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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

RAY SAWADA

Mr. Parm Bains (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently the Richmond Sockeyes Junior Hockey Club honoured a local hero as they retired the jersey of Ray Sawada, who passed away at the age of 38 while playing a recreational hockey game earlier this year.

Ray Sawada played junior hockey for the Richmond Sockeyes from 2001 to 2003, and he was selected 52nd overall in the NHL draft by the Dallas Stars in 2004. Ray retired from professional hockey in 2016 and became a Burnaby firefighter. He lived with his wife, Nicole, and their two daughters in Richmond.

Richmond's Minoru Arena was standing room only, with friends, family, the local hockey community and firefighters, as we all witnessed Ray's jersey raised to the rafters.

The Burnaby Firefighters Charitable Society presented a donation for \$27,000 in Ray Sawada's memory, to set up a bursary subsidizing hockey players, with \$1,000 per year for 27 years. Firefighters also presented Ray's jersey from the World Police and Fire Games, held in Winnipeg this year, to Richmond native Doug Patterson, the first captain and current president of the Richmond Sockeyes.

The memory and legacy of Ray Sawada will continue forever in Richmond.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the joy and spirit of Christmas, which is deeply woven into the fabric of our communities in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

In our communities, Christmas is more than a holiday. It is a celebration of Christ's birth. It is a season of unity and warmth that brings together families and neighbours, echoing the rich traditions and vibrant culture that define us.

This year, I had the immense pleasure of attending Santa Claus parades in many of our communities. Each parade was a spectacular display of community spirit and festive cheer, showcasing the unique charm of each town. The festive spirit is alive and well in our communities.

In the coming days, I look forward to attending more celebrations throughout the region, where our sense of community and shared joy truly exemplifies the spirit of the season.

As we come together to celebrate, let us continue to spread kindness, laughter and joy. After all, it is the most wonderful time of the year. I wish everyone a merry Christmas, a happy Hanukkah and a season filled with happiness, health and prosperity.

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UNITE NETWORK

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, parliamentarians can achieve a lot when they work together. When it comes to global public health, we can do exactly that through UNITE. This is an international interparliamentary network for global public health.

UNITE members are committed to working towards the promotion of efficient and sustainable policies for improved global health systems in alignment with the United Nations' sustainable development goals. As the North American director, I worked with representatives from more than 100 countries, highlighted Canada's leadership and discussed best practices.

By working together, parliamentarians can play a key role in strengthening public health in Canada and around the world.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE TRAGEDY

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have a duty to remember the Polytechnique tragedy out of respect for the victims and their loved ones and to make sure that it never happens again. Since 14 women were slaughtered in 1989 by a fanatical misogynist, every year we say, “never again”.

Nevertheless, we are seeing an ever-increasing number of femicides every year. We have an obligation to find a solution to put an end to this downward spiral.

We owe it to Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault and Annie Turcotte.

Thirty-four years later, now more than ever, we say, “never again”.

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● (1410)

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF LOISIR SPORT OUTAOUAIS

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is the 25th anniversary of Loisir sport Outaouais. Its mission is truly commendable, because it enhances the vitality of our communities.

For 25 years, Loisir sport Outaouais has made sure that youth, people with reduced mobility and seniors can enjoy quality recreational and outdoor activities. It supports municipalities' efforts to offer their citizens vibrant living environments.

I sincerely thank the entire team for their commitment. I salute Loisir sport Outaouais's remarkable contribution to the Outaouais delegation's participation in the Quebec Games. The youth of our region will remember that forever.

Happy 25th anniversary to Loisir sport Outaouais.

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[English]

CONGRESS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with great honour that I welcome the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples to Parliament Hill this week.

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, or CAP, is one of five national indigenous representative organizations, and it advocates for over 800,000 Métis, status, non-status and southern Inuit indigenous people living off reserve in Canada.

CAP National Chief Elmer St. Pierre emphasizes the pressing need for reconciliation to translate into action, as critical issues affecting indigenous peoples off reserve are often overlooked. CAP's dedication to raising concerns, from housing to missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, health care and the overincarceration of indigenous individuals, underscores the gravity of the challenges indigenous peoples face daily. The reminder that the

government must ensure equal opportunities and access to programs for all indigenous peoples is a call for justice and inclusivity.

