief to lower-income families which was dispersed on July 5, 2023.

With regard to (b), after the Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council was established in 2021, a working group was assembled to make recommendations to the Minister related to reducing food insecurity in Canada. The working group presented 3 recommendations: (1) Set a target to reduce food insecurity by 50% by 2030, based on the Canadian Income Survey's 2019 baseline. Further, seek to eliminate severe food insecurity. (2) Alleviate the disproportionate impact of food insecurity on Black and Indigenous people; and (3) Enhance measurement of food insecurity in Canada noting the comprehensive report that was submitted with recommendations on measurement and reporting.

With regard to (c), the Government of Canada has invested significantly into community-based initiatives to support Canada's food systems. Under the Food Policy for Canada, the 5 year Local Food Infrastructure Fund, or LFIF, is designed to improve access to safe, nutritious, and culturally diverse food. It provides support to community-based, not-for-profit organizations to reduce food insecurity by establishing and/or strengthening local food systems.

A comprehensive accounting of projects funded under the Local Food Infrastructure Fund, including the name of the recipient, the agreement number and duration, a brief project description, the funding amount and location of the recipient are listed as part of the Open Government website.

For example, in 2022, Cold Lake First Nations received just over \$200,000 Canadian to create a food system. The objective of this project is to purchase food processing equipment, cold and dry storage, fish harvesting equipment, food forest, garden beds with irrigation and kitchen upgrades.

Question No. 1659—Mr. Daniel Blaikie:

With regard to the government's research and analysis on policies and programs that could reduce the poverty rate for children, since fiscal year 2014-15: (a) what reports, studies, or analyses have been done on implementing a guaranteed livable income; (b) of the reports in (a), what studies incorporated the Canada Emergency Response Benefit or the Canada Recovery Benefit; (c) what were the conclusions of each report listed in (b); and (d) which jurisdictions were included in the government's review of existing basic income projects to help reduce child poverty?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a) and (b), Employment and Social Development Canada, or ESDC, monitors basic income research and reports, as well as the outcomes of basic income pilots in Canada and internationally. ESDC conducts ongoing policy analysis of basic income in a Canadian context and has identified many considerations including benefit level and cost, program design and interaction with existing benefits, implementation and interaction with provincial/territorial programming, and impact on the labour market. Recent analyses on basic income have not incorporated consideration of the precise parameters and impacts of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit or the Canada Recovery Benefit.

With regard to (c), some of the Government's programs have many features of a partial basic income. This includes the Canada Child Benefit for families and the Guaranteed Income Supplement for low-income seniors. Moreover, if a provincial or territorial government decides to proceed with a basic income pilot, ESDC would be pleased to share federal-level administrative, survey, and tax data that could support program design and evaluation.

For proactive disclosure purposes, a Question Period note on basic income is available at <https://search.open.canada.ca/qnotes/record/esdc-edsc,GouldJan2022-011>

With regard to (d), ESDC's review of existing and past basic income projects includes domestic projects in Ontario and Manitoba and international projects in Finland, the Netherlands, the United States and Spain.

For proactive disclosure purposes, a HUMA Committee binder for the Minister of Seniors dated May 25, 2021, on the impact of COVID-19 on seniors, including the topic of basic income, is available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/reports/committe-binders/may-25-minister.html>

Question No. 1660—Mr. Daniel Blaikie:

With regard to the timeline of the government's negotiations concerning the NextStar Energy battery plant in Windsor, Ontario: (a) on what date did the government enter into negotiations with Stellantis to ensure this facility would provide good paying jobs to workers; (b) what are the details of all agreements reached between Stellantis and the government that were made prior to May 15, 2023, including the (i) date the agreement was made, (ii) obligations of the government, (iii) document title or reference number, if the agreement was in writing; and (c) did the government have an agreement in writing with Stellantis prior to August 16, 2022?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), there are two agreements currently in place with respect to the NextStar Energy battery plant in Windsor, Ontario. The first is the Contribution Agreement with NextStar for the construction of the plant under the Strategic Innovation Fund, or SIF, and the second is a Special Contribution Agreement, which was negotiated as part of the Government of Canada's response to the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act, or IRA.

The SIF received approval to enter formal negotiations of the Term Sheet on February 26, 2022, while negotiations with respect to Canada's response to the IRA were initiated after a letter was sent to the company on November 25, 2022.

The SIF received approval to finalize the Contribution Agreement on July 22, 2022, and approval to finalize the Special Contribution Agreement was received on June 29, 2023.

With regard to (i) of part (b), NextStar's SIF Contribution Agreement was executed on September 30, 2022. With respect to the Government's response to the IRA, no agreement had been reached prior to May 15, 2023. Since this time, the Special Contribution Agreement with NextStar was executed on July 5, 2023.

With regard to (ii) of part (b), the obligations of the government under the SIF can be found on the Projects: Strategic Innovation Fund site. The site provides an overview of all announced and active SIF projects.

Information with respect to the government's obligations under the Special Contribution Agreement was released in a statement from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. The statement can be found on the site Canada and Ontario Establish An Auto Pact to Secure Stellantis-LGES and Volkswagen deals.

With regard to (iii) of part (b), the document title of the SIF agreement is: NextStar Contribution Agreement. With respect to the response to the IRA the document title is: Special Contribution Agreement for Lithium Ion Battery Manufacturing in Canada.

With regard to (c), as previously indicated, NextStar's Contribution Agreement with SIF was executed on September 30, 2022. The work phase of the Stellantis project dates back to August 16, 2021, meaning the recipient is able to submit claims for eligible supported costs dating back to August 16, 2021.

With respect to Canada's response to the IRA, the Government of Canada did not have an agreement in writing with Stellantis prior to August 16, 2022.

Question No. 1661—**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:**

With regard to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's regulations concerning amortizations periods for new mortgages: (a) what reports or analyses has the government conducted concerning increasing the amortization period up to 30 years; (b) what recommendations did the reports in (a) make; (c) does the government believe that increasing amortization periods to 30 years would make buying a new home more affordable; and (d) does the government intend to introduce legislative changes to increase amortization periods?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to the question, changes concerning amortization periods for insured mortgages falls under the purview of the Minister of Finance.

Question No. 1664—**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:**

With regard to the Canadian Coast Guard's Coastal Marine Response Network, broken down by coastal region: (a) what is the total number of coastal marine response teams ready to respond to incidents; and (b) what are the details of each team in (a), including the (i) location, (ii) number of individuals employed, (iii) funding provided by the government for equipment acquisition?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Canadian Coast Guard's Coastal Marine Response Network, broken down by coastal region, with regard to (a), the Coastal Marine Response Team initiative is in its planning stage only so there are not yet any teams established and ready to respond to incidents. Indigenous and coastal communities are being engaged to determine their interest in co-developing this community response initiative. A pilot project that is a precursor to the Coastal Marine Response Team known as the Heiltsuk Marine Emergency Response Team, which is funded and supported as part of the Oceans Protection Plan renewal, is currently operating, with 12 response personnel, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, on the central coast of British Columbia in close collaboration with the Canadian Coast Guard. Coastal Marine Response Teams are anticipated to become operational beginning in 2025.

With regard to (b), as the initiative is in its planning stage there are no established teams, locations or individuals employed at this time. Nor has equipment been purchased through government funding.

Question No. 1669—**Mr. Brad Vis:**

With regard to the Black Entrepreneurship Program (BEP): (a) how many applicants applied to the BEP Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund, since the program was launched; (b) of the \$160 million allocated to the Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund, (i) how much has been delivered to the successful applicants, (ii) what is the average loan amount; and (c) under the \$92 million approved funding for the Ecosystem Fund component of the BEP, what metrics will be used to determine if program goals were met?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Small Business, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Black Entrepreneurship Program, or BEP, builds on the broader Government of Canada commitment to address systemic barriers and racism against Black Canadians. The three pillars of the BEP were developed in consultation with Black Canadian communities to reflect the realities and needs of Black Canadians and is managed by Black led organizations to create stronger economic opportunities for Black Canadian business owners and entrepreneurs.

With regard to (a), the number of applicants that have submitted complete applications to the Black Entrepreneurship Program Loan Fund as at May 31, 2023 was 3,679.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (i) of part (b), the \$160 million allocated to the Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund is composed of two amounts: \$30 million in Government funding through a contribution agreement with the Federation of African Canadian Economics, or FACE; and \$130 million commitment of funds by the Business Development Bank of Canada, or BDC, to the Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund. The \$130 million are BDC funds, not appropriations, that are allocated as required when loans are approved.

As at May 31, 2023, the total amount of loans disbursed was \$27,623,585. Government and BDC funds are part of this total.

With regard to (i) of part (b), the average loan amount as at May 31, 2023 was \$90,351.

With regard to (c), the following regional development agencies, or RDAs, are delivering the BEP Ecosystem Fund in their respective regions: the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, or ACOA; the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, or CED-Q; the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, or FedNor; the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, or FedDev Ontario; Prairies Economic Development Canada, or PrairiesCan; and Pacific Economic Development Canada, or PacificCan.

Several metrics will be used to determine the ecosystem fund's performance, which will be measured annually. These may include the number and value of projects approved by the ecosystem fund; the growth in the number of clients served; and the number of under-represented groups supported by the ecosystem fund, such as women and youth. These metrics are in addition to RDAs' robust due diligence requirements related to project management, finance and reporting, such as analyzing the project's viability and conducting a thorough client evaluation. Overall results from the BEP Ecosystem Fund will be included in each RDA's Departmental Results Framework and will contribute to their shared core responsibility to support economic development in each region of Canada.

Question No. 1670—Mr. Brad Vis:

With regard to the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES): (a) how many applicants applied to the WES Inclusive Women Venture Capital Initiative; (b) of the \$15 million allocated to the Inclusive Women Venture Capital Initiative in budget 2021, how much of the funding has been delivered to successful applicants; (c) how many women entrepreneurs have accessed capital under the Women Entrepreneurship Loan Fund since the program started in 2018; (d) of the \$55 million allocated to the Women Entrepreneurship Loan Fund in budget 2021, how much of the funding has been delivered to successful applicants; (e) how many applicants applied to the WES Ecosystem Fund (i) during the first call (January 11 to March 15, 2022), (ii) during the second call (July 28 to September 26, 2022); (f) of the \$25 million allocated to the WES Ecosystem Fund's first call, how much of the funding was delivered; and (g) of the \$40 million allocated to WES Ecosystem's second call, how much of the funding was delivered?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Small Business, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy, or WES, represents nearly \$7 billion in investments and commitments from almost 20 different federal departments, agencies, and Crown corporations. This investment represents a “whole of government” approach to increasing women-owned businesses' access to the financing, talent, networks, and expertise they need to start up, scale up, and access new markets. There are a number of initiatives under the strategy.

First launched through Budget 2018, the Government of Canada announced, in Budget 2021, new investments of \$146.9 million over four years, starting in 2021-22, to further strengthen the WES. The new investments from Budget 2021 were used to create the Inclusive Women Venture Capital Initiative and the Women Entrepreneurship Loan Fund, as well as provide further funding to the WES Ecosystem Fund.

With regard to (a), the Inclusive Women Venture Capital Initiative, which is a part of the WES, funds projects led by not-for-profit organizations to strengthen and build a more inclusive risk and venture capital environment for Canadian women.

Twenty-six applications were received under the Inclusive Women Venture Capital Initiative, and five recipients were announced on March 8, 2023: the National Angel Capital Organization, or NA-CO; the Canadian Venture Capital and Private Equity Association, or CVCA; the Small Scale Food Processor Association; Social Venture Connection, or SVX; and Elevate Toronto. The news release can be found on the following site: Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development announces the next phase of the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy - Canada.ca.

With regard to (b), the Inclusive Women Venture Capital Initiative funding will be allocated and delivered over fiscal years 2023-24 and 2024-25.

With regard to (c), another component of the WES, the Women Entrepreneurship Loan Fund, was announced on March 8, 2022, and provides loans of up to \$50,000 to diverse women entrepreneurs. Following a competitive call for proposals, the following five organizations were selected as loan administrators: the Northumberland Community Futures Development Corporation, Coralus, the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association, Evol, and the Women's Enterprise Organizations of Canada. The news release can be found on the following site: Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development announces the next phase of the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy - Canada.ca.

As at March 31, 2023, 185 women entrepreneurs have received loans to help start or grow their businesses since the Women Entrepreneurship Loan Fund became available in 2022.

With regard to (d), loans totalling more than \$4.6 million have been delivered as at March 31, 2023 through the Women Entrepreneurship Loan Fund.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (i) of part (e), first launched in 2018, the WES Ecosystem Fund, which is also a part of the WES, is designed to help not-for-profit, third-party organizations strengthen capacity within the entrepreneurship ecosystem and offer business support such as training, mentorship, and financial literacy for women entrepreneurs.

Budget 2018 provided the WES Ecosystem Fund with \$85 million, and it supported 52 projects. Budget 2021 provided renewed funding of \$65 million for the WES Ecosystem Fund, which was allocated through two separate calls for applications referred to as “the first call” and “the second call” respectively.

In 2022, under the first call of the WES Ecosystem Fund, 101 applications were received and 8 were funded. Recipients of funding were announced on March 8, 2023. The news release can be found on the following site: International Women’s Day 2023: Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development announces recipients of funding under the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy - Canada.ca.

With regard to (ii) of part (e), in 2022, under the second call of the WES Ecosystem Fund, 97 applications were received and 16 were funded. Recipients of funding were announced on March 8, 2023. The news release can be found on the following site: International Women’s Day 2023: Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development announces recipients of funding under the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy - Canada.ca.

With regard to (f), as at May 31, 2023, approximately \$2.1 million of funding has been delivered to successful recipients under the first call of the WES Ecosystem Fund.

With regard to (g), the WES Ecosystem Fund funding for the second call will be allocated and delivered over fiscal years 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Question No. 1671—**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:**

With regard to Export Development Canada’s Canada account transactions to guarantee financing provided by commercial lenders to the Trans Mountain Corporation signed on April 20, 2022, March 24, 2023 and May 2, 2023, for each transaction: (a) was an assessment of the commercial viability of Trans Mountain Corporation completed prior to the guarantees being approved; (b) what evidence did the government rely on to complete this assessment; (c) what evidence did the Trans Mountain Corporation provide that it would be able to repay its commercial lenders; (d) what are the terms of the loan guarantees; and (e) if the Trans Mountain Corporation is unable to cover its debt to commercial lenders, what organizations within the government will be responsible for repayment?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these transactions were made under the Canada Account. The Canada Account is used to support export transactions which Export Development Canada is unable to support, but which are determined by the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, in concurrence with the Minister of Finance, to be in Canada’s national interest. This is usually due to a combination of risks, including the size of the transaction, market risks, Export Development Canada’s country capacity, borrower risks, or the financing conditions. All Canada Account transactions are disclosed on the following website: <https://www.edc.ca/en/about-us/corporate/disclosure/reporting-transactions/canada-account.html>

Question No. 1677—**Mr. Alex Ruff:**

With regard to the government halting activity with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB): (a) was an initial risk analysis of the organization completed prior to Canada partaking in the activities of the bank pertaining to Chinese Communist Party (CCP) influence, and, if so, what were the findings; (b) were concerns regarding CCP infiltration or control within the bank raised from Canadian executives to any federal departments prior to Bob Pickard resigning his post at the bank, and, if so, how were these concerns addressed; (c) does the AIIB have access to sensitive business and personal documents pertaining to businesses and citizens in Canada; (d) who or what department is tasked with conducting a review of AIIB and when will the review be completed; (e) how much money has Canada provided to the AIIB; and (f) of the money in (e), how much does the government expect to get back from the AIIB, and by what date?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have instructed the Department of Finance to conduct a review of the allegations raised and of Canada’s involvement in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. This review is ongoing.

Question No. 1680—**Mr. Brian Masse:**

With regard to the hiring and training of border services officers for the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) across Canada: (a) how many new CBSA officers were hired and trained in Canada since 2012; and (b) how many are projected to be hired in the next five years with the construction of the new Gordie Howe Bridge?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the data was obtained using the CBSA’s Corporate Administrative System, or CAS, and covers the period from January 1, 2012, to June 27, 2023.

With regard to (a), in 2012, 161 recruits became border services officers, or BSOs, and since the introduction of the Officer Induction Training Program, or OITP, the CBSA has trained 3,269 recruits. Therefore, the CBSA has had a total of 3,430 BSOs and BSO Trainees since 2012.

With regard to (b), the CBSA will be hiring approximately 260 BSOs to meet its staffing requirements at the Gordie Howe International Bridge.

Question No. 1686—**Mr. Mel Arnold:**

With regard to the Pacific Salmon Strategic Initiative (PSSI) announced on June 8, 2021: (a) what is the breakdown of how the \$647.1 million is allocated in budget 2021; and (b) what is the breakdown of how the \$98.9 million in amortization is allocated to (i) conservation and stewardship, (ii) enhanced hatchery production, (iii) harvest transformation, (iv) integrated management and collaboration, (v) contracted services, (vi) grants and other non-repayable disbursements to non-government entities?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Pacific Salmon Strategic Initiative, or PSSI, announced on June 8, 2021, and with regard to (a), Budget 2021 announced \$647.1 million over five years plus \$98.9 million in amortization as the accrual budget to implement PSSI. The \$647.1 million funding breakdown is as follows: \$346.4 million for Vote 1, \$26.2 million for Vote 5, and \$274.5 million for Vote 10.

With regard to (b), the \$98.9 million is the amount of amortization that remains related to the Vote 5 allocation provided to PSSI over a five-year period commencing in 2021-22. When added to the \$26.2 million referenced above, the total Vote 5 allocation is \$125.1 million, which is broken down by the following assets: \$81.5 million for buildings; \$21.2 million for leasehold improvements for buildings; \$8.3 million for communications equipment; \$7.3 million for trailers; \$3.5 million for vehicles; \$2.6 million for scientific and laboratory equipment; \$600,000 for vessels, and \$15,000 for trades support equipment.

Question No. 1691—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:

With regard to the government's calculations for nitrous oxide emissions associated with nitrogen fertilizer use: (a) what were the data sources the government based its calculations on for the current nitrous oxide emissions from fertilizer use in Canada; (b) what data and emissions calculations did the government receive from each source in (a); (c) how did the government calculate the (i) total direct and indirect nitrous oxide emissions from the agricultural sector, each year from 2005 to 2020, (ii) sector's share of national nitrous oxide emissions and percentage changes over time; and (d) what were the specific policy and scientific rationales for choosing a 30% reduction fertilizer emissions threshold?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the government's calculations for nitrous oxide emissions associated with nitrogen fertilizer use are published in the National Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory Report, which is accessible at <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.506002/publication.html>.

With regard to (b), the government received data on fertilizer use, in agricultural markets each year, in metric tonnes of nitrogen, and at a provincial scale.

There are no known nationally representative statistics available to the government that track the quantity of nitrogen fertilizers applied on farms. As a result, the provincial fertilizer statistics are used as a proxy.

With regard to (i) of part (c), the government uses methodologies consistent with the 2006 guidelines from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC, that use, for the most part, country-specific parameters derived from Canadian research as reported in the National GHG Inventory Report.

A detailed description of the methodology is available in Annex 3.4, section A3.4.5, in Part 2 of the 1990-2021 National Inventory Report. Nitrogen from organic and inorganic sources are distributed to the landscape according to the procedure described at the beginning of section A3.4.5.

Regarding direct emissions, the current approach is based on three Canadian scientific publications, namely Liang et al. 2020; Rochette et al. 2018; and Pelster et al. 2022, which summarize the research that has been carried out in Canada over the past 30 years. A base Emission Factor, or EF, for growing season and non-grow-

ing season nitrous oxide emissions is established for areas of Canada that have a unique combination of climate, landscape and soils, called ecodistricts considering multiple factors including the topography of the cropland, moisture regimes, precipitation, potential evapotranspiration, and soil texture, all of which influence how much nitrous oxide is emitted when fertilizer is applied. These base EFs are then further adjusted with factors to account for the nitrogen source, cropping system, tillage and irrigation, which are additional factors that relate to how farmers manage the land that further impact the amount of nitrous oxide that is emitted to the atmosphere.

As for indirect emissions, these are estimated from volatilization and redeposition of nitrogen, and leaching and runoff losses.

A country-specific method was used to estimate ammonia emissions from inorganic nitrogen application. This approach derives ammonia emission factors based on the type of inorganic nitrogen fertilizers, the degree of incorporation into soil, crop type and soil chemical properties.

For leaching and runoff losses, a modified IPCC Tier 1 methodology is used to estimate nitrous oxide emissions from leaching and runoff of inorganic and organic nitrogen fertilizers, and crop residue nitrogen from agricultural soils. The fraction of nitrogen leached from the soil is determined for each ecodistrict and varies from 0.05 to 0.3, depending on the climatic characteristics of the region.

More details on specific equations used in the direct and indirect emission calculations are published in the National Inventory Report Annex 3.4, ECCC, 2023.

With regard to (ii) of part (c), the agriculture sector's share of emissions are calculated based on the results reported in the National GHG Inventory Report. The fraction is based on the quantity of emissions coming from the agricultural sector, which are reported in Chapter 6 of the National Inventory Report, relative to the total sum of all nitrous oxide emissions coming from all sectors in the inventory report.

In 2021, the agricultural sector emitted 54 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, or 8.1% of Canada's total emissions, which are 670 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. Nitrous oxide emissions from agricultural soils were 19 megatonnes in 2021, making up 35% of the emissions from the agricultural sector. Nitrous oxide emissions increased from 15 megatonnes in 1990 to 23 megatonnes in 2021, representing an increase of 52%.

In 2021, nitrous oxide emissions from agriculture, or 23 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, contributed to 75% of Canada's total nitrous oxide emissions, or 30 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. The contribution of agricultural nitrous oxide to national nitrous oxide emissions rose from 43% in 1990 to 75% in 2021.

With regard to (d), the fertilizer target was developed based on scientific literature and internal analysis that points to the potential for optimizing nitrogen fertilizer use with an accompanying reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, while maintaining or increasing yield. The reduction percentage of 30% was the result of an iterative process weighting various factors and characteristics, such as: ambitious, considering climate goals and international efforts; technically achievable, given that the technologies and know-how largely exist; economically feasible, given potential cost savings and increased yield through efficiency gains and better management; and scientifically defensible, given that it is supported by research findings relevant to Canadian context.