After over five decades of advocacy, CAP remains steadfast in its commitment to indigenous people and their needs. I welcome CAP to Parliament Hill.

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HALIFAX EXPLOSION

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today in my home city of Halifax, we pause to acknowledge the 106th anniversary of the Halifax explosion. On December 6, 1917, as World War I raged on, the collision of the SS *Mont-Blanc* and SS *Imo* in the Halifax harbour resulted in the greatest human-made explosion to that point in history. Two thousand people were killed, 9,000 more were injured, hundreds of acres of our city were immediately erased, and our north end vanished from the map.

In the immediate wake of the disaster, citizens rallied together. Neighbours became first responders, navigating the wreckage to aid those in need. This collective response showcased the strength and unity embedded in the fabric of Halifax as we know it today.

Our journey from tragedy to triumph is not just a historical chapter we acknowledge on this day once a year; our ongoing resilience is a living testament to the enduring strength of our community, which was forged on that day. Today in Halifax, we pay our respects to those lost by building a city that honours their memory.

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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Sunday marked the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

[Translation]

The United Nations' theme for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities focuses on Sustainable Development Goals.

[English]

It is important that we make sustainable development a reality for persons with disabilities. The principle of “Nothing Without Us”, which means we work in partnership with the disability community, is what guides the government. It is what guides disability inclusion and helps us achieve our goal.

Recently we launched an online tool that will allow Canadians to give their input on how the regulations for the disability benefit will be implemented. The benefit is a cornerstone of our disability inclusion plan. It helps to reduce poverty. It will be a supplement to and will not replace existing supports.

Together, we will do this. We need to do this.

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• (1415)

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on December 6, 1989, we lost 14 women in the Polytechnique massacre. These women lost their lives to violence, simply because they were women. This cowardly act violated our core values as Canadians and robbed these women of their freedom and lives.

It is our duty to remember their memory, their loved ones and all victims of gender-based violence. This tragedy reminds us that, 34 years later, women continue to be the main victims of violence. We must continue to fight hatred and violence against women in all its forms, including harassment, sexual assault and intimate partner violence.

I stand up to declare loudly and clearly that we will never forget their names: Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault and Annie Turcotte.

In their memory, we will continue to fight to end violence against women.

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[*Translation*]

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the attack at École Polytechnique on December 6, 1989, remains a tragedy forever etched in our memories. Fourteen smart, determined young women were killed simply because they were women. Today, we are still haunted by the pain, outrage and incomprehension we felt back then.

Let us honour their memory by continuing to work together to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence and create a safer environment by banning certain firearms. This touches us all, and we should all be involved. Every woman has the right to live and follow her dreams without fearing violence.

On this National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, let us condemn this violence and reaffirm our commitment to making a Canada a place where the rights of women are fully respected, where everyone feels safe, and where diversity is celebrated in the spirit of mutual understanding and inclusion.

Statements by Members

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Speaker has lost the moral authority to preside over this House.

The role of Speaker requires impartiality and non-partisanship. The Speaker betrayed the trust of this House when he gave greetings at the Ontario Liberal convention—

The Deputy Speaker: We do have a process which we are following about this particular issue. Talk of the Speaker in the chamber outside of within those rules cannot happen. We cannot talk about the Speaker during this time.

I apologize to the hon. member, but I am going to have to call that out of order.

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CARBON TAX

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now that the environment minister's job is on the line, Liberals are increasingly more desperate to kill the carbon tax carve-out in Bill C-234.

Just in time for Christmas, this panicked Prime Minister ordered his hand-picked senators to exclude barn heating from any carbon tax relief in the bill. It is ideology above all else for the Liberal government. It would rather see millions of Canadians go hungry than provide farmers with carbon tax relief.

Bill told me that he paid \$14,000 in carbon taxes this fall, and that in this environment of rising costs and declining revenues, it is a huge hit to his farm. The Prime Minister is not worth the cost. He is taxing farmers who grow our food, the truckers who ship the food and the stores that sell the food to everyday Canadians who are struggling to buy food.

Liberals and their coalition allies are punishing Canadians by making everything more expensive. Enough is enough. Conservatives will grind their high-tax agenda to a halt until the Prime Minister removes the carbon tax on farmers, families and first nations.

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[*Translation*]

STUDENTS FROM JOHN ABBOTT CÉGEP

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the nine students from Cégep John Abbott who have distinguished themselves by being the only students from North America to sit on the jury for the Prix Goncourt des lycéens. The Prix Goncourt des lycéens enables nearly 2,000 French students, with the exception of one cohort from abroad, to read and study a selection of novels that are in the running for the Goncourt award and to post their favourite.

Inspired and guided by their teachers Ariane Bessette and Daniel Rondeau, these nine francophiles with a passion for literature volunteered to devour 16 books in eight weeks. I am proud of them. With a large number of anglophones and allophones, this group truly reflects the great diversity of Montreal's West Island.

Statements by Members

Congratulations to Alexa Bowers, Kamila Michelle Contreras Zarate, Anna Molins, Nahid Nowrozi, Stefaniya Pilicheva, Jeremy Plante, Sophia Qiu, Andrea Sanchez Benitez and Magali Shimotakahara.

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• (1420)

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with the guns silenced, the bombs and missiles grounded, it was a ceasefire by any other name. For a few days, there was some sense of peace in Israel and Palestine, but now the killing has begun again in Gaza. Once again, innocent civilians, children and women are dying at a horrendous rate. Where is Canada? Where is the world?

We now say we are concerned about the number of Palestinian civilians killed. We hear the talk again of a two-state solution. How much of it is talk when the Prime Minister of Israel is telling Israelis that he is the only thing standing between them and a two-state solution?

Canada must be an unequivocal voice for peace and diplomacy. It starts with ending our complicity in the arms trade and in providing ongoing diplomatic cover for those who have no intention of supporting peace, security and justice for Palestinians.

Have we not learned from history? This is a conflict that will repeat itself over and over again, unless there is a political solution.

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[Translation]

350TH ANNIVERSARY OF CITY OF TERREBONNE

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this year we are celebrating Terrebonne's 350th anniversary.

The Corporation des fêtes du 350e anniversaire de la Ville de Terrebonne was tasked with organizing the festivities. The corporation organized nine Signatures events with a turnout of nearly 100,000 people, and it supported 20 or so community projects.

In addition, the city also stepped up its event planning. I want to thank from the bottom of my heart the people who worked tirelessly for our city over the past few months and who are now here in Ottawa. I am talking about the mayor of Terrebonne, Mathieu Traversy. I want to give special thanks to Céline Durand, the director general of the Corporation des fêtes du 350e anniversaire de la Ville de Terrebonne. I also want to acknowledge the presence and impressive work of Mr. Mayer, Mr. Dufresne and Mr. Lévesque. Thanks to them, their teams, the hundreds of volunteers and everyone who participated, we were able to celebrate the great pride we have for our city.

Let me say 350 thank-yous to the organizers. We are looking forward to the 400th anniversary of Terrebonne, and for the last time in the House of Commons, I wish Terrebonne a happy 350th anniversary.

[English]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night, the Liberal-appointed senators gutted Bill C-234, which will cost our farmers nearly \$1 billion in carbon tax by 2030.

Farmer Gord in Oxford paid \$50,000 for the carbon tax just to run his farm. Thanks to the Liberals, it is now cheaper to buy Mexican asparagus shipped from 3,800 kilometres away than it is to buy asparagus grown in Oxford.

After eight years of this Prime Minister, Canadians are struggling to put food on their tables. We are facing a cost of living crisis like never seen before, with tent cities popping up across our communities and homelessness increasing. More and more hard-working Canadians are now relying on food banks, but instead of axing the carbon tax to lower food prices, this panicking Prime Minister spent the weekend begging his senators to kill this bill.

The Liberal government has ruined Christmas for our families and our farmers, but Conservatives will stand up, fight back against this radical Liberal agenda and axe the tax and make sure we have provided relief to our farmers, families and first nations.

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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this day in 1989, a man entered a quiet university library in Montreal and deliberately murdered 14 women because they were women.

Decades later, we are still holding vigils for women and girls murdered because of their gender. There were 184 femicides in Canada just last year. That is one woman or girl killed every 48 hours.