* * *

• (1620)

[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 Question Nos. 1523, 1524, 1529, 1530, 1532, 1535, 1537 to 1542, 1544 to 1547, 1551 to 1561, 1563, 1564, 1566, 1567, 1569, 1573, 1574, 1577 to 1579, 1582, 1584 to 1586, 1589 to 1596, 1598 to 1601, 1604, 1606, 1608 to 1611, 1613 to 1615, 1616, 1620 to 1622, 1626 to 1629, 1631 to 1633, 1635 to 1637, 1639, 1641 to 1645, 1647 to 1652, 1654 to 1658, 1662, 1663, 1665 to 1668, 1672 to 1676, 1678, 1679, 1681 to 1685, 1687 to 1690, 1692 and 1693 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in electronic format immediately.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1523—Mr. Mike Morrice:

With regard to Correctional Services Canada's (CSC) expenditures to operate federal correctional institutions across Canada for the past 10 fiscal years: (a) what is the total amount spent to operate each correctional facility, broken down by facility, year, and CSC's publicly reported expenditure categories (care and custody, correctional interventions, community supervision, internal services); (b) what is the total amount spent for each of the expenditures under the care and custody category (such as food, clothing, accommodation, mental health services, physical health care, etc.), broken down by facility and year; (c) what is the total amount spent for facility capital renovations, maintenance, upkeep, and repair to maintain or improve quality of living conditions for inmates, broken down by facility and year; (d) what is the total amount spent under each of the 10 distinct service categories comprising CSC's publicly reported internal services category; and (e) what is the description of the expenditures accounted for under each of the 10 distinct service categories comprising CSC's publicly reported internal services category?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1524—Mr. Mike Morrice:

Routine Proceedings

With regard to the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation's (CMHC) funding initiatives for preserving existing housing stock and building new housing, as well as CMHC's connections to both real estate investment trusts (REITs) and other private institutional investors: (a) have REITs or other private institutional investors benefited from CMHC funding in the past 10 fiscal years; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what is the total amount of (i) loans, (ii) grants, (iii) any other form of financial support provided to each REIT or other private institutional investor, broken down by recipient's name, type (REIT or other private institutional investor), amount received, year, and jurisdiction; (c) does the CMHC have agreements already in place to provide funding to REITs or other private institutional investors in the current fiscal year or future fiscal years; (d) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, what is the total amount of (i) loans, (ii) grants, (iii) any other form of financial support to be provided in the current and future fiscal years to each REIT or other private institutional investor, broken down by recipient's name, type (REIT or other private institutional investor), amount to be received, year, and jurisdiction; (e) does the CMHC have internal policies, directives, standards or guidelines on the (i) role of the CMHC in providing financial support to REITs or other private institutional investors, (ii) conditions under which REITs or other private institutional investors would or would not receive CMHC administered funding; and (f) if the answer to (e) is affirmative, what are the details of such documents?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1529—Mr. Matt Jeneroux:

With regard to the Minister of Veterans Affairs: (a) when did the minister become aware of the government's plan to remove the images of the Vimy Ridge Memorial and Billy Bishop from the Canadian passport; and (b) did the minister do anything to stop the removal of these images, and, if so, what specific action did the minister take?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1530—Mr. Matt Jeneroux:

With regard to projects funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) in the Asia-Pacific region for human rights or humanitarian issues, since 2016: (a) what are the details of all such projects, including the (i) location, (ii) funding recipient, (iii) detailed project description, (iv) organization overseeing the project, (v) amount of funding provided by GAC, (vi) start date, (vii) end date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1532—Mr. Rick Perkins:

With regard to monitoring activities of the spawning biomass of American lobster by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, broken down by year since 2018: (a) what was the estimated size of the biomass in total, broken down by each lobster fishing area; and (b) for each year's data in (a), on what date and by using what scientific methods or sources was the data obtained?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1535—Mr. Tako Van Popta:

With regard to projects funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) in Africa for human rights or humanitarian issues since 2016: what are the details of all such projects, including the (i) location, (ii) funding recipient, (iii) detailed project description, (iv) organization overseeing the project, (v) amount of funding provided by GAC, (vi) start date, (vii) end date?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1537—Mr. Kyle Seeback:**

With regard to the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) Assessment and Revenue Management (CARM) project: (a) what assessments has CBSA made in relation to delays and disruptions that may be caused while implementing CARM; (b) what specific measures, if any, is CBSA taking to ensure that the implementation of CARM does not cause any delays or disruptions; (c) has the government analyzed the impact of the new requirement for importers to obtain surety bonds as part of CARM, and, if so, what were the findings, including the impact of the requirement on smaller importers versus larger ones; (d) has the government considered whether or not the surety market would supply smaller importers with the newly required bonds, and, if so, what were the findings; (e) if the answer to (d) is negative, was this an error or oversight on the government's part when developing the project; (f) what is the current timeline for when each measure required by CARM will be implemented; and (g) what are the details of all memorandums and briefing notes about CARM that were sent from or received by CBSA or Public Safety Canada, including the Office of the Minister of Public Safety, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) summary of contents, (vi) type of document?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1538—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to the commitment of the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship in January of 2022 to eliminate backlogs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic by the end of the 2022 calendar year: (a) why was this commitment not fulfilled; (b) what are the current backlogs, broken down by immigration stream or program; and (c) when will the backlogs be eliminated?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1539—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to the government's administration of section 42.1 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act: (a) how many applications have been received under this section, since 2020, broken down by year; and (b) what is the status of each application in (a), including the (i) date the application was received, (ii) date a decision was made, (iii) decision, (iv) number of days between the date the application was received and the date a decision was made?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1540—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to deportation letters sent out by the government, broken down by year since January 1, 2016: (a) how many individuals were sent deportation letters by the government; (b) of the individuals in (a), how many (i) self-deported or left the country voluntarily, (ii) were deported by officers or enforcement agents, (iii) currently remain in Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1541—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to immigration applications for individuals who have been sponsored by their spouse or partner, since January 1, 2016, broken down by the year the application was received: (a) how many applications were received; (b) how many applications were (i) granted, (ii) denied, (iii) are still awaiting a decision; (c) how many applications were investigated for suspected fake or fraudulent marriages or partnerships; (d) of the applications in (c), how many of the marriages or partnerships were deemed to be (i) legitimate, (ii) fake or fraudulent; and (e) were there any charges or other enforcement actions taken against any of the individuals whose sponsorship application involved a fake or fraudulent marriage, and, if so, how many individuals faced enforcement action, in total, and broken down by type of enforcement action?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1542—Mr. Tim Uppal:

With regard to federal Crown land which has been sold or donated for the purpose of building housing since January 1, 2016: (a) what are the details of all such transactions, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) size of the land involved, (iii) sale price, if applicable, (iv) entity the land was sold or transferred to, (v) location, (vi) number of houses or units expected to be built on the land, (vii) number of houses or units built on the land to date, if known; and (b) what was the total square area of land transferred in (a), broken down by year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1544—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to Transport Canada (TC), the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA), and air travel: (a) what is the role of (i) TC, (ii) CTA, in ensuring that air traffic delays are correctly reported to air traffic control towers; (b) for each of the last five years, how many and what percentage of total flight delays were reported due to (i) mechanical issues, (ii) air traffic congestion, (iii) weather conditions, (iv) other issues, if known; (c) what actions, if any, have been taken by either TC or the CTA, since January 1, 2022, to (i) reduce flight delays, (ii) increase flight delay transparency, (iii) invest in improved flight reporting technologies; (d) how does TC ensure the (i) safe, (ii) efficient, (iii) transparent, reporting of flight information between air traffic controllers and Nav Canada; (e) what measures has TC implemented to improve coordination and communication between air traffic controllers and airlines when flight delays are caused by (i) adverse weather conditions, (ii) equipment failures, (iii) labour shortages, (iv) labour disputes; (f) how does TC hold Nav Canada accountable when flight delays, runway safety or shortages impact safety and passenger experience; and (g) what steps has the CTA taken to ensure compliance with the Canadian Aviation Regulations and international aviation regulations in reporting of flight delays caused by (i) runway maintenance, (ii) air traffic congestion, (iii) security incidents at airports?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1545—Mr. Ted Falk:

With regard to COVID-19 vaccine safety and the messaging on the government's webpage titled "Vaccination and pregnancy: COVID-19": (a) what is the scientific basis for government officials' statements that COVID-19 vaccines are categorically safe for pregnant and breastfeeding women; (b) did Health Canada (HC), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), or the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) identify a need for observational studies regarding potential vaccine-related health outcomes in breastfed infants and toddlers as a result of exposure to vaccinated mothers or their breastmilk to detect safety signals of concern, and implement necessary precautions, and, if so, what are the details of all such studies, including those that the government relied on, including, for each (i) who conducted the study, (ii) the methodology, (iii) the findings; (c) if the answer to (b) is none, why were no such studies required; (d) did HC, PHAC, or NACI study or review studies on the impact of the vaccines on menstrual cycles, and, if so, what conclusions or estimates were reached in relation to the number and percentage of recipients whose cycles were impacted; (e) what is HC's response to the peer-reviewed article by Thorp & Associates, titled "COVID-19 Vaccines: The Impact on Pregnancy Outcomes and Menstrual Function", and what changes, if any, were made to public vaccine guidance or advice as a result of the study's findings; and (f) does the government acknowledge that for certain individuals or age ranges, such as newborns, the risks associated with the vaccine outweigh the potential benefits and, if so, for which individuals does the government recognize that this situation may apply?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1546—Mr. Sébastien Lemire:

With regard to the expenditures of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for Quebec Regions, for fiscal years 2020–21 and 2021–22, broken down by administrative region and electoral district in Quebec: (a) what is the total amount for each region for these fiscal years; and (b) what is the detailed breakdown of the amounts by program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1547—Mr. Sébastien Lemire:

With regard to the automobile and manufacturing industry in Canada: (a) did the government work with global automobile or manufacturing businesses to boost existing investments in the automobile sector or to attract new investments in new factories, new products, including electric vehicles and batteries, or new jobs, in each province since 2022; (b) did the government consider making investments in new chemical plants to process critical and strategic minerals, and, if so, what types of plants and which municipal locations were considered; and (c) did existing battery recycling plants receive funding, and, if so, (i) in which year, (ii) for which plant, (iii) in what amount, (iv) through which program?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1551—Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:**

With regard to the export of military equipment and technology and the repression of widespread protests following the arrest and replacement of former president Pedro Castillo: (a) since December 2022, have officials from the Export Controls Division of Global Affairs Canada (GAC) undertaken an independent review to determine whether Peruvian authorities used any Canadian military equipment, including light armoured vehicles, crowd-control equipment and “less-lethal” equipment, in the crackdowns, and, if so, what were the findings of this review; (b) have Canadian authorities contacted their Peruvian counterparts to determine whether military equipment made in Canada was used in the violence, and, if so, what were their findings; (c) was authorization granted for the export of Canadian military equipment to end users involved in the violence; (d) have Canadian officials put the authorization of arms exports to Peru on hold; (e) has the government investigated what Canadian-sourced arms were used for in Peru prior to December 2022; (f) what are the details of the types of military equipment that have been authorized for export to Peruvian authorities since 2014, building on the information previously provided by GAC; and (g) what criteria, protocols or other considerations were taken into account in 2020 when the minister at that time decided to suspend arms exports to Belarus?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1552—Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:

With regard to the approval rate of francophone foreign students: (a) what is the number of study permit applications (excluding applications for extensions) processed by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada for (i) 2022, (ii) 2023 (most recent data), and broken down by country of residence; and (b) on what figures and according to what calculation did the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship base her claim on May 18, 2023, that the “approval rate for francophone students from Africa went from 27 percent in 2022 to 35 percent this year”?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1553—Mr. Stephen Ellis:

With regard to expenditures at Health Canada, broken down by fiscal year for 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23: (a) what was the total value of all expenditures under object code 0301 (advertising services); and (b) what was the total value of all expenditures under object code 04 (professional and special services)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1554—Ms. Michelle Ferreri:

With regard to government funding related to drug supply and treatment: (a) what was the total amount spent by the government on providing “safer supply” drugs in the 2022-23 fiscal year; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by province or territory; (c) what was the total amount spent by the government on opioid agonist therapy in the 2022-23 fiscal year; and (d) what is the breakdown of (c) by province or territory?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1555—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to documents sent between the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission and the Department of Canadian Heritage, including the minister's office, about Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts: what are the details of all such documents, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipients, (iv) type of document, (v) title, (vi) subject matter, (vii) summary of contents?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1556—Mr. Rob Morrison:

With regard to expenditures related to the Cabinet retreat which took place in Vancouver from September 6 to 8, 2022: (a) what are the total expenditures related to the retreat; (b) what is the breakdown of the expenditures by type of expense (accommodation, hospitality, audio-visual, etc.); and (c) what are the details of all expenditures in excess of \$1,000, including, for each, the (i) amount, (ii) vendor, (iii) description of the goods or services provided?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1557—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to expenditures by the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General (OSGG): (a) what was the total amount spent on dry cleaning and laundry ser-

vices by the OSGG in each of the last five fiscal years; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by type of item (furniture, curtains, personal clothing, etc.) and type of service (dry cleaning, traditional laundry, etc.); and (c) what are the details of all expenditures over \$1,000 that were made under code 0819 (Non-professional personal service contracts not elsewhere specified), since January 2, 2018, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) vendor, (iv) description of the goods or services?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1558—Mr. Gérard Deltell:

With regard to Canada Post: (a) is Canada Post planning on restricting the use of polybags in any way, and, if so, how and what is the timeline for any future action; (b) since 2016, has Canada Post received any correspondence from any minister, exempt staff, or government official related to polybags, and, if so, what are the details of each, including the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) subject matter, (vi) summary of the contents, (vii) type of communication; (c) since 2016, has Canada Post received any directives from the government that is causing it to prohibit the usage of polybags, and, if so, what was the directive and on what date was it received; and (d) what action, if any, will the government take to ensure that Canadian packers are not put at a competitive disadvantage compared to American packers as a result of Canadian restrictions on polybags?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1559—Mr. Clifford Small:

With regard to the disposal of fish and seafood seized by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) during the 2022 calendar year: (a) what are the DFO's policies related to the disposal of seized fish and seafood; (b) what are the details for each seizure, including, for instance, the (i) manner of disposal, (ii) quantity, (iii) species or type of seafood, (iv) recipient, if applicable; (c) of the items that were disposed of, how much was donated to local food banks or charities and what is the breakdown of the quantity each food bank or charity received; and (d) what are the DFO's policies in relation to DFO staff and agents consuming seized fish or seafood?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1560—Mr. Adam Chambers:

With regard to real estate properties leased or owned by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC): (a) in what cities does the CBC (i) own, (ii) lease, its properties; (b) what is the total estimated or assessed value of properties owned by the CBC; (c) what was the total amount paid for leases by the CBC in the 2022-23 fiscal year; (d) what is the breakdown of (b) by property owned, including, for each, the address; and (e) what is the breakdown of (c) by city where property is leased?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1561—Mrs. Karen Vecchio:

With regard to non-disclosure agreements (NDA) signed by ministerial exempt staff as part of a legal settlement or agreement related to incidents that occurred involving ministers or their exempt staff, since January 1, 2017: (a) how many current and former exempt staff members are currently bound by an NDA; (b) how many such legal settlements or agreements have been signed by the government, broken down by year; and (c) what is the breakdown of the number of current or former exempt staff members who signed such an NDA, broken down by year and by the minister they were working for at the time of the incident?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1563—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:

With regard to the government's executive vehicle fleet as of June 1, 2023: (a) what was the (i) year, make and model, (ii) purchase price, (iii) date of purchase, for each vehicle; and (b) to which minister or government executive was each vehicle in (a) assigned?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1564—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:**

With regard to Elections Canada (EC): does EC have a strategy to prevent foreign interference in the next election, and, if so, (i) what is it, (ii) how much money is budgeted towards it, (iii) which diasporas or groups which were targeted in the 2019 and 2021 elections were consulted in the development of the strategy and how were they consulted?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1566—Mr. Michael Cooper:

With regard to the electronic voters' list currently being created by Elections Canada (EC): what are the details of all contracts signed by EC related to the list, including, for each, the (i) vendor, (ii) date and duration, (iii) amount, (iv) description of the goods or services provided, (v) manner in which the contract was awarded (competitive bid or sole-sourced)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1567—Mr. Mike Morrice:

With regard to formal negotiations related to the forthcoming Canada Disability Benefit proposed under Bill C-22, Canada Disability Benefit Act, that have taken place between the federal government and the provincial and territorial governments, or organizations from the disability community: (a) what are the details of the discussions or meetings, including, for each, the (i) date and location, (ii) participants, (iii) subject matter discussed, (iv) outcome; (b) do any supporting documents related to these discussions or meetings exist, including, but not limited to, emails, briefing notes, memos and reports, and, if so, what are the details of such documents; and (c) what is the government's projected timeline for completing negotiations?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1569—Mr. Michael Barrett:

With regard to government protection for whistleblowers: (a) what specific protection is provided for whistleblowers who publicize wrongdoing within the Office of the Prime Minister (PMO); and (b) what mechanisms, if any, are in place to ensure that individuals within the PMO or the Privy Council Office do not punish such whistleblowers?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1573—Mr. Eric Melillo:

With regard to expenditures on hotel rooms by the government during or related to the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) in Montreal from December 7 to 19, 2022: (a) what was the total amount spent; (b) what are the details of the spending at each hotel, including the (i) total amount spent, (ii) name of the hotel, (iii) number of rooms rented each night, (iv) rate paid, including the number of rooms at each rate?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1574—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to the 42nd Parliament's Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, giving the Information Commissioner the power to make binding orders related to access to information requests: (a) how many binding orders has the Information Commissioner made since the bill received royal assent in June 2019, in total and broken down by each government institution subject to the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act (ATIP); (b) how many of the orders in (a) were (i) abided by, (ii) ignored, (iii) appealed or challenged in court; (c) for each order in (b) that was ignored, what was the (i) order given by the Information Commissioner, (ii) subject of the original ATIP request, (iii) reason for ignoring the order, (iv) title of the individual responsible for the decision to ignore the request; and (d) for each order in (b) that was appealed or challenged in court, what was the (i) order given by the Information Commissioner, (ii) subject of the original ATIP request, (iii) title of the individual responsible for appealing or challenging the order in court, (iv) total of the legal fees incurred to date by the recipient of the order, (v) outcome or status of the appeal?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1577—Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:

With regard to the news that Navigator Ltd. has been hired to support the work of special rapporteur David Johnston: (a) will payment for this firm be made by the government; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what are the details, including

the (i) total value of the relevant contract, (ii) date the contract was signed, (iii) end date of the contract, (iv) stated purpose of the contract, (v) details of the goods and services provided, (vi) manner in which the contract was awarded (sole-sourced, competitive bid, etc.); (c) are there any other contracts with any other external service providers to support the work of special rapporteur David Johnston; and (d) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, what are the details, including the (i) total value of the relevant contract, (ii) date the contract was signed, (iii) end date of the contract, (iv) stated purpose of the contract, (v) details of the goods and services provided, (vi) manner in which the contract was awarded (sole-sourced, competitive bid, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1578—Mr. Corey Tochor:

With regard to the government's use of the term "rapporteur": (a) what is the government's definition of rapporteur; and (b) what is the difference between an advisor and a rapporteur?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1579—Mr. Corey Tochor:

With regard to expenditures associated with David Johnston's role as a "special rapporteur": (a) what is the budget for the special rapporteur; (b) was the special rapporteur required to obtain sign-off from the Office of the Prime Minister or the Privy Council Office (PCO) prior to retaining services from Navigator Ltd. and, if so, who approved the contract; (c) what is the value of the contract with Navigator Ltd.; (d) why was communication support from current government employees not provided to the special rapporteur by the PCO; (e) why did the special rapporteur determine there was a need to hire a crisis communications firm; (f) at what point did the special rapporteur determine that his communications were in crisis; and (g) why did the Prime Minister put David Johnston in a position where he would require crisis communications support?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1582—Mr. Luc Berthold:

With regard to expenditures related to the Prime Minister's trip to Montana in April 2023: (a) what were the total costs incurred by the government for (i) accommodations, (ii) per diems, (iii) other expenses, for the flight crew and government officials who travelled to Montana; and (b) are there any costs incurred or expected to be incurred by the government related to the trip that are not included in the response to (a), and, if so, what are those costs or expected costs, broken down by item and type of expense?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1584—Mr. Warren Steinley:

With regard to car and driver services provided to employees of departments, agencies, or Crown corporations, as of June 6, 2023, and excluding ministers and other elected officials: (a) how many employees are entitled to a car and driver; and (b) what are the titles of all employees who are entitled to a car and driver?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1585—Mr. Eric Melillo:

With regard to the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor), since November 4, 2015: (a) what is the total amount of project funding announced by FedNor, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) program; (b) of the amount announced in (a), how much (i) was transferred to the recipient, (ii) was eventually cancelled, (iii) is still awaiting transfer, broken down by fiscal year and program; and (c) what are the details of all projects funded by FedNor, broken down by fiscal year, including, for each, the (i) recipient, (ii) location, (iii) amount of FedNor contribution, (iv) program under which funding was provided, (v) project description, (vi) start date, (vii) completion date?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1586—Mr. Kevin Waugh:**

With regard to the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA), as of June 7, 2023: (a) what is the current backlog of air travel complaints, both in terms of the number of complaints and the number of months that new complaints are projected to wait before receiving a decision; (b) how many CTA employees are currently assigned to process air travel complaints; (c) what is the increase in the number of CTA employees assigned to work on air travel complaints between January 1 and June 7, 2023; and (d) what is the expected timeline for when the CTA backlog will be cleared to a point where new complaints receive a decision within (i) six months, (ii) three months, (iii) 30 days?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1589—Ms. Andréanne Larouche:

With regard to the New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP): (a) how many project applications were submitted in each province for the last three calls for community project proposals, broken down by constituency; (b) how many of the projects in (a) received a grant or contribution, broken down by constituency; (c) what calculation formulas are used to allocate grants and contributions by province when calls for project proposals are made; (d) according to the memorandum of understanding, what are the details of the collaboration between the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec for the implementation of the NHSP; and (e) who sits on the selection committee established by the memorandum of understanding in (d)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1590—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to the Royal Canadian Navy's Victoria-class submarines: what was the number of sea days each submarine has had for each of the last 48 months, broken down by month and by ship?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1591—Mr. Fraser Tolmie:

With regard to the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), since January 1, 2016: (a) how many pilots have (i) retired, (ii) received their wings, broken down by year; (b) what is the current pilot shortage level and when does the RCAF anticipate it will no longer have a shortage; (c) what is the average wait time for a waiver decision for former RCAF pilots who wish to reenlist without possessing the new educational requirements which were not in place when they received their wings; (d) did the government change the waiver procedure related to the instances in (c), specifically concerning whether the Chief of Defence Staff can authorize such a waiver or whether the waiver must be authorized by the Minister of National Defence, and, if so, (i) what was the change, (ii) on what date did the change occur, (iii) what was the rationale for the change; and (e) for each waiver application for a former RCAF pilot to reenlist, since 2016, what was the (i) date the application was made, (ii) date a decision was made, (iii) decision?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1592—Mr. Adam Chambers:

With regard to the Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB): (a) what was the actual cost to the fiscal framework of the CIB, broken down by year since the bank's inception; and (b) what are the projected allocated costs for the CIB's fiscal framework for each of the next 10 years?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1593—Mr. Dane Lloyd:

With regard to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC): (a) what is the total number of citizenship applications received and granted or approved since January 1, 2015, broken down by calendar year; and (b) of the applications granted in (a), what is the breakdown between discretionary versus non-discretionary?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1594—Mr. Luc Berthold:

With regard to Global Affairs Canada and the Global Heads of Mission meeting in Ottawa in June 2023: (a) which heads of mission attended the meeting (i) in person, (ii) virtually from the country in which they are stationed, (iii) virtually from a country other than in which they are stationed; (b) which heads of mission did not attend the meeting; and (c) when planning the event, what was the government's estimate of the costs associated with the event, including travel expenses?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1595—Mr. Luc Berthold:

With regard to sports, theatre, or concert tickets for events in the New York City area that were purchased by Global Affairs Canada or gifted to Canadian ambassadors, consul generals, diplomats and diplomatic staff, since January 1, 2022: (a) what are the details of all such tickets purchased, including, for each, the (i) amount paid, (ii) date of the event, (iii) location, (iv) type of event (concert, theatre, NHL hockey game, etc.), (v) title and description of the event, (vi) cost per ticket, (vii) number of tickets purchased, (viii) names or titles of those who used the tickets; and (b) what are the details of all such tickets which were received as gifts, including the (i) value, (ii) date of the event, (iii) location, (iv) type of event, (v) recipient of the gift, (vi) cost per ticket, (vii) number of tickets received?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1596—Ms. Leah Gazan:

With regard to the commitment in the mandate letter of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to introduce amendments to the Income Tax Act to make anti-abortion organizations who provide dishonest counselling to pregnant women about their rights and options ineligible for charitable status: (a) how does the government define dishonest counselling to pregnant women about their rights and options; (b) what consultation processes has the government undertaken; (c) what stakeholders and interested parties have government representatives met with since September 21, 2021; (d) on what dates were the meetings in (c) held; (e) how many organizations have received or maintained charitable status while meeting the definition in (a); and (f) is the government still committed to introducing amendments to the Income Tax Act?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1598—Ms. Melissa Lantsman:

With regard to polling conducted by or on behalf of the Privy Council Office since January 1, 2021: what are the details of all such polls, including, for each, (i) who conducted the poll, (ii) the format, (iii) the date the poll was conducted, (iv) the topic, (v) the questions asked, (vi) the results, (vii) the value of the polling contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1599—Ms. Melissa Lantsman:

With regard to focus groups conducted by or on behalf of the Privy Council Office since January 1, 2021: what are the details of all such focus groups, including, for each, (i) who conducted the focus group, (ii) the date, (iii) the topic, (iv) the questions asked, (v) the results, (vi) the value of the related contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1600—Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:

With regard to expenditures made by the government under object code 0207 (Employee relocation in Canada) in each of the last three fiscal years (2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23): (a) what was the total amount spent each year, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity; and (b) what was the total amount spent each year for the relocation of ministerial exempt staff in Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1601—Mr. Dave Epp:

With regard to all correspondence and documents received by the Office of the Prime Minister or the Privy Council Office from the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission (GLFC), the Department of Fisheries and Oceans or Global Affairs Canada, since January 1, 2021, concerning the GLFC or the topic of Great Lakes fisheries: what are the details of each, including the (i) date it was received, (ii) recipient, (iii) sender, (iv) type of document, (v) title, (vi) subject matter, (vii) summary of content, (viii) file number?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1604—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:**

With regard to Transport Canada (TC), Transport Canada's Pleasure Craft Electronic Licensing System (PCELS) and the proposed amendments listed in Canada Gazette, Part I, Volume 157, Number 19: Regulations Amending the Small Vessel Regulations (SVRs): (a) what are the details of TC's cost benefit analysis which establishes the link between charging the operators of pleasure craft general service fees to remedy the unreliable information in the PCELS that is hampering search and rescue agencies and enforcement partners, including designated enforcement organizations (DEOs) that rely on accurate information when responding to emergencies; (b) what are the details of any complaints TC has received from DEOs in the last three years, about the unreliable information in the PCELS, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) name of the DEO that complained, (iii) summary of the complaint; (c) which current services delivered in the PCEL program are currently being used by DEOs; (d) what are the details of all proposals currently being worked on to modernize services related to SVRs; (e) what is the current cost to monitor and enforce the existing safety requirements of the SVR for pleasure craft; (f) what is the projected cost to monitor and enforce the safety requirement of the SVR for pleasure craft following the adoption of the proposed amendments; and (g) what is the projected cost of the public education and outreach campaign on the new licensing requirements and vessel management responsibilities, broken down by type of expenditure?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1606—Mr. Scot Davidson:

With regard to David Johnston's appointment as the special rapporteur tasked with assessing the extent and impact of foreign interference in Canada's electoral processes: how much total financial compensation is the government providing to David Johnston in relation to his role as the special rapporteur?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1608—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:

With regard to the Oceans Protection Plan (OPP) announced by the government in 2016: (a) how much money has been allocated to the department of (i) Transport, (ii) Fisheries and Oceans, (iii) the Environment, under the OPP, broken down by year since 2016; (b) how much money has been spent under the OPP by the department of (i) Transport, (ii) Fisheries and Oceans, (iii) the Environment, broken down by year and program since 2016; (c) how much money from the OPP has been allocated to the Whales Initiative, broken down by year since 2016; (d) how much money has been spent under the OPP on the Whales Initiative since 2016; (e) how much money has been spent under the OPP on efforts to mitigate the potential impacts of oil spills, broken down by year and by program since 2016; and (f) what policies does the government have in place to ensure that the funding allocated under the OPP is spent on its stated goals in a timely manner?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1609—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program since October 1, 2020, broken down by month: (a) what is the total amount the government has collected in repayments of student loans; (b) what is the total amount of new loans delivered to (i) full-time and part-time students, (ii) students from low-income and middle-income families, (iii) students with dependents, (iv) students with permanent disabilities; (c) how many new applications have been received under the (i) Repayment Assistance Plan, (ii) Repayment Assistance Plan for Borrowers with a Permanent Disability; and (d) how many borrowers have defaulted on their student loans?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1610—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:

With regard to addiction treatment facilities: how many facilities has the government contributed funding toward, since 2015, broken down by (i) the type of proponent of each facility (First Nations, provincial health authority, etc.), (ii) which federal funding programs were utilized, (iii) the amounts awarded by the federal government, (iv) the year in which the funding was awarded, (v) the aspect of the project that federal funding was used for (capital, operations etc.)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1611—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:

With regard to rural post offices: how many rural post offices are there in Canada serving populations under 1,000, since 2015, broken down by: (i) postal code, (ii) the model they employ (postmaster-provided, franchise, etc.), (iii) the size

of the population served, (iv) the annual leasing costs paid by Canada Post, (v) the percentage of the population served that is indigenous, (vi) the years the post office operated?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1613—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:

With regard to the government's Rapid Housing Initiative: how many housing projects in Skeena—Bulkley Valley have received financial contributions through this initiative to date, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) postal code, (iii) the amount of federal contribution, (iv) the total project budget, (v) proponent organization?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1615—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to the Canada Summer Jobs program, broken down by year from 2019 to 2023: (a) in which constituencies did Service Canada include the employer Priests for Life Canada in the list of eligible projects for review by members of Parliament; (b) for each of the constituencies identified, how many jobs and how much funding did Service Canada recommend; (c) on what basis did Service Canada determine that Priests for Life Canada met the eligibility requirements for funding; and (d) in which constituencies was Priests for Life Canada approved for funding by the member of Parliament?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1616—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to the handling of cases and claims pursuant to the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement by the Department of Justice Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada: (a) why did 215 survivors of St. Anne's Indian Residential School not get notice and not get proper evidence for their abuse claims; (b) what exactly were the third party obligations to the Catholic Church that were honoured by the government; and (c) in the documents to be sent, or already sent, to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation as a result of a memo of agreement signed by the government in 2022, do any contain details of child abuse?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1620—Mr. Philip Lawrence:

With regard to government expenditures on membership fees, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity during the 2022-23 fiscal year: (a) what were the total expenditures; and (b) what are the details of each expenditure, including the (i) name of the entity for which the membership fee was paid, (ii) date of the purchase, (iii) amount, (iv) number of memberships purchased, (v) type of organization, if known (professional society, social club, golf club, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1621—Mr. Philip Lawrence:

With regard to wrapping or other advertising expenditures for the exteriors of buildings since April 1, 2019, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: (a) what is the total amount spent on wrapping or advertising, broken down by individual building; and (b) what are the details of all wrapping, tarp, or similar type of advertising on government buildings, broken down by individual building, including the (i) vendor, (ii) description of good or services provided, (iii) date, (iv) amount, (v) file number, (vi) address of the building, (vii) message on the wrapping or the summary of advertising campaign?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1622—Mr. Dan Albas:**

With regard to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and the Canadian Intellectual Property Office: (a) what is the current wait time between when a patent application is received and the patent is issued; (b) what was the wait time between when a patent application was received and the patent was issued as of (i) January 1, 2016, (ii) January 1, 2020; (c) what is the current backlog of patent applications in terms of the number of applications and projected wait time; (d) what is the breakdown of (c) by province or territory and by country the application originated from; and (e) for each of the four options listed under "4 options to expedite patent examination" on the government's websites, what is the current backlog in terms of the number of applications and projected wait time?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1626—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to the Oil to Heat Pump Affordability Program, broken down by federal electoral district since the program's inception: (a) what is the number of applications (i) received, (ii) approved; (b) what is the average payment amount approved for each household; (c) what is the average length of time between the submission of an application and the receipt of funds; and (d) what is the estimated reduction in greenhouse gas emissions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1627—Mrs. Anna Roberts:

With regard to the Canada Pension Plan survivor's pension: (a) how many recipients are currently receiving the survivor's pension at the 60 percent level, in total and broken down by gender; (b) what is the total amount paid out in the last year to seniors receiving the survivor's pension at the 60 percent level; (c) what are the government's projections for (i) how many individuals will be eligible for survivor's pensions, both in total and broken down by gender, (ii) the total amount expected to be paid out to recipients, for each of the next five years; and (d) of those currently receiving the survivor's benefit at the 60 percent level, how many are living below the poverty level?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1628—Mr. Matthew Green:

With regard to federal spending in the constituency of Hamilton Centre, in each fiscal year since 2015-16, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to any organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality in which the recipient is located, (iii) date the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1629—Ms. Heather McPherson:

With regard to Development Finance Institute Canada (FinDev Canada): (a) broken down by fiscal year, starting with fiscal year 2018-19 to the present, what is the total amount of funds that the government, through all departments and agencies and available funding streams, provided to FinDev Canada; (b) were fund transfers publicly reported; (c) how would a member of the public find such public reporting; (d) which minister is responsible for direct oversight of FinDev Canada; (e) how does FinDev Canada communicate funding availability or calls for proposals to Canadian civil society organizations; (f) how does FinDev Canada publicly report its funded projects, including project summaries and anticipated outcomes; (g) what criteria, framework, or evaluation processes are used to evaluate a potential project's funding application eligibility; (h) what role does the FinDev Canada's Board of Directors play regarding the approval or rejection of project funding applications; (i) are there publicly available records of past and present votes by members of the board of directors regarding project funding approvals and rejections; (j) how are the funds' end use (transferred to private equity funds, private banks, or other non-Government of Canada entities or organizations) reported; (k) how does FinDev Canada evaluate a potential project's compliance with the Government of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, the OECD DAC's Blended Finance Principles and its Guidance on Implementing those Principles, IFC Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability, ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, OECD Guidance on Responsible business conduct for institutional investors, OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises, and UN Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights; (l) what policies or guidelines does FinDev Canada have regarding the use of offshore financial centres ("tax havens"); (m) how does FinDev Canada communicate guidance concern-

ing projects and project outcomes and human rights due diligence to companies, entities, or individuals that receive FinDev Canada funds or other support; (n) what redress processes are available to local communities, individuals or institutions negatively impacted by projects funded by FinDev Canada; (o) how many complaints have been received by FinDev Canada, Global Affairs Canada or other government departments about projects funded directly or indirectly by FinDev Canada; (p) how many of these complaints have involved human rights concerns, labour rights concerns, environmental concerns, or social impacts caused or related to projects funded by FinDev Canada; (q) how are received complaints investigated; (r) what actions were taken by FinDev, if any, following complaints received; (s) what access do affected communities have to FinDev's Independent Accountability Mechanism; and (t) what reports by the Independent Accountability Mechanism are public?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1631—Mr. Scott Aitchison:

With regard to surplus land owned by the government in census metropolitan areas: what are the details of all surplus land, including, for each piece of land, the (i) size, (ii) address, (iii) metropolitan area, (iv) description or type of land, (v) past use of land, if known, (vi) future planned use of land, if known?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1632—Mr. Earl Dreeshen:

With regard to the processing times for applications submitted to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, as of June 1, 2023: (a) what are the processing times for the temporary programs, broken down by month in 2023 for (i) study permits, (ii) work permits, (iii) temporary residents; and (b) what are the processing times for permanent residency programs, broken down by month in 2023 for (i) privately sponsored refugees, (ii) federal government assisted refugees, (iii) the live-in caregiver program, (iv) spouses and partners, (v) children and other family class applicants, (vi) parents and grandparents?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1633—Mr. Earl Dreeshen:

With regard to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada: what is the average age of accepted immigration applicants, broken down by each immigration stream?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1635—Mr. Brad Redekopp:

With regard to citizenship court judges, and broken down by year for each of the last five years: (a) how many citizenships were reviewed by citizenship court judges; (b) how many citizenship court judges were there; (c) what are the remuneration details of citizenship judges, including salary and bonus ranges; (d) how many cases were heard and decisions rendered by the judges; (e) what were the total administrative costs associated with the citizenship court, broken down by type of cost; and (f) do citizenship judges preside over all citizenship commissions, and, if not, who presides over the commissions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1636—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to government contracts with vendors providing IT services to departments operating under the Treasury Board of Canada, broken down by fiscal year, since 2017-18, and by department: (a) what is the total number of contracts signed; (b) what are the details of all contracts signed, including the (i) vendor contracted, (ii) value of the contract, (iii) number of IT workers provided, (iv) duration of the contract; and (c) what is the total amount of extra costs incurred as a result of relying on IT vendors instead of employing IT workers directly?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1637—Mr. Todd Doherty:**

With regard to Paul Bernardo's transfer from a maximum-security prison to a medium-security prison: (a) on what date did the Minister of Public Safety's office first become informed of a possible transfer; (b) who was the first person in the minister's office to become informed of a possible transfer and what action, if any, did that person take; (c) did the person in (b) immediately inform the Minister of Public Safety, and if not, why not; (d) on what date did the Office of the Prime Minister first become informed of a possible transfer; (e) who was the first person in the Prime Minister's office to become informed of a possible transfer and what action, if any, did that person take; and (f) did the person in (e) immediately inform the Prime Minister, and if not, why not?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1639—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to airport rent collected by the government: (a) since 2016, how much in ground rent did Transport Canada receive from airports, broken down by year; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by airport; (c) what are Transport Canada's projections related to how much revenue it expects to receive in airport rent in (i) 2023, (ii) 2024, in total and broken down by airport; and (d) what was the net cost and revenue loss of the government's decision to waive ground rent from March to December 2020?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1641—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:

With regard to the IT sector's staff vacancy rate in the government as of June 1, 2023, broken down by department: what is the amount of vacant information technology (IT, Treasury Board code 303) positions, for each of the classification (i) IT-01, (ii) IT-02, (iii) IT-03, (iv) IT-04, (v) IT-05?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1642—Mr. Frank Caputo:

With regard to Corrections Services Canada: (a) how many dangerous offenders are currently housed in (i) minimum, (ii) medium, security prisons; and (b) how many offenders convicted of multiple murders are currently in medium security prisons?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1643—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:

With regard to retirement benefits for the Canada Border Services Agency law enforcement officers in the FB bargaining group, who are employed by the Department of National Defence in the SV (FR) bargaining group: (a) what has the government done to proceed with its commitment to pursue the necessary legislative amendments to enhance early retirement benefits under the public service pension plan for these employees; (b) what are the details of all consultations that have been undertaken concerning the legislative amendments in (a), including the (i) date of the consultation, (ii) parties consulted, (iii) suggested changes as a result of the consultation; (c) what is the timeframe for the government to introduce legislative amendments to enhance the retirement benefits of these employees; and (d) what efforts has the government made to ease the physical burden on these workers as a result of doing their job?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1644—Mr. Ryan Williams:

With regard to the response from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada to Order Paper question Q-1476, for each grant and contribution listed in the response: (a) what is the proposed number of Canadians who would be affected by the funding; (b) what is the actual number of Canadians affected by the funding; and (c) what is the current status of the project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1645—Mr. Ryan Williams:

With regard to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's Venture Capital Catalyst Initiative (VCCI), since its inception in 2017: (a) what is the total amount of funds committed, broken down by fund or funds; and (b) for each fund or funds in (a), what are the details of all investments made, broken down by fiscal year, including the (i) name of the investee, (ii) location, (iii) date of the investment, (iv) amount invested, (v) monetary return on the investment, (vi) current operational status of the investee?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1647—Mr. Ryan Williams:

With regard to Global Affairs Canada, since 2015: (a) what is the total amount of funds dispersed through the CanExport SMEs program, broken down by fiscal year; and (b) what are the details of all recipients of funding for each fiscal year of funding in (a), including (i) the name, (ii) the province of operation, (iii) the sector, (iv) the funding requested, (v) the funding granted, (vi) the intended non-travel activity indicated in the application, (vii) whether the recipient successfully exported their product?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1648—Ms. Lori Idlout:

With regard to the Canada Greener Homes Grant and applications from homeowners in Nunavut, broken down by fiscal year since the program's inception: (a) what is the number of approved energy advisors serving in Nunavut; (b) what is the total number of (i) pre-retrofit, (ii) post-retrofit, EnerGuide evaluations completed in Nunavut; (c) what is the total number of requests for EnerGuide evaluations received from homeowners in Nunavut; (d) what was the total contribution from the government toward the costs of EnerGuide evaluations completed in Nunavut; (e) what is the total number of grants approved; and (f) what is the total value of the grants approved in (e)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1649—Mr. Jeremy Patzer:

With regard to the RCMP's response to media reports on June 19, 2023 that it was investigating the SNC-Lavalin affair: did the RCMP receive any communication or pressure from anyone in the government on June 19, 2023, including ministers, ministerial staff, or any government official, regarding the status of such an investigation, and, if so, what are the details of all such communication, including, for each, the (i) sender, (ii) recipient, (iii) time, (iv) type of communication (text, email, phone call, etc.), (v) summary of the contents?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1650—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to the Port Renfrew Multipurpose Marine Facility: (a) what progress has the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard made concerning the completion of the facility; (b) what directives did the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard give to the department regarding her commitment to investigate the situation on Monday May 29, 2023; (c) are there other departments that have received requests for funding from Pacheedaht First Nation for the completion of this project; and (d) what assessments have been completed or requested by departments in (c) for this project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1651—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to the Pacheedaht First Nation's request for funding for a community school, since October 23, 2016: (a) what directives were given by the Minister of Indigenous Services to ensure the community received funding for the school's completion; (b) what actions were taken by department staff resulting from the minister's directives in (a); (c) what are the details of all studies and reports conducted regarding the school, including the (i) department responsible for study, (ii) date completed, (iii) title, (iv) suggested actions or recommendations; and (d) does the government intend to provide financial assistance or professional assistance to Pacheedaht to help complete the school?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1652—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to projects or initiatives that support soil conservation and soil health in Canada, broken down by fiscal year since 2015-16: (a) what are the details of all resources dedicated to (i) developing and maintaining soil organic matter, soil erosion risk and soil cover indicators, (ii) the Canadian Soil Information Service, (iii) the Environmental Farm Plans, (iv) the On-Farm Applied Research and Monitoring program; (b) has the government established measurable goals for soil conservation and soil health, including the (i) transition to farming practices that remove carbon dioxide from the environment, (ii) farming practices that use minimal tillage methods; and (c) does the government believe that there is a link between soil health and accessible, affordable food?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1654—Ms. Niki Ashton:**

With regard to the government's commitment to close the infrastructure gap on First Nations reserves by 2030: (a) what metrics does the government use to measure the existing gap; (b) what is the government's current estimate of the infrastructure gap; and (c) does the government believe it is on track to meet the mandate assigned to the minister?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1655—Ms. Niki Ashton:

With regard to forms required by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) for on-reserve housing funding, broken down by funding stream: (a) what is the total number of forms required to complete each stage of the application and funding process; (b) what are the details of each form in (a), including the (i) title of the form, (ii) purpose, (iii) number of pages; and (c) what resources has ISC provided to First Nations to assist with completing these forms, broken down by First Nation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1656—Ms. Niki Ashton:

With regard to the Circuit Rider Training Program operated by Indigenous Services Canada, broken down by province or territory and fiscal year since 2015-16: (a) what is the total number of trained experts available to assist First Nations communities; (b) how many site visits did the experts in (a) make, broken down by First Nation visited; (c) what is the total number of individuals who received training and certification funding through this program; (d) how many requests for assistance through this program have been denied or not yet responded to; and (e) for what reason was each visit in (d) denied?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1657—Ms. Niki Ashton:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) processing times for interactions with taxpayers: (a) what service standards does the CRA apply in issuing notices of assessment for (i) digital individual income tax returns, (ii) paper individual tax returns; (b) reflected as a number and a percentage, what is the amount of notices of assessment that failed to meet the service standards expected in (a) and what is the (i) average time, (ii) median, time to deliver notices of assessment; (c) what is the total number of employees assigned to take telephone inquiries from taxpayers; (d) on average, how many telephone requests from taxpayers does the CRA receive each business day; and (e) what is the average time taxpayers spend on hold when calling the CRA?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1658—Mr. Daniel Blaikie:

With regard to the \$1.2 billion in budget 2022 allocated to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA): (a) which tools and resources have been added to expand audits of larger entities and non-residents engaged in aggressive tax planning; (b) what is the total number of new staff added to help with the audits in (a); (c) what is the year-over-year increase in investigations and prosecutions as a result of this investment; (d) what efforts have been made to expand the CRA's educational outreach; and (e) what is the total amount invested for the purposes of (d)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1662—Mrs. Laila Goodridge:

With regard to funding provided through the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program by Health Canada or Indigenous Services Canada: what are the details of all First Nations treatment centres which are currently receiving funding through the program, including for each, the (i) First Nation, (ii) location, or address, (iii) name of the facility, (iv) programs funded, (v) amount of annual funding provided by Health Canada, (vi) amount of annual funding provided by Indigenous Services Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1663—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:

With regard to the government's efforts to improve emergency towing capacity along all coasts, broken down by fiscal year: (a) what are the details of all consultations to develop the National Strategy on Emergency Towing, including the (i) date of the consultation, (ii) government representatives and organizations involved, (iii) recommendations provided to the government; (b) what is the total number of emergency towing vessels currently available to respond to incidents on the (i) Western Coast, (ii) Northern waters, (iii) Atlantic Coast; (c) broken down by coast, what

were the total number of incidents that the vessels in (b) responded to; and (d) broken down by coast, what was the total number of incidents that the vessels in (b) did not respond to?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1665—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) insured mortgages, broken down by individual and corporate borrowers for each year since 2017, and by province: (a) how many mortgages have defaulted; (b) what was the value of the mortgages in (a); (c) how many times has CMHC had to repay a bank on behalf of the insured due to mortgage defaults; (d) how much have those defaults cost CMHC; and (e) how has the frequency of defaults increased or decreased, relative to the Bank of Canada interest rate adjustments?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1666—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's insured mortgages for multi-unit residential properties, broken down by year and by province since 2017: (a) how many mortgages have been insured for real estate investment trusts; and (b) how many mortgages have been insured for other corporate borrowers?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1667—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to operating or subsidy agreements related to co-operative, social and community housing, broken down by year and province since 1993: (a) how many agreements have expired; and (b) how many units of co-operative, social and community housing have been lost as a result of the agreements expiring, broken down by type of unit, province and municipality?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1668—Mr. Tako Van Popta:

With regard to government funding for the management of aquatic invasive species: (a) what is the total amount of funding provided, broken down by year and by department or agency, between 2016 and 2022; (b) what is the total amount of funding budgeted for 2023, broken down by department or agency; (c) what is the breakdown of (a) by province or territory; (d) what are the details of all such funding provided to provincial or territorial governments since 2016, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) recipient, (iii) amount, (iv) project description and purpose of funding; and (e) what are the details of all such funding provided to organizations since 2016, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) recipient, (iii) amount, (iv) project description and purpose of funding, (v) locations where funding will target invasive species, if applicable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1672—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to the government's flagging of social media accounts or pages: (a) since 2016, have any specific social media accounts or pages been flagged by either Canadian Heritage or the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission as examples of potential "harmful content" or "misinformation"; (b) how many accounts or pages in (a) were hosted on (i) YouTube, (ii) Facebook, (iii) Twitter, (iv) Instagram, (v) Reddit, (vi) Google search, (vii) other platforms, broken down by platform; (c) of accounts or pages in (b), what are the usernames of the flagged accounts and what is the specific reason why each account was flagged; (d) of the accounts in (a), what is the breakdown of the reasons for having flagged these accounts or pages by the number of times each reason was used; and (e) has the government taken any action in relation to the accounts or pages flagged in (a), and, if so, what specific actions were taken?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1673—Mr. Garnett Genuis:**

With regard to the government's response to the Hong Kong Pathway lifeboat scheme and intimidation of the Hong Kong Canadian community: (a) will the government consider improving the policies of the Hong Kong Pathway Stream B to (i) expand and extend its scope, (ii) waive the requirement for a police certificate; (b) what is the timeline for the government to make changes related to (a); (c) what measures will the government take to prevent intimidation by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and ensure public safety in the Hong Kong Canadian community; and (d) what steps will the government take to investigate and prevent CCP infiltration and intimidation in Canada and when will each of these measures be implemented?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1674—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to the special measures program for Afghanistan announced by the government: (a) what is the number of visible minorities that have been evacuated thus far, in total; (b) how many of the evacuees in (a) were (i) Afghan Hindus, (ii) Sikhs, (iii) Christians; (c) are there currently Afghan allied interpreters still in Afghanistan awaiting evacuation, and, if so, how many; and (d) what is the government doing to accelerate evacuation efforts for Afghan nationals whose safety remains at risk while waiting in limbo across third party countries such as India and Pakistan?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1675—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to the Special Economic Measures Regulations and pursuing the forfeiture of assets of sanctioned Russians: (a) what is the total number of individuals sanctioned to date; (b) among the sanctioned individuals, how many (i) have known assets in Canada, (ii) do not have any known assets in Canada; (c) of those with known assets in Canada, how many have had their assets seized; (d) what is the total number of entities that have been sanctioned to date; (e) among the sanctioned entities, how many (i) have known assets in Canada, (ii) do not have any known assets in Canada; (f) of those with known assets in Canada, how many have had their assets seized; and (g) what is the current value of assets seized to date from (i) individuals, (ii) entities?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1676—Mr. Alex Ruff:

With regard to the inconsistencies in the reporting of data by certain departments and agencies in the government's response to Order Paper question Q-1385 on security clearance denials: (a) has the government provided direction to all departments to (i) collect and record data on security clearances, (ii) standardize responses, and, if so, what are the details; and (b) why were certain departments and agencies permitted to provide the response (i) "In processing Parliamentary Returns, the Government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and certain information has been withheld on the grounds that the information constitutes personal information," (ii) "In processing Parliamentary Returns, the government applies the principles set out in the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act. Information has been withheld on the grounds that its disclosure could reasonably be expected to be injurious to the conduct of international affairs, the defence of Canada or any state allied or associated with Canada, or the detection, prevention or suppression of subversive or hostile activities," while other departments provided the exact information and numbers requested?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1678—Mr. Alex Ruff:

With regard to the Special Immigration Measures for Afghan Nationals who assisted the Government of Canada: (a) broken down by unique email address, how many applications were received via email or webform for this program, to date; (b) how many application names did not appear on Department of National Defence (DND) or Global Affairs Canada (GAC) referral lists; (c) were the applicants in (b) notified that their application was not referred to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; (d) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, what recourse options are available to the applicant to demonstrate their eligibility; and (e) what guidance or internal policy has DND and GAC used to determine eligibility of Afghan Nationals that applied for this program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1679—Mr. Brian Masse:

With regard to government funding in the constituencies of Windsor West, Essex and Windsor—Tecumseh: what is the total amount spent since the fiscal year 2020-21 up to and including the current fiscal year, broken down by department or agency, initiative, and amount?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1681—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to the Accelerated Investment Incentive, broken down by fiscal year since 2018: (a) how many corporations in the oil and gas sector have (i) qualified for the incentive, (ii) received an incentive; (b) how much foregone revenue to the federal government due to the incentive was related to the oil and gas sector; (c) how much foregone revenue to the federal government under the incentive was from eligible Canadian development expenses or Canadian oil and gas property expenses; and (d) what was the average tax deduction received?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1682—Mr. Alex Ruff:

With regard to the findings from the 2023 Auditor General Report 2 titled "Connectivity in Rural and Remote Areas" that "59.5% of households had access to Internet coverage at the target speeds" in rural and remote areas: (a) after the completion of the Universal Broadband Fund, what percentage of rural and remote communities will still need connectivity to meet the 50/10 goal; (b) by 2026, what is the estimated percentage of rural and remote households that will be connected to the 50/10 goal based on funded and projected projects; (c) what improvements are planned for the Internet Service Availability map to ensure that it is up to date and accurate; (d) when will each of the improvements in (c) be implemented; (e) does the National Broadband Internet Service Availability Map share a data source with the Ontario New Interactive High-Speed Internet Map; and (f) what is the breakdown of the submissions received by (i) consumers, (ii) providers on the feedback section of the government's web page titled "High-speed Internet for all Canadians", broken down by geographic area the submission was from and by the nature of the feedback?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1683—Mr. Brian Masse:

With regard to funding allocated to all Great Lakes programs and organizations: what was the total amount of funding allocated since the 2012 fiscal year up to and including the current fiscal year, broken down by year, organization, amount and purpose of intended funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1684—Mr. Mel Arnold:

With regard to the budget 2021 allocation of \$647.1 million over five years, plus \$98.9 million in amortization as part of the Pacific Salmon Strategic Initiative (PSSI): (a) how many hatchery operations have been funded under the PSSI pillar of enhanced hatchery production; (b) what are the names and locations of the hatcheries funded by PSSI for each year since 2021; (c) how many individual commercial salmon licenses have been retired each year since 2021 under the PSSI pillar of "harvest transformation"; (d) how much was paid for each license retirement; and (e) how many more individual commercial salmon licenses does the PSSI deem necessary to retire?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1685—Mr. Mel Arnold:

With regard to the budget 2021 allocation of \$647.1 million over five years, plus \$98.9 million in amortization as part of the Pacific Salmon Strategic Initiative (PSSI): (a) how many employees have been hired to work in the PSSI, for each year since 2021; (b) how many employees have transferred from other government departments or entities to work in the PSSI, for each year since 2021; (c) what is the total amount of salaries and benefits for PSSI employees, for each year since 2021; (d) how many more employees does the Department of Fisheries and Oceans plan to hire to work in the PSSI; (e) what is the breakdown of the locations of PSSI employees by region; (f) how many contractors have been hired to support PSSI activities, for each year since 2021; and (g) what are the details of each contract supporting PSSI activities, including the (i) vendor, (ii) date, (iii) value, (iv) description of goods or services?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 1687—Mr. Mel Arnold:**

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' management of fisheries from 2016 to 2022: (a) what was the total number of fisheries managed by the department each year; (b) in how many fisheries did the department reduce licenses each year, and, for each reduction, what was the total number of licenses reduced per fishery and per year; (c) in how many fisheries did the department reduce total allowable catch each year and for each reduction, what were the total reductions of total allowable catch per fishery per year; (d) in how many fisheries did the department reduce quotas each year and for each reduction, what were the total reductions of quota per fishery per year; and (e) how much compensation was disbursed for reductions of (i) licenses, (ii) total allowable catch, (iii) quotas?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1688—Mr. Richard Cannings:

With regard to the cost of fighting wildfires since 2012: (a) broken down by year from 2012 to 2022, what was the total federal expenditure each year for (i) international assistance provided to provinces and territories, (ii) assistance from the Canadian Armed Forces provided to provinces and territories, (iii) assistance from other federal departments and agencies provided to provinces and territories, broken down by department and agency, (iv) fighting wildfires inside national parks, (v) fighting wildfires on Indian reserves, (vi) fighting wildfires on other federal lands; and (b) what is the total federal expenditure in each category in (a) between January 1, 2023 and June 30, 2023?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1689—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:

With regard to the government's engagements with the World Economic Forum (WEF): (a) what are the details of all contracts, transfer payments, memoranda of understanding, letters of intent, charters, accords, projects, and associations between the government and the WEF since November 4, 2015, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) type of engagement (e.g., contract, memoranda of understanding, project, association), (iii) name or title, (iv) duration, (v) departments engaged, (vi) purpose, (vii) summary of the terms, (viii) description of deliverables, (ix) cost to the taxpayer, (x) achieved or anticipated outcomes; and (b) what is the total dollar amount transferred to the WEF by the government since November 4, 2015, in total and broken down by year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1690—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:

With regard to the ArriveCAN application: (a) what risks did the government identify with regard to the ongoing use and potential broadened use of the application; (b) which international health organizations and their institutions did the government identify to submit Canadians' personal information to, as noted in the original version of the application's privacy notice; (c) did the government submit Canadians' personal data that it received through the ArriveCAN application to any international organization, and, if so, what information was shared and with whom; (d) what were the specific reasons for authorizing the sharing Canadians' information with the organizations in (b); and (e) what are the details of all memoranda or other documents received by either the Minister of Public Safety, his office, his senior officials or by senior executives at the Canada Border Services Agency, related to the ArriveCAN application that contain reference to the "Known Traveller Digital Identity" program, or the "Digital Identity Program", including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) recipient, (iii) sender, (iv) title, (v) type of document, (vi) summary, (vii) subject matter, (viii) file number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1692—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:

With regard to the legislative review of the Canada Infrastructure Bank Act: (a) what are the details of all written submissions received, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) sender's name, title, and organization, (iii) type of document, (iv) title, (v) summary of contents, (vi) file number; (b) what are the details of all meetings conducted in the course of the review, including, for each, (i) the names and titles of individuals in attendance, (ii) the date, (iii) the location, (iv) whether the meeting was in person, virtual, or hybrid, (v) the agenda items, (vi) the minutes of meeting or summary of event; (c) of the \$8.6 billion in private and institutional capital attracted by the Canada Infrastructure Bank to date, how much of that capital is from (i) pension funds, (ii) labour unions, (iii) provincial or federal Crown corporations; and (d) why was (i) the Lake Erie Connector Project, (ii) other unsuccessful projects, not mentioned in the legislative review?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1693—Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:

With regard to the government responses to Order Paper questions (OPQ) and the information contained in the package released by Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) to Access to Information Request A-2022-00489: (a) since January 1, 2016 what instructions, definitions, directives, or other advice has the Privy Council Office (PCO) provided any departments, including those sent through the Parliamentary Returns Control Assistance System with the use or the development of (i) so-called "high-level limitation language", a term used throughout Access to Information Request A-2022-00489, (ii) other means of not directly responding to each part of a question, and what are the details of each instance, including for each, the (A) date, (B) instruction, directive, or advice, (C) recipient, (D) relevant OPQ numbers; (b) are communications risks considered when departments develop responses to OPQs, and, if so, (i) what is the protocol, (ii) what measures are in place to ensure that Parliamentarians who submit OPQs receive responses that are complete and are not politically manipulated; (c) since January 1, 2016, what government-wide practices, protocols, or procedures have been developed to provide justification for not directly responding to each part of a question; (d) when the term "inherent risk" is used in relation to the use of so-called "high-level limitation language" or other means of not answering a question, what type of risk is being assessed; (e) on which other responses to OPQs in the 44th Parliament did (i) NRCAN, (ii) any other department or agency, strategize on how or if to use "high-level limitation language" or otherwise non-responsive language in a response to an OPQ; (f) for each instance where so-called "high-level limitation language" was used to avoid answering each part of a question, what was the reason for the non-answer, broken down by OPQ number; (g) did the Office for the Coordination of Parliamentary Returns in the PCO authorize NRCAN to use "high-level limitation language" to avoid directly answering any OPQs, and, if so, who authorized such as response, broken down by each question where such a non-answer was given; (h) what did Kyle Harrietha, the former Minister of Natural Resources' Deputy Chief of Staff, mean when he wrote that the Speaker of the House of Commons is going to "tut tut"; (i) how was the "high-level limitation language" used in the government's response to Q-974 arrived at, including who came up with the language that was used; (j) who decides when NRCAN uses "high-level limitation language" to avoid directly answering a question; (k) was the Minister of Natural Resources informed that he was signing an incomplete response prior to him signing the response to Q-974, and, if so, why did he sign the response; (l) what is NRCAN's explanation for how multiple departments come up with identical language when using "high-level limitation language"; (m) who in the PCO, the Office of the Prime Minister or the Office of the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons was involved in the development of the template and language used in the response to Q-974; and (n) what was the rationale for using "high-level limitation language" in the response to Q-974 as opposed to directly answering the question?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-48, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (bail reform), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to ask my colleague a question specifically about the widespread support for this bill.

Government Orders

We are seeing premiers from throughout the country, all of them as a matter of fact, applaud this legislation. We have heard the Leader of the Opposition himself say that he would waste absolutely no time in seeing this become law. We know that countless organizations out there, from chiefs of police to police associations, are all in favour of this legislation.

Can the parliamentary secretary provide insight into how quickly he thinks this bill should be able to move through the committee stage, back to the House and to the Senate so we can get this into law?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is really important that all of us know and recognize that, at the end of the day, Bill C-48 would make our communities safer. That is the reason we have all sorts of jurisdictions; politicians, whether provincial, municipal and obviously federal; and law enforcement agencies coming out and saying that this particular legislation is good, sound legislation. The reason for that is that it is going to make our communities safer. That is why I am hopeful that, through the support of all members of the House, we will see it pass quickly to committee stage.

The leader of the official opposition made that very clear not that long ago when he said we should get the bill before us and that if we, in essence, stay until midnight, we will get the legislation passed. I would suggest to the Conservative members that if they really want to get this legislation passed today, they will find that the government, the Bloc opposition and the NDP are very receptive. It is up to the Conservatives to get it passed today.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, some of the reverse onus provisions in this bill apply only to violent offences with a weapon. I wonder why the government did not include other violent offences where a weapon was not used. Does the member believe that these crimes are less serious? Conservatives have been calling for a total repeal of Bill C-75. Why did the government not do that?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, whether it is firearms, knives or bear spray, and the reverse onus as applying to those in certain situations through this legislation, it is not the first time there is a reverse onus with respect to acts that are committed.

If the member has more specifics, as I suggested in my comments to the previous question, nothing prevents us from doing what it is the member's own leader was recommending not that long ago, which is to pass this legislation through. In getting it to committee stage, if the member has an idea that he would like to bring forward with respect to this legislation, I would encourage him to do so.

What I am suggesting is that there seems to be a will to see this legislation pass that goes far beyond even the House of Commons. Ultimately, standing committees can do good work when working with the minister, who I know is committed to working with the different stakeholders who are out there. If there is a way in which it can be improved upon, I am open to it. Let us see it go to committee.

• (1625)

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague if he agrees with me that this piece of legislation is not the only solution. The provinces and territories have also devised their own legislation in this regard and have worked jointly, because our justice system is complex and we need all levels of government to work together.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member raises a very good point. Judicial jurisdiction in our courts and our laws is actually shared between Ottawa and provincial and territorial governments, so it is important we all work together at advancing and improving community safety. What is so good about Bill C-48 is that the background work was done. This is good, solid legislation that would make a positive difference in terms of safety in our communities.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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 Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Agriculture and Agri-Food; the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Ethics.

[English]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise on this first day of the new parliamentary session.

I would start by saying that the role of debate is to separate the wheat from the chaff, to use our experience, intelligence, discretion and insight to pinpoint what is really going on as opposed to what we think is going on, which can be influenced by the rush to easy assumptions and various biases, personal and societal, and so on.

The point of intelligent and informed debate, that is, of reasoned democratic discourse, is to safeguard against the kind of populism that appeals to simple intuition or, to use the new Conservative code word, simple common sense. Common sense sounds so right, so good. Who could object to it? Common sense is a deceptively appealing slogan, but there is a difference between common sense and good sense.

[Translation]

There is a distinction to be made between good sense and common sense. Good sense that is thoughtful, nuanced and based on facts and rigorous analysis is an excellent thing. On the other hand, what is referred to as “common sense” can be reductionist and simplistic, a populist trope designed to get the public to buy into easy solutions that serve narrow ideologies and well-established political agendas.

Government Orders

[English]

“Common sense” is a catchphrase that seeks to oversimplify and to get the buy-in of the public for simple solutions to complex problems, solutions that are not always the best but that serve an ideological agenda like cost cutting or rolling back environmental protections. I believe there is such a thing as collective wisdom that offers up time-tested notions, like the difference between good and evil, the need for caution in the face of too much rapid change or the value of preserving order in society. However, age-old collective wisdom cannot always guide us in dealing with technically and legally complex matters of contemporary public policy. So-called common sense can be off the mark.

[Translation]

So-called common sense can lead us down the wrong path. It can actually lead us right off the road.

[English]

With respect to bail reform, this seems to be the Conservative common-sense approach or belief: Those apprehended and accused of a crime are guilty and therefore should remain in jail while awaiting trial. However, in our justice system, the product of centuries of accumulated wisdom and reason, in law one is, thankfully, innocent until proven guilty.

Traditional small c conservatives are supposed to put faith in accumulated wisdom and the organic evolution of thought, laws and institutions, as opposed to promoting reactive solutions. Canada's bail system is the product of English common law dating back hundreds of years.

Let me be clear: One murder because someone is out on bail who should not have been is one death too many. It is a tragedy and we should not stand for it. There is not a single person in this House who disagrees. However, to claim, as the opposition does daily, that the streets are being overrun by murderers on automatic bail in a revolving-door justice system is, I believe, demagoguery.

How does the bail system work, versus the opposition's truncated version of it? Namely, it is up to police and prosecutors in provincial jurisdiction to make the case against granting bail to an individual. In other words, the onus is on the state to justify why someone who has not yet been found guilty should have to remain behind bars while awaiting trial. However, something not generally understood is that when it comes to charges of murder and certain other offences, the onus is actually reversed. The accused must convince the court why they should be released while awaiting trial.

In 2019, Parliament adopted Bill C-75, which extended the reverse onus to repeat offenders charged with an offence against an intimate partner, or what we call intimate partner violence. Again, this will be news to many listening today. The burden of proof is also on the accused for certain firearms offences, including weapons trafficking, possession for the purpose of weapons trafficking, illegal importation or exportation of a weapon, discharging a firearm with intent, discharging a firearm with recklessness and the following offences committed with a firearm: attempted murder, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, kidnapping, hostage-taking, robbery and extortion. Again, that is a far cry from a revolving door. Furthermore, the law is already clear that detention with-

out bail is justified when deemed necessary by a judge to protect the safety of the public.

• (1630)

When someone is granted bail, they typically are required to have a surety, that is, one or more people who commit to supervising the behaviour of the accused and who will pay a certain sum if the accused breaches their bail conditions. There are many reasons bail can be denied: the accused has a criminal record or failed to comply with past bail conditions; or, as mentioned, the accused is thought to pose a risk to the public; or the accused lacks a surety or place to live, which is a problem that more often afflicts members of disadvantaged groups.

Here is a news flash that will come as a surprise to many people listening today: In 2020, 77% of people in Ontario's jails were in custody awaiting trial. In other words, we are not a lenient country, contrary to the Conservative populist narrative. To quote Queen's University professor Nicole Myers, “We've had more people in pre-trial detention than in sentence provincial custody since 2004.”

All that said, we do need bail reform, and Liberals are reformers by nature.

How do we reconcile the need to protect the public while at the same time preserving the central tenet of our criminal justice system, which is “innocent until proven guilty”? The answer is Bill C-48. The bill would add a reverse onus for an accused person charged with a serious offence involving violence that was used, threatened or attempted, and the use of a weapon such as a knife, where the person was previously convicted, namely within the previous five years. This makes sense because a previous offence is an indication of risk. A serious offence would be defined as an offence carrying a maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment, such as assault causing bodily harm and assault with a weapon.

The bill also expands the list of firearms offences that would trigger a reverse onus. These offences include unlawful possession of a loaded or easily loaded prohibited or restricted firearm, breaking or entering to steal a firearm, robbery to steal a firearm and making an automatic firearm. Currently, there is a reverse onus when the person is subject to a weapons prohibition order and violates it. The new law would clarify to include prohibition orders made at bail.

Government Orders

Bill C-48 would also broaden the reverse onus for repeat offenders of intimate partner violence to those who have received a discharge under section 730 of the Criminal Code, or, in other words, where the offence no longer appears on a criminal record.

Finally, Bill C-48 would require courts to consider an accused person's history of convictions for violence as well as concern for community safety. As OPP commissioner Thomas Carrique told *The Globe and Mail* recently, the changes in Bill C-48 “go a long way to help eliminate and prevent harm and senseless tragedies in our communities”.

We need to keep in mind that indigenous people are denied bail more often than others, while Black people in Ontario spend longer in custody while awaiting trial than white people for the same offences. This is because courts use police reports to decide on bail, and police reports can contain racial bias. Another reason is that members of disadvantaged groups often have trouble finding sureties or bail money. It is worth noting that the longer someone is detained without bail, the greater the probability of a plea bargain or that the person will plead guilty despite having a viable defence. Either way, justice is compromised.

Under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, accused persons in Canada have the right to bail unless there is a very compelling reason to keep them in custody. This is constitutional law, whether Conservatives like it or not.

• (1635)

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned the data, which says that 70% of incarcerated people in provincial jails are in pretrial detention. They have not even been tried or convicted yet. He says that in his opinion, this counters the false narrative that the Canadian judicial system is lenient. However, maybe it is evidence that our courts and Crown prosecutors are under-resourced. Accused people have the right to a speedy trial, and maybe people are just languishing in pretrial because our courts and Crown prosecutors are under-resourced.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, the percentage I quoted was 77%, which is extremely high. Yes, of course the system is under-resourced and that could affect this figure, no doubt, but it is such an overwhelming figure that I think it is compelling in its own right.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I note that the member, at the beginning of his speech, talked quite a bit about this new-found slogan that the Conservatives are using, which is the “common sense” talk. As an Ontarian, the first thing I thought of was Mike Harris's “Common Sense Revolution”, which led to widespread cuts, the selling off of government organizations that were actually making money and, of course, the neglect to ensure that we had safe drinking water, which was due to cuts to the various agencies that oversaw healthy drinking water.

The member touched on this a bit, but I am curious if he could comment as to what the idea of this “common sense” approach really means in terms of the impact it would have on Canadians, as we saw in Ontario in the nineties.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, what I was trying to bring out was the distinction between common sense and good sense. Easy slogans like “common sense” can hide a lot from the public. They can hide issues that need to be explored in greater detail. I think the distinction between common sense and good sense is important because it underscores the notion that, yes, things have to make sense but solutions have to be well-grounded.

I think a lot can be done in the service of an ideology while hiding behind an easy slogan that appeals to people. Let us face it. We all believe in common sense. A lot can go on behind this slogan that is, in some ways, deceptive.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his thoughtful speech. He raised several points.

This bill is not nothing. It enacts a reverse onus. The Bloc Québécois said that it will support this bill. However, does the member believe that Bill C-48, as it now stands, passes the constitutional test that he spoke about earlier? If so, why? If not, why?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, that is a good question.

It is something that may not be obvious to those who are watching us today. When our government took office in 2015, we reversed a previous practice. When the previous government knew that a bill might violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, it had a member introduce it as a private member's bill so that it would not be scrutinized by the legal experts at the Department of Justice.

We abandoned that practice. As the member must know, every bill introduced in the House must withstand the scrutiny of the charter. Nothing is perfect. It is always possible that a judge may find that the bill is not perfect and decide to strike down a certain aspect of it. Generally speaking, these bills are very carefully scrutinized to ensure that they comply with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

[*English*]

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. I will be splitting my time with the member for Langley—Aldergrove.

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Before I begin, I want to recognize one of the people in my community of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. That would be one Ethan Katzberg, whom I met about a year ago. Over the summer, Mr. Katzberg became the world champion in the hammer throw. This is an incredible accomplishment for anybody, but more so for somebody of his young age. He is in his early twenties. We are so proud of him. Under the tutelage of Dylan Armstrong, a medallist in the Beijing Olympics, Ethan has really made Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo proud. I thank him for his contribution and congratulate him.

I also want to recognize a young man who passed away over the summer. His name is Reid Enzo Ross Davidson. I believe he has a relative who works on the Hill here. He was the grandson of somebody I look up to immensely, Enzo Lizzi, who is a pillar of our community in Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo and also a pillar of our Italian community. I wish his family, Michael and Lisa, and his partner, Georgia, condolences through what would be a difficult time. Mr. Davidson was only 24 years old when he passed after a motor vehicle accident.

To me, one of the critical elements that we should be focusing on here is the number 246. By my math, and I was never really good in math, it has been about 246 days since the premiers asked the government to act on bail. We are just now debating this bill at second reading. The NFL playoffs came and went; we had a Super Bowl champion crowned and a new season started in that time. Hockey playoffs came and went. The Stanley Cup was awarded. This actually happened even before we found out that the Prime Minister himself admitted to staying in a \$6,000-a-night hotel when he went for the Queen's funeral.

That is how much time has passed. In fact, between the time that the Liberal government tabled the legislation and the time that the premiers had written their letter, it was about 112 days by my math. It had really reached a crescendo at the point when the premiers were begging for bail reform.