My city of Hamilton, like more than 40 other Canadian cities, has declared gender-based violence an epidemic and not just physical violence, but psychological abuse and economic coercion. These affect a woman's ability to provide for herself and care for her children, and they lead to more homelessness among women. Women's shelters in Canada are overfull.

Our government's national action plan to end gender-based violence directly supports frontline organizations. We are making housing more affordable, and we are addressing mental health. We are bringing men's voices into the solution, because gender-based violence is not a women's issue.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1425)

[Translation]

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we honour the victims of the Polytechnique shooting and dedicate ourselves to ending violence against women.

Today, we are also thinking about those who will not have enough to eat this Christmas. There are reports of young people writing letters to Santa Claus not asking for presents, but for food. Some 25% of young Canadians and Quebecers are telling pollsters that they cannot afford to eat.

Why did the Prime Minister force his senators to maintain a tax on Canadians' food?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we honour the memory of 14 young women who were murdered at École polytechnique de Montréal simply because they were women. We honour their memory by continuing to fight against inequality and gender-based violence. We all need to continue to pursue reforms against assault weapons, the implementation of red flag and yellow flag laws and the fight against femicide.

We must make sure that a tragedy like the one at Polytechnique never happens again.

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HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost of housing. He has doubled the cost of housing since he took office.

Yesterday in the Senate, a senator asked the president of the federal government's housing agency if there was a plan for building the 3.5 million homes needed to make housing affordable. The answer is no. That did not come from me. It came from the president of the federal housing agency.

When will the Prime Minister watch my brand new documentary to come up with a common sense plan and eliminate taxes and red tape so houses can be built?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are clearly not fooled by the Conservative Party's YouTube hashtag games.

This Conservative leader has never seen a social program that he did not want to cut. He did not support Canadians and small businesses during the pandemic. He will have no credible plan to build housing or stabilize grocery prices. He does not even recognize that climate change is real. Maybe he thinks Canadians are fools, but we know who he really is.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians know is that the Prime Minister has doubled the housing costs, doubled the rent, doubled mortgage payments and doubled the needed down payment. After eight years,

Oral Questions

our housing costs have worsened at a greater rate than all but one OECD country.

Yesterday, a senator asked the head of the Prime Minister's own housing agency if there is a federal government plan to eliminate the 3.5 million home deficit that we have in Canada. The answer: No. It is not me saying that; it is his own housing agency. Given that he does not have a plan, why does he not watch the common-sense housing documentary I put forward so that he can see a common-sense plan to cut bureaucracy and build homes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is shameful that the Conservative leader is exploiting the very real anxieties and fears of Canadians for clicks and views. The leader continues to demean co-ops as "Soviet-style" housing. He called a Niagara family's home a "shack", and he keeps using homeless people as props.

A responsible leader acts on the concerns of Canadians instead of exploiting them for political gain just so he can get his 15 minutes.

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CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is shameful is that this Prime Minister is causing homelessness in this country. He has caused the doubling of the number of people eating at a food bank in Toronto. One single mother in Sydney said, "Well, this month, I had to choose between eating and having heat. My kids are getting fed, but my house is freezing." The Prime Minister's solution is to quadruple the carbon tax on that single mother and on seniors.

We have a common-sense Conservative bill to take the carbon tax off farmers and food. Why did the Prime Minister manipulate and intimidate Liberal senators into blocking that bill? Why does he want to tax food right before Christmas?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after all of the intimidation and threats from the Conservatives towards parliamentarians concerning Bill C-234, it turns out that the only farming the Conservative Party cares about is rage farming, because all of this was just an attempt to fundraise off the backs of farmers.

Time and time again, the Conservative leader has shown that he wants to take Canadians back to the Stone Age instead of helping them get ahead. On this side of the House, the Liberal government will always be there to support farmers.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister raises taxes on food, brings back malnutrition and brings in record-smashing food bank use, the best he can come up with is a bunch of scripted talking points from junior staffers in the PMO. That is outrageous. Canadians are going hungry as Christmas is just around the corner. A common-sense Conservative bill to take the tax off farmers and food could have helped solve the problem.