The Minister of Justice tells us that they are ready to move lightning fast to get this done and that when there is a problem, Liberals act. Members will have to forgive me for asking this: How long does it take for Liberals to act? Is it 246 seconds, 246 months or 246 days? What is it?

How many police officers need to get hurt on the job for Liberals to act? How many shopkeepers need to have things stolen from them or to be the victim of a robbery? How many women need to be the victim of intimate partner violence at the hands of somebody who should not be on bail? I once heard someone, a Liberal, say they could look at one's calendar and tell me one's priorities. Let us look at the Liberal calendar.

For 246 days, this issue has languished. I remember that it was over the Christmas break last year when the then minister of justice told us there really was not a problem with bail. Constable Pierzchala was killed, allegedly by somebody who was on bail at the time. I expected that the government would return with bail legislation. If we want to talk about common sense, that would have been the common-sense thing to do.

Sometimes there are inflection points in society, and the expectation is that government will act. However, the Liberals came back and told us there was nothing to see, the system was working as it should and dangerous people would be detained. Unfortunately, the premiers did not agree. More importantly, Canadians do not agree.

The issue with bail, in my view, has really come to a head. I receive letters. I believe many of my colleagues receive letters.

• (1645)

Not too long ago, I was in my colleague's riding of Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, and we had a public forum about bail and crime. I was amazed to see that crime was so out of control that, in a small community of about 4,000 people, customers were having to press a buzzer to be allowed into a store because there was such a concern.

My colleague in the NDP, in referencing what the hon. Leader of the Opposition said, said that people are just being arrested for shoplifting, and it is no big deal. Sometimes that shoplifting is very expensive. My colleague should tell that to a person who runs a small store and is losing a couple of thousand dollars a month of their livelihood. That is \$24,000 a year. That might be the difference between making a car payment, being able to afford a mortgage or putting food on the table and not doing so.

When people trivialize the import of some crimes, saying that they are not serious offences and are just breaches, with all due respect, I would say that breaches of court orders are serious offences. The court has said something, and somebody is willfully and deliberately saying they think otherwise and are going to choose otherwise.

This is obviously a subject I am passionate about; it is something I dealt with a lot formerly as a Crown prosecutor, as well as something I taught. That is why, when I was first elected, I promised to bring in a private member's bill on bail, which I did almost immediately in Bill C-274. It essentially said that if offenders have three indictable offence allegations with penalties of 10 years or more, the offenders will be presumptively detained, except in exceptional circumstances. The reason for this is that exceptional circumstances are often why legislation is found to be unconstitutional for outlier cases. We build in what is called a "safety valve"; in doing so, we make the legislation constitutional. Bill C-274 talked about three serious allegations at different points in time.

Then there was Bill C-313, which was another private member's bill. That bill was in direct response to the alleged killing of Constable Pierzchala. It proposed to change the reverse onus. This is the way I see it. We are talking about reverse onuses; people have gone into what a reverse onus is, so I am not going to get into that. What we are attempting to do right now is to expand the reverse onus.

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There has been widespread discussion about supports, but I believe the next step for Parliament to take is to discuss changing the nature of the reverse onus, and here is why: Let us say that we have a medication that is supposed to be working and has been working to varying degrees, but we want to apply it in a more widespread manner and hope it works better. To me, that is what we are looking at with the reverse onus, which we hope works, as opposed to changing the treatment in itself. Perhaps we have to get to the target of the reverse onus, because right now, from what I have seen, the reverse onus is not necessarily doing what it is supposed to do. That is something I encourage Parliament to consider as we move forward.

I want to acknowledge another constituent of mine. Mr. Glenn Fieber passed away at 84 years of age. I went to school with his children. May eternal light shine on Mr. Fieber. I extend my condolences to his family.

The last person I wish to recognize is Mr. Ron Maguire, another person from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo who passed away recently. He was known as Mr. A&W because he started working at A&W and then built up A&W restaurants. He received the key to the city and the Freedom of the City. My condolences go to his wife, Lynne, and his daughters, Kristi and Robyn.

It has been a pleasure to talk about bail and bail reform. I hope we can continue to have reasoned discussion in hopes of making Canada safer.

• (1650)

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his comments; I look forward to working with you on the justice file going forward. I was very pleased to hear your enthusiasm about moving forward at such a rapid pace today.

My—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the hon. parliamentary secretary that he is to address his questions or comments through the Chair.

Mr. James Maloney: Madam Speaker, since the member is interested in moving so quickly, will he go back to his lobby, speak to his colleagues, rally behind his leader and agree to get this bill passed today, as he promised he would do upon the return of Parliament?

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, I not only want to get this bill done, but I also want to get this bill right. There are a number of people who have things to say on this bill, and I am not going to tell them to be quiet. It is time for us to debate this bill. If the Liberals wanted it passed so quickly, why did they wait 246 days for it to come? They waited that long, and now they want us to pass it expeditiously, without any sort of discussion.

With that being said, I welcome my colleague to his new position. I look forward to working with him, perhaps even on making this the best bill possible.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is encouraging when we have all political entities inside

the House supporting legislation. As I indicated earlier, at the end of the day, it is about making our communities safer. That is really what it is all about for me; I know that is what it is about for my colleagues. That is what our constituents want us to do.

With all the different stakeholders, whether provincial or territorial jurisdictions, political parties of all stripes or law enforcement officers, I believe that there is a great deal of momentum in passing this legislation. A lot of consultation was done to bring it before us, and we have had it informally and in the form of the written bill for quite a while now. Can the member provide an explanation for why, by passing the legislation, we would be making our communities safer?

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, any time that we can tighten up bail, this is something we need to look at in this House. Clearly, Canadians of all political stripes of all occupations and socio-economic statuses are telling us and begging for us to do this. Therefore, when my colleague asks why we should be doing this, that is the reason. It is also the reason I brought forward Bill C-274 and Bill C-313, which I really feel fell on deaf ears with the Liberals.

I again come back to this: When we talk about passing this so quickly, why did we not debate it before we left for summer? Why did it take 246 days to bring this legislation forward after the premiers wrote their letter?

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I hope my hon. colleague from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo had a good summer. I know his area was also affected quite heavily by smoke.

I heard the exchange with the hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke. I know it is tempting in this place to paraphrase what another member has said, and in some way, make their comments seem less responsive to public will.

I just know that when my colleague from Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke commented about offenders who were shoplifting, it was not to trivialize what they were doing. Rather, it was to clarify a statistic used earlier in this place by a different member, who categorized a large number of offences as due to violent crimes. The member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke was merely providing a factual context that a lot of those crimes were not violent. I do not think he trivialized them.

• (1655)

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, in response, I do not believe that my hon. colleague who mentioned this was providing any sort of evidentiary basis or any sort of statistics to prove that.

Whether something is trivialized is obviously in the eye of the beholder. My point was that, when we talk about different things, it is my view that these types of offences can become very serious. We are not talking about dealing with people who have one-off offences. Nobody is asking to lock people up and throw away the key for somebody who messes up.

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We are looking at a subset of serious offenders who disproportionately commit a significant number of offences. I believe our leader will be the next prime minister. When he says we should be targeting these people who have committed a disproportionate number of crimes, that is not something to trivialize. Those are the people we should be addressing in our legislation.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canada's criminal justice system is broken.

Earlier this year, Leger, a polling company, polled Canadians on how they feel about public safety in this country. A significant majority, two-thirds, feel that they are now less safe than they were before the COVID-19 pandemic, and most Canadians think that provincial and federal governments are doing a poor job of addressing crime and public safety.

Another shocking statistic comes out of British Columbia. In B.C., people charged with violent crime committed while on bail pending trial on previous charges are released on bail again 75% of the time. That statistic comes from a recent review on bail hearings done internally in British Columbia the last couple of weeks of 2022 and the first few weeks of 2023.

The B.C. Prosecution Service, the crown prosecutors, asks for pretrial detention, but the judges deny that, so the accused are again free to go out and commit another crime. We have been hearing too much of that.

Public safety is taking a back seat to the rights of the accused. However, let us not blame judges. They are bound by the law. One B.C. mayor, the mayor of Nanaimo, who is a former provincial NDP cabinet minister, was quoted in *The Globe and Mail* in April: "The judges are applying the law as it exists.... The law needs to be changed. It diminishes public safety and destroys public confidence in the justice system. This needs to be fixed, yesterday."

Unfortunately our new Minister of Justice does not have that same sense of urgency when it comes to bail reform. Shortly after being appointed to his new position, he acknowledged the obvious saying, "there's a sense coming out of the pandemic that people's safety is more in jeopardy." He then added that he thought "that empirically it's unlikely" Canada is becoming less safe.

Our Minister of Justice has his head in the sand. Other law enforcement agencies are doing what they can to face the crisis in confidence in our criminal justice system and public safety. For example, the British Columbia government has directed their prosecution service to push for more restrictive bail conditions in cases where public safety is at stake.

However, these efforts are being blunted by the federal Liberal government's legislation, which requires judges to release detainees at the earliest possible opportunity and on the least onerous conditions. That catch-and-release bail system thinking, which needs to be fixed, is based on Bill C-75, legislation from the 42nd Parliament, passed just before the House rose for the summer four years ago, in June 2019.

It is poorly thought-out legislation. It is the Liberal government's response to its understanding of what the Supreme Court of Canada said in a series of cases about defending and protecting the rights of

accused people to reasonable bail and the presumption of innocence. It is poorly thought-out legislation.

What is the result of Bill C-75 four years later? Is it general support for this catch-and-release? Absolutely not at all. As a matter of fact, we have a letter signed by 10 provincial premiers and three territorial premiers, from all political parties, unanimously telling the Prime Minister that our bail system is broken and that it needs to be reformed and fixed urgently.

The premiers are hearing from their citizens and reacting to deep concerns from the public about the perception that the criminal justice system favours the accused at the cost of the public. Here is what the premiers said: "We write to urge that the federal government take immediate action to strengthen Canada's bail system to better protect the public and Canada's heroic first responders."

That letter was initiated at a meeting of the attorneys general from across the country in October 2022. It asks for reverse onus. They are saying reverse onus for repeat violent offenders would be one way to fix our criminal justice system. Reverse onus ostensibly makes it more difficult for an accused person to be let out on bail. They said, "This is just one proposal for much-needed reform".

● (1700)

They are asking for general reform of the bail system. Certainly, the police services and the people I talked to across the country over the summer have been saying the same thing.

Between the time of the meeting and the writing of the letter in January, there was another tragic event in Canada that underlies the need for urgent bail reform. OPP officer Greg Pierzchala was shot down and was killed. He did not make it home after his shift on December 27, 2022. He was responding to a traffic call. He did not stand a chance. They opened fire on him, and he died on the scene.

His boss, OPP commissioner Thomas Carrique, stated that one of the two people who were charged with his murder was out on bail at the time. He had been banned from owning any firearms for life since 2018. Three years later, that same person was charged with several firearms-related offences and assaulting a police officer.

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He was released on bail on a number of conditions, including remaining in his residence under his mother's care, not possessing firearms and wearing a GPS ankle bracelet, which he somehow removed. His trial date was set for September 22, but he failed to appear. There was a warrant for his arrest.

At the justice committee, when we were studying this, we had chief of police Darren Montour of the Six Nations Police Service, which was charged with supervising this killer's bail conditions. One witness had this to say: "What we've seen with the increased release of people on bail conditions is effectively a downloading to the police services of jurisdiction to become professional babysitters". Darren Montour added, "We don't have the manpower or resources to do that."

Commissioner Carrique of the OPP said at a press conference, "Needless to say, the murder of Const. Greg was preventable. This should have never happened. Something needs to change. Our police officers, your police officers, my police officers, the public deserve to be safeguarded against violent offenders who are charge with firearms-related offences".

Premier Doug Ford, shortly thereafter, said, "OPP Commissioner Carrique's comments on the tragic killing of Constable Grzegorz Pierzchala is the latest plea for the federal government to address the revolving door of violent criminals caused by our country's failed bail system...Too many innocent people have lost their lives at the hands of dangerous criminals who should have been behind bars — not on our streets. Enough is enough."

I agree with that, as does the vast majority of Canadians.

That is why we are here today debating Bill C-48, an act to amend the Criminal Code on bail reform. This is the government's response to concerns expressed by many Canadians, including the premiers. The premiers' letter captures the public perception, what we have all been hearing on the ground, but let us now see whether Bill C-48 captures that same mood.

There are a number of preambles in the introduction of this legislation. I am just going to read two of them that I think are informative. The fourth one reads, "Whereas a proper functioning bail system is necessary to maintain confidence in the criminal justice system, including in the administration of justice". I agree with that.

The eighth paragraph in the preamble says, "And whereas confidence in the administration of justice is eroded in cases when accused persons are released on bail while their detention is justified".

I would say that this sounds good. This is certainly a step in the right direction. This is a recognition that Parliament needs to find a balance between the rights of the accused and the protection of the public.

• (1705)

What would Bill C-48 actually do? It would introduce a reverse onus for serious offences, with serious offences defined as an accused person being charged within the last five years on something that would have had a 10-year sentence. However, I think the bill is too narrow. I do not think this legislation addresses all the concerns

that we are hearing from the public, and more work needs to be done.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to get my hon. colleague's opinion that this is a good bill, but it is not good enough on its own. Does he agree with me that our justice system is quite complex, and the provincial governments also have to make much-needed improvements to make sure that the justice system serves well?

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, the bill is a step in the right direction. I think it does respond in a manner to what the premiers have been asking for, but it is very narrow. The premiers have also asked for a much broader discussion on bail reform, and I feel that this legislation does not capture that. However, the bill is a step in the right direction, but much more needs to be done.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his great intervention on bail reform.

With the Liberal's Bill C-75, which was soft on crime, they allowed so many criminals back on the street. They went back so far in time that they actually reversed a lot of the bail requirements for things such as committing a crime with a firearm, which started under Pierre Elliott Trudeau. They even undid things that were done on mandatory minimums going back to the Liberal era of the seventies and eighties.

I would ask my colleague if he really believes that, because of Liberal ideology in Bill C-75, the hug-a-thug approach, it has ultimately resulted in what we have today with an increase in violent crime of over 32%. The city of Winnipeg, where I come from, is now one of the most dangerous cities in all of North America. It all has to do with the bail reform, and how the Liberals have always stood up for the criminal and never stood up for the victim. It is time for jail and not bail.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague completely.

The problem with Bill C-75 is that it favoured the criminal and did not find the right balance between the rights of the accused and public safety. Also, there is the perception that the public has in the fairness of our criminal justice system, which is the problem.

In Vancouver, and this stat has been mentioned a number of times, 40 people were responsible for 6,000 negative interactions with the police. This is just a revolving door. This is insanity. This needs to be fixed.

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Bill C-75 caused that problem. Bill C-48 is a step in the right direction, but it would not solve the underlying problems.

• (1710)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I think the average person on the street would probably agree with the principle that someone who has repeat offended at some point would require a reverse onus for bail. However, I am thinking of one of the cornerstones of the rule of law system in our country, which is the presumption of innocence. We have a right to walk the streets and have liberty, and if the state charges us with a crime, we have a right to be presumed innocent and not to be deprived of our liberty.

I am wondering how my hon. colleague squares that notion with the concept of reverse onus, where somebody who is accused would have to justify why they would retain liberty instead of being incarcerated pending a trial and pending conviction of the crime, which has not yet occurred. Does he have any concerns in that regard?

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, of course we all stand behind the age-old principle of the presumption of innocence and the right to reasonable bail. However, I am going to talk again about the 40 people who have been responsible for 6,000 interactions with the police, which is 150, on average, per person. At some point, perhaps they lose their right to be free on bail.

The problem with Bill C-75 is that it gutted the court's ability to punish people who breached bail conditions, which is why people keep coming back time and time again with no consequences. The public is losing confidence in the criminal justice system because of that revolving door insanity.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I think if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent, after consultations with all parties, for the following motion: That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment today, Bill C-48, an act to amend the Criminal Code (bail reform), be deemed to have been read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole, deemed considered in committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at report stage and deemed read a third time and passed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

An hon. member: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There does not seem to be unanimous consent.

The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul has a point of order.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, this is just to confirm that the NDP denied unanimous consent to my—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is not to confirm.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Nepean.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

I would like to speak to the bail reform bill, Bill C-48, an act to amend the Criminal Code.

Canadians deserve to feel safe and be safe. We have a critical issue that affects the safety and well-being of our communities. It is the need to strengthen our bail laws and tailor them to focus on violent repeat offenders and intimate partner violence. It is an issue that strikes at the very heart of public safety and the preservation of justice. That is why we introduced the bill, which is a targeted reform to our bail laws and is designed to focus on violent repeat offenders, gun and knife violence and intimate partner violence.

Bail laws, at their core, exist to strike a delicate balance between individual rights and the collective safety of society. They ensure that individuals accused of crimes are not unjustly incarcerated before trial, upholding the cherished principle of “innocent until proven guilty”. However, this balance can be challenging to maintain, especially when dealing with violent repeat offenders and those accused of gun and knife violence or intimate partner violence.

We developed this bill by obtaining expert advice and adopted an evidence-based approach to put Canadians first and address public safety concerns in our bail system. We have a legitimate concern that violent offenders may pose a significant risk to the community if they are released from custody while awaiting trial.

Bill C-48 would strengthen the law by targeting repeat violent offenders who use weapons when committing crimes and those who have a history of violent offending and firearms-related crime. Violent repeat offenders are individuals who have shown a pattern of engaging in dangerous and harmful behaviours repeatedly. They pose a clear and present danger to our communities. Strengthening bail laws in those cases is not about denying their rights but about prioritizing public safety.

By focusing on comprehensive risk assessments that take into account an offender's history and propensity for violence, we can ensure that these dangerous individuals are held accountable for their actions, while respecting the rights of others. We also need a stricter approach to bail for violent offenders to act as a deterrent. This would discourage individuals from engaging in violent criminal behaviour in the first place, as they may be less likely to receive pre-trial release. This bill would send a strong message that judges ought to seriously consider the public safety risk posed by repeat violent offenders at the bail stage, while ensuring that the fundamental charter right to bail remains intact.

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Bill C-48 would also strengthen the government response against intimate partner violence offences by expanding the reverse onus on these offences. The harrowing reality is that countless individuals suffer in silence, trapped in abusive relationships. Strengthening bail laws to protect victims and potential victims of intimate partner violence is not just a legal obligation; it is a moral imperative. We must provide a safe path to justice for survivors, ensuring that those accused of such heinous acts are not released to perpetrate further harm.

The bill would create a new reverse onus for accused persons charged with a serious offence involving violence and the use of a weapon where the accused was previously convicted of an offence of the same criteria within the past five years. A reverse onus for bail presumes that the accused should be detained pending trial and requires them to demonstrate why they should be released. A reverse onus does not mean that an accused will not be able to obtain bail. It means that the onus of proof has shifted to the accused, reflecting our intent that it ought to be more difficult to obtain bail in these circumstances.

● (1715)

One of the provisions of this bill is new considerations and requirements for courts regarding an accused's violent history and community safety. Bill C-48 would add a requirement that courts consider whether an accused person has a history of convictions involving violence when making a bail order. It would also require courts to state on the record that the safety and security of the community were considered when making a bail order.

Bail reform has long been the subject of federal, provincial and territorial collaboration because of shared jurisdiction over bail laws and their implementation. Bill C-48 responds directly to calls for reform from the provinces and territories. This bill is the product of collaboration with the provinces and territories. Hence, we have wide and unanimous support for this legislation from all provinces and territories.

The bill has benefited from input from mayors, police, parliamentarians, indigenous leadership and the legal community. Bill C-48 is part of our broader strategy to ensure the safety of all Canadians and is an example of what we can achieve when we work together.

Let me put on record the support this bill has received from key stakeholders.

The Premier of British Columbia said, "From the British Columbian perspective, this is a huge priority. We need this bill passed. This is something that has wide support, all-party support, all-premier support, and action needs to be taken."

The Premier of Ontario, Doug Ford, said, "I'm urging the federal government to use this time to quickly pass their bail reform bill."

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police stated:

We commend the federal government for acting on the urgency for legislative change and for recognizing that our...amendments were not calling for a complete overhaul of Canada's bail system....

We are convinced that the legislative changes put forth in Bill C-48 will go a long way to help eliminate the preventable harm and senseless tragedies attributable to violent and repeat offenders across Canada.

The president of the Canadian Police Association stated:

Front-line law enforcement personnel have been asking the government to take concrete steps to address the small number of repeat violent offenders who commit a disproportionate number of offences that put the safety of our communities at risk. We appreciate that [ministers] have worked collaboratively with stakeholders and introduced this common-sense legislation that responds to the concerns that our members have raised.

The Ontario Provincial Police Association stated:

Our members appreciate the virtually unprecedented consensus that formed calling for concrete action on bail reform, and we're glad to see the government has responded with the introduction of Bill C-48. We look forward to working with all stakeholders and Parliamentarians to see this legislation pass quickly.

The president of the Toronto Police Association said:

Our members recognize that our Charter ensures we all benefit from a presumption of innocence, but for too long the current balance has put the rights of an accused well above the rights our communities have to public safety and security. Ensuring the public maintains its confidence in the administration of justice is paramount, and I believe the introduction of Bill C-48, and the clear message being sent by the government that public safety remains a top priority, will help victims of crime, as well as all Canadians know serious, repeat violent offenders can and will be held accountable for their actions.

I would like to end my speech by quoting Brian Sauv , president of the National Police Federation, who said:

We see the federal government's tabling of Bill C-48...as a good first step, but this cannot be the only solution. Provincial and territorial governments must now look at their own justice systems and make needed improvements. Our justice system is complex, with many interrelated challenges and flaws that cannot be addressed through legislation alone.

● (1720)

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, it has been asked of the Conservative Party a number of times today if we support this, yet when we had a motion to move this piece of legislation along very quickly, the NDP-Liberal coalition opposed it. I would like to know why.

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, I have to disagree that the Liberals opposed the fast movement of this legislation. We do hope that the legislation will pass very quickly and become law as soon as possible.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I hope we will get some clarification on what happened earlier and perhaps a redo.

My question for the hon. member has to do with dealing with—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

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The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. It is not time for other questions. The hon. member who has the floor for a question is posing the question, so I would ask members to wait.

The hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Madam Speaker, my question to the hon. member is about how we deal with repeat offenders. One of the proposals in the bill is to make the option of community-based bail supervision available in all cases for the judge to select. That means that people could get bail who would otherwise end up in detention before trial. What we really need is the commitment of resources from the federal government to get that program under way, because it is far cheaper than detaining people and has much better outcomes, in terms of public safety.

Is the member prepared to commit the government to support community-based bail supervision?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, we have come to this stage after seeing how repeat violent offenders can get bail easily and recommit violent offences. The main purpose of this particular legislation is to strengthen our bail system so that repeat violent offenders do not get bail easily and that there is a reverse onus on them to prove that they should get bail.

• (1725)

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member's speech, and he devoted quite a bit of it to referring to the requests from the various chiefs of police for this legislation and took credit for the government's doing what it has been asked by these chiefs. The reason the chiefs of police were asking for this legislation is the damage the government has done to the bail system and the emergence of a small number of chronic offenders who make up such a disproportionate number of arrests.

Will the member apologize for the government's failed approach that got us to this point?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, I would like to quote the president of the National Police Federation.

He said that this bill “cannot be the only solution. Provincial and territorial governments must now look at their own justice systems and make needed improvement. Our justice system is complex, with many interrelated challenges and flaws that cannot be addressed through legislation alone.”

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, can my colleague provide his thoughts in terms of how important it was for the federal government over the last number of months to work with the provincial stakeholders and law enforcement agencies to ensure that we have legislation that can get unanimous support, as it has gotten virtually from coast to coast to coast?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, this is something that we have achieved through collaborative work with the provinces, territories, police and other stakeholders, and this shows what we can achieve when we all work together. This is the best outcome, which has been done because of collaborative work.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member from the area

of Ottawa about the importance of Bill C-48 for him and his constituents.