Why did the Prime Minister manipulate and intimidate senators to keep the tax on food and make our people go hungry right before Christmas?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have an opposition leader who is so ideologically opposed to protecting the planet that he is willing to take Parliament hostage and stop Parliament from supporting workers, stop Parliament from supporting families and stop Parliament from supporting Ukraine as well. The Leader of the Opposition has threatened to ruin the holidays if his ideological demands are not met.

Let us be clear. We will keep working for Canadians, while the Conservative leader is fuelled only by the sound of his own voice and has no real plan for this country. We will never back down from supporting Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while there are people who see themselves as prime minister but then have the crazy idea of grinding Parliament to a halt, there is work to be done.

For example, the government appointed Catherine Tait as interim CEO of CBC/Radio-Canada. Her mandate is to fight against disinformation; fight against disinformation by cutting jobs in French in the regions.

Does the Prime Minister agree with me that Ms. Tait should come to Parliament to explain her decisions, which are shocking, to say the least?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a government, we have always supported CBC/Radio-Canada and the services it provides to local communities across the country.

One of the first measures we took as government was to cancel the Harper government's cuts to our public broadcaster. Supporting local news and journalists during these difficult times for the industry is exactly why we introduced Bill C-18.

While the Leader of the Opposition celebrates Canadian families being laid off, we will continue to support local journalists and local news in Canada. We are very open to working with the Bloc Québécois on this, as always.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I hope we are not supposed to think that Liberal cuts are better than Conservative cuts.

More people in Canada tune in to Radio-Canada than the CBC. Radio-Canada generates more advertising revenue in Canada than the CBC. In fact, French-language Radio-Canada subsidizes CBC's English-language services.

Nevertheless, Ms. Tait is calling on French-language Radio-Canada to absorb half the cuts she is demanding, at the expense of French and at the expense of the regions.

Should the Prime Minister not personally summon Ms. Tait to come and explain herself to francophone parliamentarians in the House of Commons?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the leader of the Bloc Québécois knows full well, we will always be here to stand up for Canada's two official languages. We are going to focus special attention on protecting French, including French in Quebec.

CBC/Radio-Canada has an important mandate in this area. We are concerned about the situation confronting all of our media outlets these days, what with digitization, web giants and the Conservatives' attacks on the media, especially on CBC/Radio-Canada. We will always be here to stand up for journalism as an essential pillar of our democracy.

* * *

[English]

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, three women in London have been killed by their male partners over the past year. Our women's shelters are doing everything they can, but they just cannot keep up. Anova's women's shelter had to turn people away 2,400 times this year. This is an epidemic, but what are the Liberals doing? They are cutting funding to women's shelters when they need them the most.

When will the Prime Minister reverse his \$150-million cut to women's shelters?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today and every day, we reinforce that everyone has the right to live free from violence. We have made historic investments, including precedent investments during the pandemic, to support shelters, and we are taking real action to end gender-based violence in our communities.

We are also working with provinces and territories to develop a national action plan to prevent gender-based violence and support survivors. We know there is an urgent need for more action, and we will not stop until gender-based violence comes to an end.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, indigenous women and their children are forced to live in violent situations because of the lack of adequate housing. The Liberals are actively keeping indigenous people marginalized by delaying the release of housing investments promised. The NDP fought to secure \$4 billion to help build homes indigenous people need, but the Liberals keep delaying these investments, keeping indigenous people out in the cold.

When will the government help indigenous communities get the homes they so desperately need?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are taking action to address housing gaps in indigenous communities swiftly, effectively and in equal partnership. Budget 2023 included an additional investment of \$4 billion in the indigenous housing strategy on top of the \$6.7 billion since 2015. In fact, since 2016, we have supported the construction and renovation of over 30,000 homes in first nations communities, and we continue to work with first nations partners to co-develop a 10-year housing infrastructure strategy.

We will continue working with first nations, Inuit and Métis, along with all levels of government, to co-develop and implement community-based housing solutions because they are desperately needed.

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CARBON PRICING

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a desperate and panicking Prime Minister spent the weekend calling Liberal senators, pleading with them to keep the carbon tax on farmers. The Conservatives' common-sense plan would take the tax off the people who grow the food, ship the food, and, as a result, off Canadians who buy the food. Yesterday, he got his Christmas wish. Liberal senators gutted Bill C-234, a move that will keep food prices high while Canadians visit food banks in record numbers.

Will the Prime Minister finally listen to the outcry? Will he listen to anyone but his globe-trotting activist environment minister and take the tax off so people can put food on their tables this Christmas?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only senators who sit in any caucus are Conservative senators, and I would note that up to one-third of those Conservative senators did not vote yesterday.

Climate change, not pollution pricing, is driving food inflation. Farmers are on the front lines of climate change. They know about climate change. They experience the effects of droughts, floods and storms first-hand, and, unlike the Conservative Party, they have no problem saying “climate change”.

The Conservative strategy is to ignore climate change and stay hiding in the pockets of big oil and gas. That is no strategy at all, and it is risky and reckless.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every single senator who voted against the bill was a Liberal senator.

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister's carbon tax has already ruined Christmas for millions of Canadian families, so Conservatives are going to ruin Christmas vacation for the Prime Minister and his Liberal MPs. We will stay here as long as it takes to force them to axe the tax so Canadians can afford gas, groceries and home heating.

How long are we going to be here? Is it one week, two weeks or three weeks until the Prime Minister finally relents and cancels his carbon tax on farmers, families and first nations?

● (1440)

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Conservatives, who had their senators bully independent senators in the other place, we will stand up to the bullies on the other side. We will continue to stand for Canadians every single day, and we know that when we put a price on pollution with the rebate, Canadians get more back than they pay.

If the Conservatives cared about Canadians and their affordability challenges, they would support the price on pollution because it is putting money in their pockets, but in typical Conservative style, they take from the poor to give to the rich.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this weekend, it was the Prime Minister who was bullying the senators, calling them up and telling them to kill Bill C-234, a common-sense bill to help farmers and families. The Senate listened to him; it gutted the bill. However, people are suffering. People are hungry.

The food bank use in my riding is up over 100%, so will the Prime Minister finally listen to Canadians and take the carbon tax off farmers, first nations and families?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the other place actually found one of the Conservative senators in breach of privilege for the actions he took bullying independent senators. The member should be cognizant of the fact that independent senators can make their own decisions.

Oral Questions

When it comes to supporting Canadians, the current government has been there the entire time, whether it was through supporting millions of Canadians through the pandemic or whether it is supporting them through the social safety net the Conservatives are looking to gut with their cuts. In typical Conservative fashion, they are looking to take from the poor and give to the rich.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the Liberal government that is trying to make everybody poor. The Prime Minister is determined to ruin Christmas for Canadians, so Conservatives will ruin his vacation.

We will stay here and we will fight until the Prime Minister decides to take the carbon tax off families, farmers and first nations. Will he do it?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the party opposite continues to spread information that is simply incorrect. When Conservatives are talking about the vote in the other place, they should really be asking the Conservative senators, who sit in caucus, why they did not show up to vote yesterday. If they truly cared about it, that would have been the question they were asking instead of posing this question to the government, which has nothing to do with the independent Senate.

What we do on this side of the House is support farmers. We are going to be there for farmers. We are going to be there for all Canadians like we have been since 2015. We are going to keep delivering for them.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Liberal government, everything costs more and, unfortunately, it is not over yet.

As we know, the House passed Bill C-234 and even the Greens voted for this bill, which will give farmers a tax break. Then, on the weekend, the Prime Minister panicked. He picked up the phone and called the senators he appointed to make sure that Bill C-234 did not get passed. Unfortunately, it worked, and that is the problem.

Why is the Prime Minister always so quick to take even more money out of the pockets of Canadian families?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for my colleague opposite, but he knows full well that the only party in the House that is trying to take money out of Canadians' pockets is the Conservative Party. If the Conservatives cancel the price on pollution, most Canadians will be worse off than they are now. If there is anything that we should be asking senators, it is why the Conservative senators did not vote yesterday.

We, on this side of the House, respect democratic institutions, but we know that the Conservatives do not.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the minister too, but she is going to have to explain to me why, whenever there is a tax hike, it always means taking even more money out of the pockets of Canadian families. That is exactly what the government is doing.