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, this piece of legislation brings a lot of peace of mind for families and communities, especially for the victims of violent crimes.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I do believe that if you seek unanimous consent you will find it in this House for the following motion.

I move:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practices of the House, at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment today, C-48, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (bail reform) be deemed to have been read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole, deemed considered in Committee of the Whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at the report stage and deemed read a third time and passed.

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is obviously wonderful to rise after the unanimous consent motion was passed here in this House of Commons on a very important bill for all Canadians, including the wonderful residents in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge.

This past summer, I met with many of the York Region police officers in my area, including the deputy chief of police. It was clear how important bail reform is to our police officers and our policing authorities. I have a sibling who has been a member of a police agency in Canada for over 25 years. I have heard a number of times from him how important bail reform was to him and his colleagues. Therefore, I am so glad that unanimous consent was received with respect to Bill C-48. I have a few comments.

It is wonderful to see all my colleagues here. With respect to the member of Parliament for Etobicoke—Lakeshore who usually sits in front of me, I wish to acknowledge his appointment as the parliamentary secretary. He is a great friend and has been a great friend for decades and I was very happy to see his appointment as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

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I am grateful for the opportunity to speak in support of Bill C-48, an act to amend the Criminal Code, bail reform. It proposes targeting amendments to the bail regime with the aim of enhancing community safety and reinforcing confidence in the administration of justice. Canadians have spoken and we have listened. All parliamentarians have listened.

Crime is a serious concern for communities across this nation and it must be addressed. That is why the Liberal approach is to pair legislative reform like Bill C-48 with programs that stop crime at its roots. We want to both hold criminals to account and prevent crime from happening in our communities in the first place.

At the onset, I want to highlight the positive reactions we have seen to Bill C-48 from law enforcement agencies.

The president of the Canadian Police Association called to say it is “common-sense legislation that responds to the concerns that our members have raised”.

The president of the Toronto Police Association said that “the introduction of Bill C-48, and the clear message being sent by the government that public safety remains a top priority, will help victims of crime, as well as all Canadians know serious, repeat violent offenders can and will be held accountable for their actions”.

The Saskatoon Police Service deputy chief of police said, “It is encouraging to see the voices of the community and the policing community across Canada are being heard.”

Members need not just take my word for it. They can take the word of those law enforcement experts. Bill C-48 is an excellent piece of legislation that would make positive change in our communities and, yes, keep our communities safer. I hope that the members opposite will help us pass this bill as soon as possible.

In essence, the proposed amendments in Bill C-48 would make it more difficult for those engaged in repeat violent offending to get bail. In order to accomplish this objective, the bill proposes, among other important amendments, to, first, create a reverse onus to target serious repeat violent offending involving the use of a weapon; make certain firearms offences subject to reverse onus at bail; and broaden existing reverse onus to target repeat offenders of intimate partner violence, or IPV. This point number three is very important as intimate partner violence usually means that women are being impacted by their partners. We as a government, since day one, have been working on these issues to ensure all citizens feel safe, especially women, in their homes, in their neighbourhoods and on the streets and I applaud this.

Before elaborating on the proposed amendments, I am going to take a moment to situate these reforms within the existing bail regime. As members know, bail is when a person charged with a criminal offence is released from custody while awaiting their trial or the outcome of their case. Accused persons are presumed innocent until they have been found guilty of the offence charged and have a constitutional right not to be denied reasonable bail without just cause. This is why typically the prosecutor bears the burden of showing why the accused person should be denied bail and detained in custody. The prosecutor must show that the detention of the accused person is necessary to ensure their attendance in court, for the protection or safety of the public including a victim or wit-

nesses, or to maintain confidence in the administration of justice. A reverse onus shifts the burden from the prosecutor to the accused person. It requires them to show why pretrial detention is not justified. This is an exception to the general rule and reflects Parliament's intention that it be more difficult to obtain bail in certain circumstances or for certain kinds of serious offences.

● (1730)

Through these reverse onuses, Parliament signals the importance of considering certain offences by accused persons differently at bail to advance the critical purposes of the bail system including the protection of public safety and maintaining confidence in the administration of justice.

Bill C-48 would create a new reverse onus for accused persons charged with an offence that is punishable by at least 10 years of imprisonment, which involves violence and the use of a weapon if the accused was previously convicted in the last five years of an offence for the same criteria. In addition, the bill would make certain firearms offences also subject to reverse onus at bail. These offences are unlawful possession of a loaded, prohibited or restricted firearm, breaking and entering to steal a firearm, robbery to steal a firearm and making an automatic firearm. These amendments are the product of significant collaboration among federal, provincial and territorial engagement, collaboration and co-operation. For instance, the offence of unlawful possession of a prohibited or restricted firearm is proposed to be added to the list of offences that will be subject to a reverse onus at the request of all the province and territories outlined in an open letter to the Prime Minister of Canada.

This bill also addresses concerns about the use of bear spray and blade weapons expressed by some jurisdictions and is consistent with the recommendations of key stakeholders, including police organizations. These amendments also complement the federal government's ongoing efforts toward gun control and reducing gun violence. All 13 premiers and law enforcement groups across this country support Bill C-48. If Conservatives care more about the public safety of Canadians than about petty political games, they will help us pass this bill today.

Mr. Ron Liepert: We did. You did update it.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: I know.

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Madam Speaker, I would now like to turn to Bill C-75, which has been the subject of much debate recently. My thanks to the hon. member from Calgary.

Hon. members may recall that the former Bill C-75 made the most recent set of amendments to the bail regime, amendments that were informed by extensive consultation with the provinces and territories and that were debated and voted on in Parliament.

The former Bill C-75 did not change the law on bail. It codified binding Supreme Court of Canada decisions and sought to reduce the number of accused persons in pretrial custody for low level, non-violent offences. It also enacted a reverse onus for accused persons charged with an offence and involving intimate partner violence if they have a prior conviction for violence against an intimate partner. This amendment effectively made it harder for those accused of repeat intimate partner violence, or IPV, to obtain bail. This bill would again strengthen this reverse onus by ensuring that it applies not only to previously convicted persons, but also to those previously discharged of an IPV-related offence. Offenders who are discharged of an offence are found guilty but are not convicted, in appropriate circumstances, in order to avoid the implications of having a criminal conviction. Again, it is so important that intimate partner violence be reduced in Canada. We know that every year countless numbers of women are killed by their partners and we must put a stop to it with all the tools we have available. Through Bill C-48, we are acting on that.

I am going to take a moment to remind hon. members of the systemic discrimination inherent in Canada's criminal justice system. In developing Bill C-48, the federal government was mindful of the potential impacts on indigenous people, Black persons and members of all vulnerable groups, such as accused persons facing mental health or substance abuse challenges who are already overrepresented in pretrial custody. That is why this bill proposes targeted amendments to the bail regime and addresses violent offending specifically.

Any reform to the current bail regime must seek to promote community safety and reinforce public confidence in Canada's bail system, while also considering and attenuating any potential disproportionate or negative impacts on these groups.

Ministers of justice and public safety across the country have agreed that both legislative and non-legislative action is required to ensure that our bail system operates as intended. We know from key stakeholders that enhancing public safety requires non-legislative solutions such as improving reintegration programming, allocating our resources to community-based bail supervision and enforcing bail conditions. I am pleased to see that all levels of government are stepping up to take action within their respective areas of responsibility.

In conclusion, I firmly believe that Bill C-48 as a direct action taken at the federal level strikes the appropriate balance in promoting community safety, reinforcing public confidence in how Canada's bail system deals with repeat violent offenders and in respecting the Charter of Rights. I am glad to see that all members have come together to pass this bill with unanimous consent.

• (1735)

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member left out of his remarks that, under the government over the past eight years, we have seen the reversal of a decades-long trend of lower rates of crime and lower rates of incarceration. We have also seen the emergence of chronic, repeat violent offenders running amok in Canadian cities and burdening local police, who repeatedly arrest the same people. They arrest them over and over again. This bill is, in part, damage control; it is undoing what the government did in its first Parliament.

Will the member take this opportunity to admit that the Liberals' approach has been wrong and that they will be reversing the approach that got us to this point?

• (1740)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, as a government, we have collaborated and acted in unison with provinces, territories and police organizations to come up with a bill, Bill C-48, that is charter compliant. It also brings in a number of provisions to make sure that our streets, our communities and our families feel safe. We want them to know that they are safe, the law is on their side and they can enjoy their livelihoods and their families. Kids can be in their communities, and their families will know they are safe.

We have three daughters at home and lots of kids in our neighbourhood. We understand the issue of property crime. We want to make sure that all Canadians feel safe in their communities, and this bill is one large step in that direction. It is great to see that unanimous consent was received from all parties regarding Bill C-48.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Obviously, this bill will be passing with unanimous consent; we did say that, but I would like to get my hon. colleague's thoughts on something. Yes, we did pass this with unanimous consent, but I feel as though Conservatives were ready to do that from the get-go. However, it took the Liberal government 246 days to table the legislation after the premiers wrote their letter.

Can my colleague comment on what appears to be a discrepancy between words and action?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, it is great to see the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo back here in Ottawa. Our families have known each other for approximately six decades, if I am not mistaken.

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As a government, we are always taking action to protect the citizens of this country, as well as to ensure that our streets are safe and our families are even safer. That is a very important priority for all 338 members of Parliament here. Our citizens sent us here to ensure that we do the right thing. Bill C-48 is a great piece of legislation that will keep Canadians even safer.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, since this is the first time I am standing up in the House since my appointment, I want to thank the Prime Minister for the faith he has in me. I want to assure all Canadians that I will be working very hard for them each and every day.

My friend from Vaughan—Woodbridge gave a really good speech, and I want to congratulate him for that. I know the member opposite just asked a question about timing. My recollection of what happened was that this bill was tabled months ago, well before we rose, and there was an opportunity to pass it. We pleaded with the Conservatives to get it passed. I appreciate the gesture today. Now that it is passed, I want to make sure that the Senate is able to pass this without any delays on the part of caucus members from the party opposite in the Senate.

Can my friend elaborate on how we can ensure that this law comes into effect as soon as possible?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations on his appointment; it is well-deserved.

We want to see the Senate deal with this bill effectively and efficiently, as all 338 members in this House did by providing unanimous consent for it. We would like to see the same thing done in the Senate as expeditiously as possible.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am going to split my time with the hon. opposition whip.

I know that we are at the point where we are going to pass this legislation, but I must put on the record that we do not believe that this is enough.

I will start with this question: How did we get here? After eight years of the Liberal government, we often ask this. The problem is almost always worse, and the answers are never satisfactory. The Liberals allocate blame to everyone and everything else. They are always claiming that it is outside of the government's control. The excuses are near endless, and either the policy prescriptions are absent in their entirety or they lack basic common sense.

Are crime rates up, or do we just think they are up when everything is actually fine? The justice minister in the Liberal government believes that Canadians simply think it is worse, even though crime is, in fact, getting worse. He basically says that it is all in their head.

Let us play back the tape, because two days after the new justice minister replaced the last one, he actually said this when asked if the country was less safe than it was before: "I think that empirically it's unlikely.... But I think there's a sense coming out of the pandemic that people's safety is more in jeopardy." That is a direct quote.

The reason people believe that safety is in jeopardy is because of the very fact that this country is less safe, and this is backed up by empirical evidence. The overall crime severity index was up 4.3% from 2021-2022, while the violent crime severity index was up 4.6% compared to the year earlier. Since the Liberals took office in 2015, the violent crime severity index has gone up 30%. Youth crime has risen by 17.8% in a single year.

The evidence is not hard to find. These numbers are from Stats Canada. They are the government's own statistics. In fact, Stats Canada said that the overall crime rate may be resuming an upward trend that was interrupted by the pandemic because of lockdowns and other government measures. This is what the latest data indicates. Somebody should let the minister know.

In Toronto, major crime is up this year by more than 20% since last year. Their cops are saying that; it is not us. That means more assaults, thefts, sexual violence and break and enters. Last year, I documented some of what was happening on Toronto's public transit. Public transit used to be an option for many in my community, until those who could do so simply opted out; those who cannot opt out have reason to feel unsafe, because what is happening on public transit in Toronto is unacceptable.

Here is a review from the last full year on record for the very city that the new justice minister represents. I will start with February 9 of last year. A TTC employee was randomly stabbed at Dupont station while just trying to do his job. One week later, a TTC bus driver was stabbed at Keele and Lawrence. Just over a month after that, a TTC operator was assaulted by six people in a swarming attack. In April, a man was shot dead on the TTC, this time at Sherbourne station, and 12 days later, another man was randomly stabbed at St. George station. That same month, a woman narrowly survived after being pushed onto the tracks. Less than a month later, a 12-year-old girl was sexually assaulted while riding a bus. Then in June, we all read the horrible story of a woman who was set on fire at a subway station. She later succumbed to her injuries.

This violence is already unconscionable, and we are only halfway through last year. In July, a man was assaulted while two men committed robbery at Don Mills station. The next month, a woman was the victim of a random assault at Sheppard-Yonge station. In October, a man fell asleep on the TTC and was assaulted and robbed. Just a few days later, a woman was stalked when she got off a bus in Scarborough; she was sexually assaulted. Then in December, things started to get worse.

On December 8 of last year, two people were randomly stabbed at High Park station, with one woman dying from her wounds. Two days after that, a TTC operator in Etobicoke was assaulted and robbed. In the same month, a woman was arrested for allegedly assaulting six different people on the subway.

In a separate string of incidents, a man allegedly sexually assaulted and exposed himself to multiple TTC riders. Toward the end of the month, an 81-year-old woman was left with a concussion after being assaulted on our city's transit system.

● (1745)

It is the fall of 2023, and the violence still has not abated. In fact, it has gotten worse, which is what the empirical evidence also says. It is not in anyone's head. Now, these are not all repeat violent offenders, but many are. However, my point is that the new justice minister ought to go outside, because this is happening in our own neighbourhood.

I will go back to my original questions: How did we get here? How did it get so bad?

In 2019, with Bill C-75, the Liberal government eased access to bail considerably. Bill C-75 legislated the principle of restraint concerning bail for police and courts to ensure that release at the earliest opportunity is favoured over detention. The principle of restraint is a linchpin that supports a catch-and-release justice system. This is clear in the numbers and the pressure on the federal government to fix issues with the bail system. It had no options. This is where we are at now. What Conservatives said would happen at the time is happening all over the country, including in the city where the justice minister and I both come from. Repeat violent offenders became the unintended consequence of changes to the bail law in 2019, which made it difficult to hold violent offenders in pretrial custody.

First, there was pressure that came from provincial and territorial justice ministers. Then, in December 2022, as members might remember, there was the murder of OPP Constable Greg Pierzchala. He was shot and killed by a 25-year-old who was out on bail. This shocked us all. The killer had a lengthy criminal record, including assaulting a peace officer, and he was subject to a lifetime firearms prohibition. Then, 13 premiers sent a letter to the Prime Minister calling on the Liberals to reverse their catch-and-release policies in order to protect the public, as well as first responders. The justice committee of the House also heard witness after witness calling for changes to the bail system. Witnesses from law enforcement to victim services and municipal leaders right across the board all said the same thing. In the face of random violent attacks committed by repeat offenders out on bail, the government is now touting this long-awaited plan to address the catch-and-release justice system it has enabled and overseen until it could no longer ignore the pressure and the evidence.

The bill before us would add the reverse onus provision for just four firearms offences and for individuals previously charged with intimate partner violence facing similar charges. This is not going to reverse the disastrous course that I just talked about in our own city. I do not know how to say this nicely, but it is not going to work. The Criminal Code amendments in Bill C-48 are only a tiny step to reversing the damage that the Liberals have done in masquerading as the be-all and end-all solution to the danger and the chaos unleashed on our neighbourhoods. It is hardly a solution.

The bill is very specific about what it considers violence, but it is not specific in a helpful way. To qualify for the new reverse onus provision, the suspect has to be charged with a crime involving vio-

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lence and the use of a weapon, and their record over the last year has to have the same conviction in it. Therefore, it would not apply if a person committed a crime with their hands, if a person repeated a property crime that put somebody in danger, or if a person's second crime did not use a weapon but the first one did, or vice versa. One starts to get the picture.

The system has become accustomed to immediate bail for violent offenders. If the Liberals are going to showboat about an eight-page bill that would change the structure of bail hearings, they might want to ensure that there is something that would ultimately result in a prescription for judges to make different decisions in the face of this system. There is nothing in here that would change that, so it would not end the catch-and-release policies that were initiated by Bill C-75. The bill before us would not even have restricted bail for the accused killer of Officer Greg Pierzchala, which is one of the very obvious cases that led the government to be forced into admitting failure and presenting Bill C-48. The question is this: Why not fix it?

I hope that the Liberals go back to the drawing board and actually solve for the problem, which is backed by empirical evidence in every single one of our communities right across the country. It is not in the heads of Canadians; violent crime is a problem, and these guys are not the solution.

● (1750)

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

One of the things my hon. colleague highlighted is the fact that what we are dealing with is really a small piece of the overall crime pie. The pie itself, and the difficulty that we are in, really lies with the Liberal Party, whether it be Bill C-75 from the last Parliament, Bill C-21 or Bill C-5. We now have sexual offenders or people who have committed serious gun crimes who can serve their sentence from the comfort of their home.

I would ask my hon. colleague this: How much further do we need to go, and is this going to help in a meaningful and significant way?

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• (1755)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, I think the solution is very clear. Violent suspects who break their conditions of bail should be automatically remanded to jail until their court date. It is the jail, not bail solution. It is what is going to keep our communities safe. It is what is going to stop the incidence of repeat violent crime that is a problem in every one of our neighbourhoods, on every transit system, and in the justice minister's own community. I suggest that if Canadians want a solution to bring home safe streets, they will have the option to elect a Conservative government in the next election.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, my question for the member for Thornhill has to do with solving the large number of repeat offenders who are not involved in violent crime. I wonder if she would agree with me that part of the solution for most of the people who cause most of those cases the Conservatives like to talk about is to get people into substance abuse treatment and mental health programs and lift them out of poverty so they can truly become more productive members of our Canadian society.

Instead, the Conservatives have been arguing against a lot of the decriminalization of drugs that would lead to better treatment programs. Which is it for the Conservatives? Are we going to put money into resources and treatment so we can reduce this incidence of crime in our local communities?

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, I am actually glad to hear my hon. colleague talk about treatment, because it is often something that is overlooked in what the NDP consistently pushes, which is safe supply. It is not working. There is a 300% increase in overdoses in this country. The member would know that in the city of Vancouver, in his own province, 6,000 crimes are committed by 40 criminals, which on average is 150 crimes per criminal. I do not know how this bill or anything the member suggests would be a solution to putting those 40 people away and solving 6,000 charged crimes. That is a countless number of victims of those crimes who do not come home every night to their families. We could stop this, but this bill would not do that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not want the member to give the impression that crime did not exist during the Harper and Conservative governments. I was a justice critic in Manitoba when we had serious issues with automobile thefts. It was the highest per capita in the whole country. I think there were close to 12,000 in one year. At the end of the day, we have to recognize that it is not just Ottawa. Our justice system is a shared responsibility, and it took the province to take action in order to get rid of some of those issues. I wonder if she can provide her thoughts on this. Instead of blaming Ottawa for all these problems, does she not recognize that the provinces and territories also have a role to play?

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's intervention, but today we are talking about provisions in the federal Criminal Code, which can be changed to make things better.

I will make a plea to those who are watching in my own riding. I have never in my entire life growing up in my community, in the city of Toronto, taking transit, been afraid until this year. I have rat-

ted off the incidents and I could not even get through it. I know that is how people at home feel. I know that is, in large part, due to the soft-on-criminal-justice policies that the current Liberals have enacted in this country.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Madam Speaker, let me first echo the comments of the Leader of the Opposition in response to the news earlier today and offer my sincerest condolences to the family of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was murdered near my home in Surrey.

Crime, chaos and disorder is the Prime Minister's legacy after eight years. This is the direct result of his dangerous soft-on-crime policies. Canadians' lives and sense of security are being destroyed in record numbers by criminals who should never have been out roaming the streets in the first place. Canadians are not feeling safe in their communities, on public transit, at public events or in coffee shops. They are rightly worried that they may be the next victim of the Prime Minister's crime wave.

The government's own statistics illustrate a stark reality. Violent crime has gone up 39%. Gang-related homicides are up 108%. Sex crimes against children are up 126%. Gun crime has increased every year and is up over 100% since 2015. The Prime Minister's response is to go after law-abiding hunters.

Across the country, murders are up 43%, the highest rate in 30 years. In Vancouver alone, murders have gone up 55%, and firearms-related offences are up 22%. In the last seven months alone, eight police officers were killed in the line of duty. There were eight in seven months. These statistics are alarming. We in the federal government, charged with national security, can never forget that they are more than statistics. These are real crimes happening to real people, with devastating consequences.

There are commuters carjacked at gunpoint, students lit on fire on the bus, teenagers stabbed at the subway and executions in the street, parking lots and driveways. This crime wave is a direct result of Liberal legislation passed, which was sponsored by the most radical minister of justice in Canadian history, the member for LaSalle—Émard—Verdun. His bill broke the bail system. Where is he now? He is no longer in cabinet. Under his bill, Bill C-75, the catch-and-release act, violent offenders are arrested, then released on a promise that they will appear in court. They then commit another offence within hours. They have time and opportunity to commit crimes literally morning, afternoon and evening.

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Take Vancouver, for example. As my colleague just mentioned, the same 40 offenders were arrested 6,000 times in a single year. That is 150 arrests each. Last year in Toronto, there were 17 gun-related murders committed by violent criminals out on bail. This summer in Edmonton, a father of seven children was stabbed in the chest, murdered at a transit station. Again, the accused was out on bail. The crime wave is evident in B.C. as it is elsewhere. In Surrey last April, a 17-year-old boy named Ethan Bespflug was stabbed and killed on a bus. A few days later, a young man was stabbed on the SkyTrain. In August, a man was shot in the face at a Surrey bus stop.

Recently, at Vancouver's Light Up Chinatown! festival, meant to bring the community together, a man who previously had murdered his teenage daughter by stabbing her stabbed three people. Last Thursday, Vancouver police arrested a man for four assaults committed in the span of 45 minutes. He used a chain and a concrete block.

One of the most horrific incidents in downtown Vancouver was last March. It was videotaped and shown on social media. A man standing outside a Starbucks was brutally and senselessly attacked, stabbed to death in front of his wife and daughter in broad daylight. We are talking about mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, friends and neighbours.

Sadly, the urgency of this crime wave seems to be lost on the new Minister of Justice. Just days after he was sworn in, he said, "I think that empirically it's unlikely" Canada is becoming less safe. He is in complete denial of the dangerous reality on the streets. He is telling victims of crime and Canadians who are rightly concerned, many living every day in fear, that it is all in their heads. Even by Liberal standards this was a ridiculous statement. Frankly, he should apologize for it.

● (1800)

For Liberal elites in their ivory towers, understanding the reality Canadians are facing in our communities is a difficult concept. I am pleased to see that the Liberals have finally woken up and are paying some attention to the heinous violence committed by criminals on bail. They should be listening to the experience of frontline law enforcement officers.

Constable Shaelyn Yang was tragically and senselessly stabbed to death while on duty by a man who was arrested for assault and out on bail on the condition that he would appear in court. He failed to appear. A warrant was issued for his rearrest, and when Constable Yang found him living in a park in Burnaby, he murdered her.

The case of Constable Yang is sadly not isolated. Last December, Constable Greg Pierzchala was shot and killed in the line of duty. The accused was out on bail, had a lengthy criminal record, including assaulting a peace officer, and was the subject of a lifetime firearm prohibition. Did I mention that he was shot?

Following this despicable murder, all 13 premiers wrote a joint letter to the Prime Minister demanding urgent action. Finally, after public blowback, the united call for change from the premiers and fierce criticism in the House from the Conservatives, the Liberals have admitted that they broke the bail system.

Today the Liberals have brought forward Bill C-48. We should all support this bill because it imposes a reverse onus on certain firearms offences and requires courts to consider the violent history of an accused. This is the reason the Conservatives asked for unanimous consent to pass this bill today. The NDP initially denied consent but has since agreed with the Conservatives that this bill should be passed today at all stages.

It is our view that Bill C-48 is a good start but still falls short, and a Conservative government will take steps to strengthen it. The legislation in its current form ignores several key recommendations put forward by the premiers, including the creation of a definition within the Criminal Code for serious prolific offenders and to initiate a thorough review of Canada's bail system.

Under Bill C-48, the accused killer of OPP Constable Pierzchala and countless other repeat violent offenders would have still been released back into the community. Under pressure from the Conservatives, the Liberals have now proposed a partial fix to an obviously broken bail system. The Conservatives can be counted on to fight for common-sense, thorough and meaningful improvements when we form government. It remains doubtful that the dangerous NDP-Liberal coalition will ever put the rights of victims ahead of the rights of criminals.

Last year, this coalition passed Bill C-5, removing mandatory prison time for serious crimes, including robbery with a firearm, extortion with a firearm, discharging a firearm with intent, drug trafficking and the production of heroin, crystal meth or fentanyl. Bill C-5 also expanded the use of house arrest for several offences, including criminal harassment, kidnapping and sexual assault.

Thanks to NDP and Liberal MPs, those who commit sexual assault can serve their sentence at home in the same community as their victim. Think about that. The Liberals and the NDP would rather be on the side of violent men than their female victims. There is perhaps no greater example of this than the case of Paul Bernardo, a notorious serial rapist and killer of teenage girls. The Liberals allowed that monster to be transferred out of maximum security and into medium security over the objections of the victims' families. We brought a motion to the House calling for Bernardo to be returned to maximum security but Liberal members denied consent.

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All of this is proof that the Liberal Party and its partners in the NDP cannot be counted on to protect victims or to restore safe streets. For that, we need a change in government. A common-sense Conservative government will bring home desperately needed safety to our streets, and we will do it by ensuring that prolific offenders remain behind bars while awaiting trial. The days of catch and release will be over.

After eight years, crime, chaos and disorder in our streets is the new normal. It should never be normal. Conservatives know we have a lot of work ahead, but we will fix our broken bail system and bring back safety to our communities.

• (1805)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague's speech was pretty wide-ranging and touched on a number of things. It contributed to the debate, but in some cases it did not.

We are talking about bail conditions and how we deal with people who commit crimes on bail. The member raised the tragedy outside the Starbucks in Vancouver, where Mr. Schmidt was knifed to death. However, that was by a person who was not out on bail, so I am not sure what that has to do with the legislation that is under consideration.

The current bail law in this country is that bail can be denied when an accused's criminal record is taken into account, particularly if they have failed to comply with past bail conditions or court orders. It is the law now that bail can be denied by a judge if someone has failed to comply with bail conditions in the past or if they have a repeat criminal record.

Could the member explain to us why she thinks the current law is not sufficient to keep those people in jail pending their trial, when that is the law right now?

• (1810)

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Madam Speaker, the reference to the horrific murder outside the Starbucks is about the rise in violent crime generally in Canada, and in my province of British Columbia, which we see unfortunately playing out, including on social media where people, and it is hard to even say, tape and send the videos out of actual murders of Canadian citizens.

That was one such situation. It is horrific. It has been brought about by an overall attitude of the Liberals and NDP in their coalition that is soft on crime and that does not deal with the most prolific repeat violent offenders. That is who we want to see targeted in our Criminal Code legislation. We will take the steps to do what is needed to get that job done.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member did a great job in her speech of going through the litany of what has unravelled in our criminal justice system under the current government.

During the debate, the Liberals are stepping back, as if they have had nothing to do with the problem that needs to be fixed, and they are taking credit for just following the recommendations the provinces made on bail reform.

Could the member take a moment to again reinforce the extent to which specific actions the Liberal government has undertaken over the last eight years have brought us to where we are today?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Madam Speaker, the concern is over the philosophy of catch-and-release.

It is a term we usually use when fishing. However, it has come to mean someone being arrested, sometimes for a violent crime, early in the day, then the police seeing that person going down the street in the afternoon, and they end up arresting them for another crime. Then the police see that person in the evening, and there they are again arresting them for something they have done with criminal intent.

This idea of catch-and-release, this endless revolving door, does not work. There is no deterrence at all in a system like that when we are talking about people prone to violence, when we are talking about people who would attack with chains and concrete blocks, who stab strangers at public events. This is destroying confidence in our justice system.

At the end of the day, the federal government has control over the Criminal Code, over sentencing and how this should go forward.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Before I begin, I just want to recognize a constituent who passed away, Ms. Anna Russo. I know that she leaves behind a daughter, Pina Russo. Her daughter Susie Russo, who was beloved in the Italian community, predeceased her. I send my condolences to the family.

My question to my hon. colleague is this: The member for Vancouver Kingsway just mentioned that people can be detained on their record. I recently spoke to a prosecutor who told me that somebody was in court for a bail hearing with 12 open files. Would my colleague agree that this is out of control, given those circumstances, and that we are not just dealing with one or two times of repeat offenders?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Madam Speaker, ultimately, we are dealing with an approach to dealing with criminality. When the approach is to do the least amount necessary, that is what ends up happening. The least amount is done in response to egregious acts of criminality.

• (1815)

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Richmond Hill.

This being my first time rising in my new role as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, I hope members will indulge me for a moment. I want to thank the Prime Minister for placing his confidence in me. I want to say how much I look forward to working with our newly minted Minister of Justice, who is my friend and colleague, and in whom I have great faith.

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I also want to reflect on some personal matters and how I arrived in this position today. I have been very lucky in my life to have a number of mentors. I think of my spouse, Deirdre, who could not be here today.

When I was called to the bar in Ontario in 1996, the Hon. Allan Rock was the minister of justice. He served as a role model to me throughout my career.

I think of my mother, who was engaged in politics her whole life and who taught me more about this process than anybody I have known. I think of my late father, who sat on the Supreme Court of Ontario for 26 years, from whom I learned more about life and law than any other person in the world.

I practised law for 20 years before I took on this role, and I could not be more proud. I will do my best. I commit to the House, colleagues on all sides, to do my best, to listen and to learn from all members.

With that background, I could not be happier to be starting my first day with this bill, something as important as Bill C-48, an act to amend the Criminal Code, bail reform.

This bill is an essential step in addressing growing concerns relating to how the bail system deals with repeat violent offenders involving the use of weapons, offending involving the use of firearms, and offending involving repeat intimate partner violence. The Government of Canada is unwavering in its commitment to ensure that our criminal laws, including our bail regime, keep all people in Canada safe.

I do not think I am alone in asserting that Canada is, for the most part, a very safe country. However, recent acts of violence have shaken the public's confidence in community safety. We stand, on this side of the House, and in all of the House, I dare say, wholeheartedly with Canadians, and I assure everyone we take threats on public safety very seriously.

The premiers of all the provinces and territories support Bill C-48. Police associations across our nation support Bill C-48. I was so pleased to see the Conservatives today stand up a short time ago to join us in support of this bill today, and I thank them for that.

I want to acknowledge the people who are most likely to be victims of violence in this country. Data shows that women are at a greater risk of being victims of violent crime than men. In 2019, the rate of violent victimization among women was nearly double that of men.

Further, indigenous women are especially vulnerable and reported an overall rate of violent victimization that was double that of non-indigenous women. Women with a disability are also at a higher and greater risk as they are twice as likely to be victims of violent crime as compared to women who do not have a disability.

Protecting victims, promoting community safety and reinforcing public confidence in the administration of justice are of paramount importance. This is why the criminal justice system includes mechanisms to support these objectives, including the strong bail system. Our government, as I said, is committed to upholding public safety by addressing the root causes of crime and holding criminals to account.

I have pages and pages of notes here. I was going to chastise the Conservatives for not supporting this bill today, but they pulled the rug right out from under me.

I do want to pause to reflect on something for a moment. I think it is important when we are speaking about any piece of legislation and in particular one that is so critical, vital and important to this one, that we have to tone down the rhetoric.

Making these absolute statements that people know to be false is not productive. They are not true, and they undermine the confidence of Canadians in our justice system, which is one of the best in the world. I am asking my colleagues, on all sides of the House, to please stop it.

We recognize that there is a need for legislative and non-legislative action to ensure that our bail system operates as intended in all cases.

The legislative part of the solution falls under federal responsibility, which is why the Minister of Justice introduced Bill C-48 to propose targeted Criminal Code amendments that aim to reinforce the bail system. We are pleased to have the support of all 13 premiers.

● (1820)

The bill proposes the creation of a new reverse onus for accused persons who are charged with a serious offence involving violence and the use of a weapon where they have been previously convicted of an offence with the same criteria within the past five years. This would make it harder for accused persons who have a history of repeat, violent offending to obtain bail.

This bill also proposes to strengthen the existing intimate partner violence reverse onus provision to apply not only to those who have a past conviction but also to those who have a past discharge for intimate partner violence. This amendment recognizes the potential elevated risk of reoffending for accused persons who have a history of intimate partner violence related offences. It also aims to address the risk accused persons may pose to public safety, especially for their intimate partners and other family members, including each partner's children, should they be released.

The bill would also require courts to consider if the accused person's criminal record includes any past convictions for violent offending and to include on the record a statement that they considered the safety and security of the community in relation to the alleged offence when making a bail order. The latter amendment further emphasizes the need to consider the impact of release not only on victims but also on the community.

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Given the higher rates of victimization among indigenous people, especially in remote locations, considering community safety and security when contemplating the released of accused persons on bail is especially important. This becomes clear when one considers the recent case from Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

The government is committed to changing our nation's bail regime without causing undue harm to communities that are already overrepresented in pretrial detention and in our criminal justice system more generally. These communities include indigenous and Black accused persons and accused persons from vulnerable groups, such as individuals with mental health and addiction issues.

A safe Canada is in everyone's best interest. It is beneath all of us to suggest anyone in this place disagrees. I hope my colleagues across the aisle acknowledge our common goal, and I look forward to working with them, not just on this bill, but on many going forward.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, I send my congratulations to our colleague across the way for his promotion.

In light of the government's record of being crime rate deniers, it is a relief to see it reversing one of the many measures implemented in Bill C-75, but I was particularly interested in the aspect of firearms making the potential for bail even more unlikely.

Specifically, on October 31 of this year, tens of thousands of people across Canada are going to become paper criminals because they have not handed in their AR-15, although they legally own them. Because these violations involve a firearm and it is a criminal offence, I am wondering where they are going to put all the tens of thousands of people who become criminals on October 31 because they legally own an AR-15.

Mr. James Maloney: Madam Speaker, on calling us “crime rate deniers”, as I said in my speech, how is that productive in this discussion or in any other discussion? What kind of message does that send to Canadians? If she or any other member of the House think that anybody on this side of the House is soft on crime and wants bad guys out on the street, they are just wrong, and everybody knows it, so I ask the member stop saying it, please.

As for the weapons she is talking about, I was born and raised in Thunder Bay. I had my hunting licence when I was 16. Never in my life did anybody say, “Hey, can you hand me the AR-15.”

Bill C-21 is strong legislation. We worked hard, including with members on the opposite side of the House, some of whom are in this chamber right now. I am a hunter myself. I would never do anything that would in any way infringe on the rights of Canadians who are legally exercising their right to go hunting and engage in that sporting activity.

• (1825)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my friend on his appointment as parliamentary secretary. I know he worked as a lawyer for many years in Toronto. Some of the statistics that were presented earlier oftentimes conflate a number of different things when it comes to bail. Could he tell us today what kind of consen-

sus existed to bring forward this bill from the police services, the premiers and justice ministers across the country?

Mr. James Maloney: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, who was my predecessor in this role, for the question. He has big shoes that I have to fill, and I want to thank him for everything he did in setting the stage for me.

We have heard today from some of the members opposite about how long it took, 246 days, to get this piece of legislation to now pass. However, if we want a piece of legislation to pass in its proper form, that is going to be accepted and work properly, we need to do proper consultation, which this government did. We met with police chiefs, premiers and ministers of justice across the country. I have had deputy chiefs of police in my office from Toronto, Peel and other regions in the GTA. I asked them point-blank: “If there is something in this bill that you do not like, tell me; give it to me straight.” They all said that they support the bill. However, the only reason we got it into the position that it is in today is through the consultation that my colleague referred to, which is why I am so proud that we were able to succeed and get this passed today. I want to thank members opposite again for their co-operation.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to ask my friend across the way a question. It gives me a little bit of hope that there are some atoms bouncing around in the heads over there to see a member like him get promoted.

However, if we want to reduce the rhetoric, we should be focused on facts. How many criminals would the bill actually impact?

It looks like very few people will be caught by the bill. The truth is that the bill does not go far enough. Most folks in provinces, including those who wrote the initial letters, have said that the bill does not go far enough to address the issues with bail.

Mr. James Maloney: Madam Speaker, as for atoms, I know the member is particularly fond of them.

However, it is an impossible question to answer. All I can say is that we need to continue to work with all of the communities I mentioned earlier to keep moving forward. If there are further measures that need to be taken to make our communities safe, we will do it.

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak today in support of Bill C-48, an act to amend the Criminal Code, otherwise known as bail reform.

It looks like my intervention is going to come after the unanimous motion that was tabled by the Conservatives and passed by all members of this House. First of all, let me congratulate all parties and all members of the House for passing this bill and getting it to the Senate. It is my desire to see the Senate pass it in an expedited manner as well.

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Since the passing of the motion a bit earlier today, a lot of focus has been shifted toward how inadequate Bill C-75 was. It was not a perfect bill, but I can say that it is not as bad as some of my colleagues across the aisle are making it out to be. I think it might not be a bad idea for the sake of Canadians, now that they are reassured that the amendments in Bill C-48 are going to pass, to spend a bit of time trying to understand not only what Bill C-75 was and what some of the challenges were, but also the regime in the bill, which needs a bit of demystification.

I want to start by noting that Canada's bail regime works well, not in all cases but in most cases. However, the government has recognized the growing concerns relating to repeat violent offending and offending involving the use of firearms and other weapons resulting from the recent and horrific acts of violence committed by some individuals while out on bail. This has to do with members of our community: repeat offenders who are out on bail. That issue has to be addressed, and Bill C-48 is addressing it.

Naturally, all Canadians deserve to feel safe where they live and work, during their commute and in the duties they attend to every day of their lives. That is why we have identified problems and are trying to deal with them. The federal government has introduced Bill C-48 in order to address these concerns, promote community safety and reinforce public confidence in the administration of justice.

I am not going to spend a lot of time on the details of Bill C-48, although that was my intent, but I will briefly touch on them. The bill proposes reforms to create a new reverse onus to target repeat offending involving a weapon, add additional firearms offences to the existing reverse onus provisions, broaden the reverse onus targeting repeat offenders of intimate partner violence, clarify what constitutes a prohibition order in an existing reverse onus for offences involving a weapon and require the courts to consider an accused person's history of conviction for violence, and community safety and security concerns, when making any bail decisions.

We have seen examples of violent crimes in communities across our nation. I think colleagues across the aisle raised this to the next level, but the fact is that those offences are happening. I mourn for the families who have lost loved ones through these senseless acts, and I want to assure them that our government cares deeply, not only for them but about protecting public safety. We stand with all Canadians on issues of public safety and their and their families' security. After all, we know that Canada is known as a country of democracy where public safety is at the forefront.

What do safer communities and safety look like? True safety requires both holding criminals to account and attacking crime at its roots to prevent violence from occurring in the first place.

● (1830)

I was glad to hear some of our NDP colleagues actually talk about some of the root causes and how we can address some of them. That was welcome news to me.

Our government believes fervently in both objectives. We will not sensationalize violence. We will not use catchy slogans to argue for draconian measures, and we will lead with evidence-based policies that make a real difference.

My remarks today, as I said, will focus on the core principles that underpin the law of bail in Canada, on clarifying the impact of the former bill, Bill C-75 and on our bail regime, with a very light touch on Bill C-48.

Accused persons are presumed innocent until they are proven guilty of the offence charged, and they have a constitutional right not to be denied reasonable bail without just cause. I highlight "reasonable bail". As such, they must be released on bail unless their detention in custody is required in order to ensure their attendance in court; for the protection or safety of the public, including any victim or witness of the offence; or to maintain public confidence in the administration of justice. There are fundamentals in place. I just highlighted the conditions that need to be considered when an individual is requesting bail, and these conditions are reviewed by the judge.

Accused persons who are released on bail may be subject to release conditions linked to the accused's risk related to the three statutory grounds for the detention I just mentioned. For example, the court can impose, and I emphasize this, any reasonable condition that it considers desirable or necessary to ensure the safety and security of any victims or witnesses to the offence. The point here is that the law is there and the court is empowered through the law to be able to consider the safety and the security of the victim and the witnesses and also assess the risk.

Such conditions could include that the accused remain in a specified territorial jurisdiction, abstain from communicating with any victim or witness to the offence, abstain from going to a specific place or geographical area, or deposit their passport as specified in the order. Once again, as we see, the guidelines are clear. The tools have been given to our justice system to be able to find that fine balance between doing the right thing and ensuring that we protect the community.

I will close by referring to some of the decisions that were made in the past. In the *St-Cloud* decision from 2015, the Supreme Court emphasized that, in Canadian law, the release of an accused person is the cardinal rule and detention is the exception. In its 2017 decision in *Antic* and its 2020 decision in *Zora*, the Supreme Court held that for most alleged crimes there should be release on bail at the earliest reasonable opportunity, with minimal conditions.

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I am bringing up these three cases because we are trying to say that although Bill C-75 was not a perfect solution, and hence we have Bill C-48, we will see that fine balance, that it protects the rights of individuals in the Charter and that it allows them to benefit from the opportunity of receiving bail if they are a first-time offender and the crime is not extensive. However, all of the tools are provided to the justice system and to the bail law to ensure that repeat offenders can be punished.

• (1835)

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I noted in his speech that toward the end the member did acknowledge that there were shortcomings in Bill C-75, and it was refreshing, because that is about as close as we have come today to hearing that the necessity of Bill C-48 is in large part due to the disaster that the government has been on criminal justice since it came into force. I congratulate him on his candour and thank him for it.

I would ask if he would go a step further and admit that Bill C-75 was a mistake.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for showing candour and acknowledging the candour I have shown. However, let us remember what the focus of Bill C-75 and the focus of Bill C-48 are. They are to ensure that we keep Canadians safe. They are to ensure that we put the right legislation in place. Naturally, no legislation is perfect, and we have to make sure that as time comes and as evidence presents itself, we amend the existing laws to ensure that we continue to keep Canadians safe and ensure that our laws are representative of the facts of the day and are strong in protecting Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if my colleague can provide his thoughts in terms of the degree to which the Conservatives might try to simplify things. I will point to some contrasts. For example, we think of judicial independence through our courts, the process of our crowns and so forth, and the role that provinces, territories and indigenous communities play in terms of the whole legal process. Is it fair to say that it is not quite as simple as it is portrayed, but that when we take a look at Bill C-48 all of the stakeholders I just listed are very supportive of Bill C-48?

I am wondering if the member can provide his thoughts in terms of it not just being the federal government that is responsible.

• (1840)

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Speaker, like all my colleagues, I had the opportunity to talk to my chief of police and hear from many of my constituents. The beauty of this bill, aside from the fact that it is amending and the fact that it is really focusing on repeat offenders and strengthening the bill is the fact that it had unanimous support. Why it has unanimous support and why it took some time, as I know the number of 200-some days was shown, is that this was collaborative and fact-based, and that we talked to all provinces, all chiefs of police and all stakeholders. This is what signifies Bill C-48, and that is why our colleagues across the aisle agreed with us and unanimously passed it.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have heard for several hours now from the Liberal bench, the

NDP and the Bloc how Bill C-48 is going to be an answer to improving community safety from coast to coast. As a former practising Crown attorney who has run thousands of bail hearings dealing with the individuals who we have read about and seen on television committing heinous crimes across this country who are already facing reverse onus scenarios and still getting released, how on earth does the member reconcile Bill C-48 by adding four new reverse onus provisions? How is that, in the face of what happens day in and day out in our courts, going to make Canada safer?

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Speaker, the bottom line is that it would, because there was a gap and through consultation and through the agreements across all the provinces and territories and all the chiefs of police we agreed that this is the logical next step to take. Is this the end solution to all the crimes? It is absolutely not, but this is a good step forward, and I am sure that as we roll out the new bill, Bill C-48, it will highlight other opportunities for us to be able to enhance and strengthen the bill. I look forward to working with all members of this House to further strengthen any bills that come to this House that protect Canadians and their trust in their government.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Brantford—Brant. I will keep my remarks somewhat short so that I can hear all that he has to say, which I always appreciate.

First of all, I want to welcome everybody back to the House as we continue our role in supporting our constituents. I am especially proud to be able to speak on behalf of the wonderful residents of Red Deer—Mountain View, many of whom I have had the privilege of reconnecting with this summer.

This summer, we all heard messages regarding things like housing affordability, but one of the other main messages that resonated with Canadians has been the message of safety. On this first day back in this fall session, we finally have a bill in front of us that speaks, even though in a somewhat fleeting fashion, to the issue of bail reform. The concept of bail reform is important. The reality is that there is much more to do in the reformation of our criminal justice system if Canadians are to truly feel safe in their homes and within their communities.

As we have heard multiple times today, the fact that 40 criminals in Vancouver have been charged 6,000 times baffles the minds of Canadians. Not only does this make a mockery of the bail system, but it ties up precious resources of both the courts and our law enforcement agencies. This precious time and money could truly be used to expedite trials, put more officers on the street to protect the public and, if these offenders were actually put in jail, make our streets safer, not just for the general public but for the unfortunate people living on our streets who also deserve our full attention. I also believe it is high time that governments respect the job that our law enforcement officers do and then ensure that those arrested are dealt with swiftly, that their hearings are done in a timely fashion and that appropriate penalties are meted out.

The Conservative leader has a strong message as to how we should work toward making our communities safer. “Jail not bail” is more than a catchphrase. It speaks to taking violent repeat offenders off the streets. It speaks to the enforcement of the rampant gun smuggling that has made many cities a war zone and it speaks to recognizing that these criminals have one thing in common: They hurt our fellow Canadians.

To this end, the Liberal government has introduced legislation that mirrors our concerns about serious repeat offenders. The question is: Can it be trusted to see this through to its logical conclusion? There must be more than just comforting words if this legislation is to have any meaning.

In conclusion, the point is that if we deal early with the real bad actors and mete out the appropriate punishment as required by the Canadian Criminal Code, two things are accomplished. First, it keeps criminals off the streets and disrupts those who organize to terrorize our communities and, second, it tells other would-be hooligans that we will not be tolerating this type of behaviour and their unruly actions will have consequences.

We have given the Liberals that opportunity by unanimous consent on Bill C-48, and I am hopeful that this legislation can make a real difference for the safety of all Canadians.

• (1845)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is encouraging to see the House come together and recognize the valuable contributions that Bill C-48 would make to Canadians. It would make our communities safer places to be. We know that because of the types of support at the many different levels that I referenced earlier. I would like to emphasize that law enforcement officers are also in support of the legislation.

Would the member across the way not agree that by working with law enforcement agencies and provincial and territorial jurisdictions, we have before us sound legislation that would, in fact, make our communities safer?

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Madam Speaker, one of the things the Conservative caucus had done back in 2017 was have a rural crime task force talk to thousands of Albertans through multiple meetings. Then the report that it had developed was brought to the House of Commons. We managed to get it into Motion No. 167, which was introduced by the member for Lakeland, which called on the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security to study the issue of rural crime in Canada.

I will not go into all of the details, but that was an opportunity we had when we spoke to law enforcement to try to make changes to the judicial system. Some of those also dealt with things that needed to be done as far as bail was concerned.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

One thing my colleague has highlighted is the vast nature of the problem we are dealing with when it comes to crime. Whether it be Bill C-5 or Bill C-75 in the former Parliament, the Liberals have really made a mess of the situation. When I think of Bill C-5 and oth-

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er ways the Liberals have dropped the ball here, I am thinking about sex offenders who are able to serve their sentences on house arrest and serious firearms offenders who, again, can get house arrest. I wonder if my hon. colleague can tell us where he thinks we should go next, especially when we think about how much work there is to be done.