We had the solution with Bill C-234. It would give farmers a break, it would mean less tax to pay, it would stop food prices from continuing to rise under this Liberal government. Sadly, the Liberals decided to once again use their senator friends, whom they themselves appointed, to attack the wallets of Canadian taxpayers.

When will this government understand that it is costly to vote Liberal?

● (1445)

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is costly is taking money out of Canadians' pockets, which is what the Conservatives are doing. They voted against the Canada child benefit. They voted against increasing the guaranteed income supplement for seniors. They voted against the dental benefit for less affluent Canadians.

On this side of the House, we understand that we have to be there to support Canadians. That is something I wish the party opposite could understand.

* * *

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the number to keep in mind this week is 2,000. That is the number of meetings there have been between the Liberals and fossil fuel lobbyists since last year; 2,000 meetings in two years.

We know that numbers do not lie. When a Liberal offers a choice between listening to his or her speech or looking at the numbers, everyone should do what I did and look at the numbers.

The Liberals keep telling us that they are green. I have a very simple question for them.

Do they realize that the numbers suggest they are actually black as oil?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to have meetings with participants from every sector of the economy. That includes the oil sector of course, but also environmental groups.

Two weeks ago, I had a meeting with people from Environmental Defence, CAN-Rac and many other environmental groups to have these very important conversations.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the numbers do not lie: The Liberals have met with fossil fuel lobbyists 2,000 times since last year.

The Prime Minister's Office has met with oil and gas companies twice as often as environmental groups, and the Department of Finance has met with them four times as often. Is that having an impact on policy?

Let us follow the money. The Liberals' flagship environmental measures in Bill C-59 amount to \$30.3 billion in subsidies for oil and gas companies.

When will the Liberals finally base their policies on the climate crisis rather than the oil and gas companies' whining?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have already said, it is important that we meet with people from all sectors of the economy. Of course, I have also met many times with the Bloc Québécois.

This week, we announced new regulations to reduce methane emissions by 75%. We are the first country in the world to make this commitment. It is a very important step in fighting climate change, and we are very proud of it.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister spent the weekend pressuring Liberal senators, demanding that they kill our Conservative bill that would axe the carbon tax for Canadian farmers. Yesterday, those senators bowed to their political master. They used every dirty trick in the book to gut the bill.

The truth is that the Liberals are not hurting us. They are hurting hungry Canadians who cannot afford higher prices for their food.

Why will the Prime Minister not park his ideological admiration for higher taxes for Canadians, give Canadians a Christmas miracle and finally axe the tax for farmers, first nations and families?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are no Liberal senators and the Conservative senators did not even vote.

We already know the Conservatives do not believe in climate change, but it seems like they do not believe in math either. University of Calgary-based economists conducted a thorough review of our price on pollution and facts are facts: 94% of families that earn less than \$50,000 receive more back through our price on pollution than they pay.

In typical Conservative fashion, the member for Carleton and his merry band of climate change deniers want to steal from the poor and give to the rich. It is risky and reckless.

● (1450)

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is the most ridiculous answer I have heard in the House today. There is only one group in the House trying to take away from those who are most vulnerable. When will the Liberals finally understand that if we tax the farmers who grow the food and the truckers who ship the food, it is eventually going to cost more for Canadians to buy the food?

When will the Prime Minister set aside his ideological attachment to the carbon tax and finally give a break to farmers, first nations and Canadian families this Christmas?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, farmers

Oral Questions

are on the front lines of the climate crisis. They are the first to feel the effects of floods and droughts. Wheat yields are down 20% in 2023. Why is that? It is climate change, yet unlike the Conservatives, farmers have no problem identifying climate change as the culprit for the reduction in their yields.

Speaking of wheat, if the Conservatives really want to support food security, they should support the breadbasket of Europe. That is Ukraine. Ukraine says it needs assistance in strengthening economic resilience, yet the Conservatives voted against the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. I urge them to reconsider that shameful vote at third reading.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Liberal-appointed senators voted to gut common-sense Conservative Bill C-234, an action that betrays farmers.

For the last decade, the Prime Minister has repeatedly made the claim that the Senate and those he appoints to it are independent, yet this weekend proved otherwise. He and his socialist environment minister were busy employing a campaign of bullying and pressure to force his senators to kill this needed carbon tax carve-out. The carbon tax is punishing the farmers who produce the food and the folks who need it.