• (1850)

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Madam Speaker, I suppose, going back to the study we had done on rural crime, there was a recognition that there are three levels of government that have to deal with the issues of criminality in communities. I think that is the important part. We saw that with the premiers and territorial leaders just pleading with the government to finally have some action, which I think is the critical part. However, we hear it in our communities as well from municipal leaders. Of course, as federal representatives, this is something we are always seized with. Therefore, it is important we have that communication with all of the leaders in the country and that we engage with law enforcement in order to make sure we can manage this properly.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak on behalf of my constituents of Brantford—Brant. In particular, it is very meaningful to me to have this opportunity to opine and provide some thoughts with respect to Bill C-48. In light of the UC motion that was passed, much of my commentary is now moot.

The time I have available provides an opportunity for me to share with this House that Bill C-48 is not the be-all and end-all to addressing the concerns that Canadians, premiers of provinces and territories, police chiefs and presidents of police unions have had for years. The escalating crime rate is out of control, and serious repeat violent offenders have ruled our streets. Bill C-48 is a step, but it is a small step on the path to pure bail reform.

I want to correct a misnomer. I have listened for several hours to several of my colleagues who have the view that the legislation itself is tabled as bail reform. This is not bail reform. This is a legislative amendment to the Criminal Code as it relates to the provisions regarding bail hearings. It takes four additional offences that put the onus on the Crown to prove to the court why detention should be necessary and reverses that onto the accused.

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That may sound like a good idea. In fact, it is a good idea. However, it is small comfort, and I will tell the House why. I posed a question to my colleague a few minutes ago about the vast majority of the offenders we have heard about, read about, watched on television and heard about anecdotally from a number of people. They are creating chaos and havoc, killing officers, killing innocent bystanders, killing innocent people and maiming and wounding innocent people who were simply trying to catch a bus or a train, were walking a child to school or were going for lunch. These are individuals who are already subject to reverse onus provisions in the Criminal Code.

I want to explain very briefly that just because there is a reverse onus provision does not mean it is difficult in practical terms to discharge. The whole goal of a bail hearing presided over by a judge or a justice of the peace is to have an assessment of risk, whether it is the Crown trying to establish detention or suggest appropriate terms of release to alleviate that risk, or it is up to the accused and their lawyer to discharge the onus by saying they have a risk but the risk could be mitigated by this particular plan. That is the test.

If the judge or the justice of the peace, after hearing the evidence and submissions, determines that the plan of release proffered by the accused through their defence counsel is reasonable and could satisfy the test within the Criminal Code under section 515, a release is fashioned. That is what has been happening for years. It has allowed serious repeat violent offenders to get arrested and, within hours of being released, commit the same type of crime or other serious crimes, continually getting arrested and released. All of this has its genesis, its origin, in the Liberal soft-on-crime approach. I am not going to get into those details, because I have very limited time.

I also want to address another false narrative that I have heard from the government: that it has heeded to the calls of the premiers of provinces and territories and police chiefs. The government has to a certain degree. Those officers and those premiers did want reverse onus provisions for those four criminal charges. However, they wanted more.

- (1855)

For instance, the Liberals have still not answered the call from all premiers and territories asking for the federal government to conduct a thorough review of Canada's bail system. I have not heard anything from that side of the House. Second, they have ignored calls from law enforcement agencies who are pleading for a Criminal Code definition of a violent repeat offender and a serious prolific offender, and for improvements to the bail hearing process so that serious violent offences are dealt with, with the urgency they require, without bogging down the rest of the court system.

What I wanted to share with the House is that this past July there was a meeting of the National Police Federation. Together with that federation, speakers met with a number of premiers in Winnipeg, Manitoba. They produced a paper called "Smart Bail Initiatives: A Progressive Approach to Canada's Bail System", which makes a number of recommendations. I hope the Liberal government will listen very carefully to them in facilitation.

For instance, the paper reads, "Recommendation 1: The Government of Canada, in coordination with provincial and territorial gov-

ernments, should establish a national standing committee on Canadian criminal justice system (CJS) data sharing, which would collect, analyze, and report on current trends, challenges and best practices." The second recommendation is as follows: "The Government of Canada, provinces, and territories should invest in deploying technologies that are proven effective at monitoring bail condition compliance. This would include an in-depth review of all existing available post-release monitoring technologies, and potentially the development of new technologies."

One recommendation I highly endorse is recommendation 3: "Any jurisdictions using a Justice of the Peace (JP) to preside at bail hearings should establish a standard qualification for those bail JP positions, which are based on education and legal background, such as a law degree and five years of legal practice experience." The sad reality is that the vast majority of justices of the peace we have in Canada are not legally trained. They come from myriad backgrounds. When dealing with serious, prolific violent offenders, they need, in my respectful submission, to have a legal understanding. They need to understand all the nuances and to understand how to read and interpret case law to determine what the best practices are in terms of finding that balance between protecting the rights of the accused and protecting the victim and communities. Sadly, that is not done enough.

Recommendation 4 is that "The Government of Canada undertake a national, systematic study of the CJS bail system which examines the most effective bail provisions that promote public safety and meet the CJS' objectives, including ensuring future court appearances and preventing the commission of new offences while on bail."

- (1900)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 7 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, Bill C-48, an act to amend the Criminal Code with regard to bail reform, is deemed read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole, deemed considered in committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at report stage and deemed read a third time and passed.

(Bill read the second time, considered in committee of the whole, reported, concurred in, read the third time and passed)

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A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

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[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is good to be back in the House of Commons here, after the summer, to bring back what we have heard not only in our communities. I have had the honour and privilege of travelling and hearing the stories of Canadians from coast to coast. In sharing those stories not just from my riding in eastern Ontario, but from P.E.I., northern Ontario and the Lower Mainland in British Columbia, I have to say the conclusion of many Canadians, and a growing number of Canadians, is very clear: After eight years of the Liberal and NDP coalition, Canadians are hurting. They are struggling financially, and some of the statistics that have been coming out have proven exactly that. Nearly half of Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque because they cannot afford to make ends meet. The cost of living is at a 40-year high. Grocery bills for the average family are expected to go up over \$1,000 per year this year alone. What they are seeing time and again from Liberal and NDP MPs is just how out of touch they are.

We have a carbon tax in this country that is hurting, not helping, the pocketbooks of Canadian families. We have a carbon tax that is not an environmental plan. It is a tax plan, because emissions are going up. We have a government with a coalition partner in the NDP that is cancelling clean energy projects. A tidal energy company in Nova Scotia walked away from a clean energy project. Numerous projects like hydro-electric in Quebec are cancelled, which were lower emissions, and instead, we have this group of MPs saying not only that we need a carbon tax but that it needs to be increased. When all is said and done, in the coming years it will add 61¢ a litre to the price of fuel in this country. That is 41¢ in the first carbon tax. There is a second carbon tax coming on top of that of 17¢. Of course in typical Liberal and NDP fashion, the government taxes the tax, so when all is said and done, in the coming years, it is going to get worse at the pumps, it is going to get worse to heat people's homes and the cost of living will be going up because of these increased costs in carbon taxes.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer says that in the province of Ontario alone, when the Liberals and New Democrats are done their carbon tax increases in the current round that they have in the coming years, it will cost Ontario families out of pocket \$2,300 more per year. That is before any of these phony rebates that they say cover it. They say that people need not worry, but should just pay more carbon tax and that the Liberals and the New Democrats will just cut it back to them and that it is cost neutral for them, but it is not.

Here is the part that is most frustrating that the Liberals and New Democrats just do not get: Farmers, truckers and businesses get zero rebates in the first place and they are passing that along to consumers. I am thinking that in P.E.I. where I was this summer, where there are four Liberal MPs, I heard repeatedly, the 14¢ a litre increase that came to Islanders on July 1 was bad economic news for P.E.I. The worst is yet to come.

Our Conservative plan is common sense. We would axe the carbon tax. We would focus on technology and not taxes. Canadians are hurting. They are struggling to pay the bills. We are seeing grocery bills stubbornly increase because Liberal and NDP MPs keep

taxing our farmers, our truckers and our stores more. When will the Liberal and NDP coalition get what I know they have been hearing in every part of this country? Why will they not just axe the tax?

• (1905)

[Translation]

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to see you here and to be here with my colleagues in the House this evening.

[English]

It is good to be back. It was a great summer. I had a nice time having conversations with my constituents as well, but it certainly is excellent to be back in the House representing our constituents. I am here with a new role, and it is a huge honour and privilege to be the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change in addition to my role as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Sport.

Indeed, the fight against climate change is the most important battle of our generation, in my view, and in most people's views, and it is an honour and privilege to be serving in this capacity today because climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time. In recent years, climate change has had unprecedented effects on Canadians and people globally. Impacts from climate change have affected our homes, the cost of living, infrastructure, health and safety, and economic activity in communities across Canada and in the world. Inaction on climate change is just not an option in 2023.

This summer, news was rampant across this country about the devastating wildfires and the impacts they are having on our communities. The air quality was an issue. People were fleeing their homes. People were evacuating as far north as Yellowknife. It is not an option to ignore the impacts of climate change. Putting a price on carbon pollution is an effective and essential part of any serious response to the global challenge of climate change, and our approach is designed with a focus on affordability. It is not just possible but incumbent on everybody in the House to care about more than one thing at a time.

I heard from my constituents over the course of the summer that affordability is a top concern. I also heard from people that fighting climate change is a top concern. Any serious government needs to have a plan to fight for both, and indeed we do.

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Sadly, what we are fighting against in the House is this thinly diluted version of a Republican party, where evidence and facts just do not seem to matter anymore. All that seems to matter to these Conservatives is politics because that is their only path to power, so they repeat these cheesy slogans over and over again to try to shift the narrative away from important issues, such as climate change. This is despite the fact that good economists are producing evidence that suggests pricing pollution only has a 1% impact on prices going up on certain items and that it only adds a tenth of 1% to inflation.

It is dishonest and it is disheartening to see so-called progressive Conservatives, such as my friend and colleague opposite, who campaigned on a promise to price pollution, turn on their heels and run in the opposite direction when their new leader changes his mind. It is something they all campaigned on, and it is very disheartening to see. It is actually stark to recognize that there are members of the Conservative Party who campaigned on a promise to price carbon, and now they are going against their promise to those constituents. Many of those progressive Conservatives in those ridings indeed voted for those ideas.

In closing, I would like to read a quote. I call it the “good idea”. It reads:

The “good idea”...seeks to advance — and that I wholeheartedly support — is that for any economic activity, especially the production of energy, we should identify its negative environmental impacts, devise measures to avoid, mitigate or adapt to those impacts, and include the costs of those measures in the price of the product. It's the idea behind using carbon pricing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, water pricing to conserve water, garbage pricing to deal with waste, and road pricing to reduce traffic congestion.

That quote is from Preston Manning, the idol, the Conservative mentor of the leader of the Conservative Party.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, the Liberals are using one part of their environmental platform that is working well. They are recycling the same failed ideas and talking points they had when they left here in June. In the months of our leader and our caucus travelling around the country, including into communities where we currently do not hold seats but where Canadians are desperate for a voice, we are hearing the need for change.

When we talk about affordability, I hear the message that it will change a little bit. They still support the carbon tax. They still support it being 61¢ a litre, tripling or quadrupling in the coming years, but at the same time now they are saying that it only adds a little bit. To the farmer who gets zero rebates, the trucker who gets zero rebates and the stores that get zero rebates, it is like a compound interest in tax on the pocketbooks of Canadians.

At the same time they pretend to be proud of their climate change record, they are driving up taxes and the cost of living, while at the same time emissions are still going up. They are letting clean energy projects be cancelled in this country. Instead, they have no problem taxing the pocketbooks.

● (1910)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Madam Speaker, the government's approach to carbon pricing pollution is working, and any reference to the contrary is false. Industries are encouraged to become more efficient, and they are using cleaner technologies. The member opposite says they are all for technology and not for pricing carbon,

but they work hand in hand, and any economist worth their salt would say the exact same. Indeed, Preston Manning, a Conservative economist worth his salt, says the exact same thing.

Another prominent Conservative, who I am privileged to be able to use the name of in the House now, Erin O'Toole, campaigned just recently, back in 2021, on a promise to price pollution, just as every other Conservative on that side did. I recall when my colleague from eastern Ontario, my friend, campaigned alongside Erin O'Toole and was proud of his carbon pricing plan and was proud of the fact that a Conservative stood up and said it is important to fight climate change. We wish that more Conservatives would.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, in June I asked the Prime Minister if he understood the connection between the cost of energy and the price of food. In response, the Minister of Agriculture bragged about how hard the government was working to spread manure. As a long-serving member, I have heard some cow pies for answers in the House before, but never literally.

It should worry Canadians that, when pressed on food prices, this tired government can only answer with accomplishments on bovine excrement. It is sad to see these ministers forced to utter bull dung responses on behalf of a distracted, petulant, pouty Prime Minister. Unfortunately, for Canadians, the carbon tax was just a first blow in the Liberal Party's war on affordable food.

Canadians understand that it is the official policy of the Liberal Party to make energy more expensive. Now, it is officially in favour of making food more expensive. New food packaging regulations are going to reduce competition and drive up prices even higher. New food labelling regulations will make food more expensive, and now the Prime Minister is threatening to impose a new tax on grocery stores. Are our Liberal colleagues getting high on their own safe supply? Was the air cut off in the Liberal caucus room last week? That might explain why Liberals think a new tax on grocery stores would reduce food prices.

These Liberals claim that by taxing carbon, we will get less carbon. After all, they have seen that putting a tax on news links shared on social media results in news links disappearing. Now the Prime Minister wants to put on NDP orange face and join the socialists in bullying grocery chain stores. This type of far left, radical populism was fashionable in places like Venezuela and Argentina, until the day the consequences became clear. For many Canadians, that day has already arrived.

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After eight years under this radical, far-left gang, life has become unaffordable for millions. The price of a house has doubled. The cost to rent has doubled. Food bank usage is at an all-time high. Deaths of despair, whether from drug overdoses or state-sponsored suicide, are upsetting all-time records. This government's radical ideology is killing Canadians, and the Liberals' only solution is more of the same: more taxes, more bureaucrats, more regulations, more red tape and, if the Minister of Agriculture is to be believed, more cow manure.

Once upon a time, this country had powerful ministers of agriculture. They were often farmers with noses for BS. They would have seen it as their duty to stop radical environment ministers from pushing policies to make food more expensive. Instead, the last ag minister led the charge to make fertilizer more expensive. They just do not get it. It takes energy to manufacture fertilizer. It takes energy to ship fertilizer to the farmers. It takes energy to spread fertilizer. It takes energy to harvest crops. It takes energy to ship crops to processors. It takes energy to process crops into food. It takes energy to ship the food to stores.

The official policy of the Liberal Party is to increase the cost of energy. Now, it has an official policy to make food packaging more expensive. Yet these Liberals deny that their own policies are working exactly as intended. When will they come clean with Canadians about their policy to make life unaffordable?

• (1915)

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke for the opportunity to talk about our government's commitment to strong, profitable and sustainable farm businesses across this great country.

[Translation]

I would like to remind opposition members that the majority of the agricultural sector's emissions are not subject to carbon pricing. There are also exemptions for gasoline and diesel fuel used by farmers for agricultural purposes. There is also a partial rebate for commercial greenhouse operations.

[English]

As well, we will be returning a portion of the proceeds from the price on pollution directly to farmers in backstop jurisdictions through a refundable tax credit.

[Translation]

This may apply to farmers in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador.

We support our farmers, who are bearing the brunt of the effects of climate change. Over the past few years, we have all seen how difficult recent weather disasters in Canada have been for them.

[English]

We need only look at the severe drought and wildfires in western Canada and the flooding in Atlantic Canada this past year.

[Translation]

Marco Corbin of La Halte des Pèlerins in Sherbrooke testified about the enormous amount of work he had to do around the clock during last spring's late frosts to save his harvest. By helping producers like Mr. Corbin get back on their feet, we are also helping them be more resilient to extreme weather conditions, which are becoming more and more frequent.

In Alberta, for instance, our on-farm climate action fund has already helped more than 1,200 farmers with \$10 million in funding to adopt practices on one million acres in the province, including cover crops, nitrogen management and rotational grazing. An additional \$18 million or so has been allocated to Alberta this year.

[English]

We are also responding to help farmers cover costs such as soil testing, soil mapping, organic amendments and seeds.

[Translation]

What I am trying to say is that farm families across the country can rest assured. We will stand by them and support their growth, resilience and viability. Several agricultural sectors in Canada have already committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. I am thinking in particular of dairy and beef producers. This demonstrates the willingness and commitment of agricultural producers to transition to a low-carbon economy, while continuing to work to put food on the table for Canadians.

[English]

Just as importantly, some of these practices may generate positive economic benefits. It is a win for farmers and a win for the environment.

[Translation]

Once again, I thank the hon. member for the question.

[English]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary is living in denial, but Canadians know the truth. It is the Liberals who have been in power for the last eight years. Liberal policies are driving up prices and Liberal spending is fuelling inflation, yet the Liberals still try to gaslight Canadians. When the price of energy shot up in Atlantic Canada this summer, the radical Minister of Environment claimed this was all the fault of the companies and not his carbon tax and clean fuel regulations. It is another example of Liberal gaslighting. Here is what the Minister of Environment's own clean fuel regulations state: "it is estimated that provinces in Atlantic Canada will be more negatively affected by the Regulations."

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It is clear from the comments of the unnamed Liberal MPs recently published on CBC that the government has been gaslighting its own caucus. The environment minister has known for years that his energy regulations would hammer Atlantic Canadians and he pushed them through anyhow.

It is time for the Liberals to fire their leader and reverse their policies of making life more expensive for everyone.

[Translation]

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Madam Speaker, the member knows full well that many factors affect food prices, including, of course, climate change.

[English]

That is why we are helping farmers to take action on climate change through popular programs such as the on-farm climate action fund.

[Translation]

We also fully recognize that the rising cost of food is putting tremendous pressure on families. In Canada, food insecurity is directly linked to inadequate household income. That is why we launched the grocery rebate in July to provide \$2.5 billion in financial assistance to low-income households.

As part of our government's first food policy for Canada, we invested \$70 million over five years to support community initiatives to improve access to healthy, nutritious, diverse food. Provided through the local food infrastructure fund, this money has enabled organizations such as Moisson Estrie—

• (1920)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, at a time when Canadians continue to struggle with basic affordability, like being able to feed themselves and being able to heat their homes as they get their first propane or oil delivery, and as the cold weather starts to set in and folks start receiving natural gas bills, many folks cannot even find a home because of the price of mortgage payments and the price of down payments. The price of rent has doubled under the government.

Canadians are still picking up massive tabs for the jet-setting, vacationing lifestyle of the Prime Minister. Six figures is what it costs when the Prime Minister wants to take a holiday, even though Canadians already keep up an official holiday residence for the Prime Minister, which has seen massive multi-million dollar upgrades during his time in office. His recent trip to Jamaica saw taxpayers pick up another six-figure tab. What is interesting here is that his host is a very recent donor to the Trudeau Foundation and is also the godson of the Prime Minister's late father.

No one disagrees that politicians, public servants and prime ministers are entitled to time away. A prime minister needs security and there are some costs that go along with that, but what is reasonable?

The common-sense approach would tell us that the regular cost we would incur if we were not a public office holder we would pay anyway. The price to stay at this particular locale is \$9,000 a night. Who picked up the tab for that at a time when Canadians cannot afford the basics? Their grocery bags get lighter and lighter every week because they cannot afford food, and they have seen the inflationary policies of the government drive up the cost of everything. Its carbon tax on everything is driving up the cost of these essentials. Are they expected to pick up a tab for \$9,000 a night for time off? That does not sound like a Sunwing or discount vacation to me, or a prime minister who is particularly engaged with the struggles that everyday Canadians are facing.

Canadians had questions about this and they put those questions to members of Parliament. We have not had an ethics commissioner for six months, and the government has just finally appointed an interim commissioner without conversation or co-operation with opposition parties. Canadians need to have confidence that, first of all, the rules are being followed, but also that the government realizes the realities they are facing every single day. The Liberal Prime Minister continues to drive up costs while also asking Canadians to pick up the tab for his expensive holidays.

When we asked for details from the government, it was quite indignant and was not prepared to offer an answer. However, I hope that with hindsight, time and the reality of the situation that we find ourselves in now, the parliamentary secretary will be able to provide clarity to Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a number of years ago, when I was in opposition, I saw then prime minister Stephen Harper in front of the Parliament buildings, and I noticed there was an exceptional number of security staff around the prime minister.

I had given that some serious thought, recognizing Canada and the role that it plays in the world today and that with the threats that are out there around the world it was a good thing that then prime minister Harper had the type of security force that was there to protect him. It was not Stephen Harper per se, it was the Prime Minister of Canada.

Where we could agree is that when one is a leader of a country like Canada, as Prime Minister, sadly, it is true that they become a target. That means there has to be a commitment to support our Prime Minister.

The term the member used was jet-setting. It is not like the Prime Minister could hop on an Air Canada flight to fly outside Canada for a holiday by himself. It does not work that way. It did not work that way for Stephen Harper. There is a security detail. It is not quite as simple as the Conservatives often try to give the impression. I would suggest that is a false impression.

I remember when I was in opposition. If members want to talk about abuse, what always came to my mind is when the former prime minister Stephen Harper went to India. We were talking about India earlier today. It is hard to believe, but his car was actually flown to India. It cost the taxpayers over \$1 million. That would be a lot of nights at a hotel. They do have vehicles in India.

We should compare apples to apples and oranges to oranges. I would suggest that the member needs to be reminded not to throw rocks at glass houses. At the end of the day, the member made reference to the Ethics Commissioner. I am not too sure if Canada had an Ethics Commissioner when that incident took place, because having an Ethics Commissioner is relatively new to Canada. The position was not there when Stephen Harper was first elected. I suspect that if it had been, and there is always a learning curve that takes place, there might have been some thoughts in regard to a number of issues. One could think of the Senate, for example, and some of the things that have taken place in the Senate.

We need to focus on the real issues that Canadians are facing today, issues such as inflation. That is one of the reasons why we met and called for the big grocery giants to come to Ottawa, so we could state our concerns and indicate that we would take action. We are upset with the degree to which grocery stores are making record profit, while at the same time we are seeing grocery inflation.

That is not to mention the announcement of investing in ensuring that we get more homes built. Those are the issues that are really important to Canadians—

• (1925)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, the member opposite talks about glass houses while millions of Canadians are struggling

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to just realize the dream of having a house. They cannot because of, and it is exactly as the member said, the inflationary policies of the Liberal government.

When Canadians are asked to pick up the tab for luxury vacations for the Prime Minister, such as \$9,000 a night for Jamaica and \$6,000 a night in London, my goodness, the Prime Minister has not found a dollar that he is not willing to tax out of Canadians' pockets and spend on his own luxury and excess.

Canadians want policies from the government that would see that Liberals stop their reckless spending, their reckless inflationary policies and focus on the needs of Canadians. The Liberals could start doing that by axing their carbon tax, which is driving up the cost of everything.

Is the parliamentary secretary willing to do the right thing and commit today for the government to stop driving up the cost of everything, including home heating?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I hope the Conservatives would understand and appreciate, from the last seven or eight years, that their sole focus has been to be critical and make character assassinations, whether of the Prime Minister or other ministers within the government. They should take that same force, that desire to make politics look as ugly as possible, and turn it into something more positive, such as dealing with inflation or housing.

Never before have we seen a government that has invested more in housing. In fact, during the nineties, political parties here in Ottawa were pulling out of their housing commitments. This government and this Prime Minister have made commitments and continue to work with other jurisdictions across Canada so that we can have more homes.

• (1930)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): 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 7:30 p.m.)

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