Will the Prime Minister finally just listen to Canadians and axe his carbon tax?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is well aware that the other place makes decisions on its own.

The Conservative Party of Canada has senators in its caucus. The Conservative Party of Canada does not have a policy or a plan for the environment.

I can assure my hon. colleague that we do have a plan for the environment. That is why we are able to make an investment of \$1.5 billion to help farmers and processors reduce their environmental footprint. We have supported and will continue to support our farmers and ranchers in this country.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister sits right here and I can barely hear him. Let us try to keep the sound down a little.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know for a fact that farmers are asking the minister to axe the carbon tax.

The Prime Minister promised that the Senate would be independent, but the actions this past week prove that that is a complete farce. We know he bullied his senators. The Prime Minister himself was on the phone over the weekend telling them they had to gut Bill C-234.

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister lied and his minions continue to lie about—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member, who got here at the same time I did, knows full well that he cannot use that word. The hon. member should retract it and apologize.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I will not apologize to the Prime Minister when he continues to lie—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: I am asking the hon. member to apologize for the second time and retract that word. The hon. member knows full well he cannot use that word in this chamber. This is the last opportunity.

Will the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot be retracting it?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, it is the truth. I will not apologize to the Prime Minister.

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NAMING OF MEMBER

The Deputy Speaker: Mr. Kurek, I have to name you for disregarding the authority of the Chair.

Pursuant to the authority granted me under Standing Order 11, I order you to withdraw from the House and any participation by video conference for the remainder of this sitting day.

[*And Mr. Kurek having withdrawn.*]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

* * *

● (1455)

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in Canada, over half of women with disabilities are living on less than \$10,000 a year. They cannot afford the medication they need, nutritious food or housing. Women with disabilities who are facing intimate partner violence cannot afford to get away or to move out of their homes.

The Liberals have failed these women. Will the Prime Minister stop endangering women with disabilities by releasing the Canada disability benefit now?

Hon. Kamal Khera (Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for that really important question. It gives me a chance to, first and foremost, acknowledge that this past Sunday was International Day for Persons with Disabilities, an opportunity for all of us to continue to do the hard work to create a barrier-free Canada and to ensure that we create equal opportunities for persons with disabilities.

On Canada's disability benefit, the hon. member knows very well that we are absolutely committed to getting it right and getting it out as quickly as possible. In the true spirit of "Nothing Without

Us", public consultations for regulations are fully accessible and available online. I hope that all Canadians will participate.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this weekend, violence between Israel and Hamas resumed. More Palestinian children and humanitarian workers have been killed in Netanyahu's bombardment, and there are still many people being held hostage by Hamas. Doctors Without Borders convoys in Gaza were attacked and destroyed, and aid trucks have been blocked. This is not eliminating Hamas; this is destroying an entire population, yet the Liberals and the Conservatives refuse to call for a ceasefire.

Why is the government's position so cowardly in the face of this humanitarian disaster?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we unequivocally condemn the terrorist attacks that happened on October 7 against innocent Israeli civilians, as we, of course, think that it is completely unacceptable that so many women and children, civilians, in Gaza have died in the context of this crisis.

The cycle of violence will not ensure Israel's long-term security, and the price of justice cannot be the suffering of Palestinian people. The violence must stop.

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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, we remember the 14 young women who were killed during the École Polytechnique massacre. As the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence comes to an end, we are reminded that our work must continue until we achieve a Canada free of gender-based violence.

Can the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth update the House on how our government is addressing the prevention of gender-based violence?

Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, we remember the victims of the massacre at École Polytechnique. The brazen disregard of the safety of women and the clear intent to harm them cast a shadow on our hearts to this day.

Even now, gender-based violence remains a real threat to women. Because of this, our commitment to end it has not changed. That is why we have signed 10 agreements, alongside provinces and territories, through the national action plan to end gender-based violence. This work will not stop until it ends.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, Canadians across the country are feeling betrayed by the Prime Minister's senators, who voted to gut Conservative Bill C-234, a bill that would have provided carbon tax relief for Canadian farmers and for Canadian families who are just trying to put food on the table.

After eight years, will the Prime Minister end his carbon tax obsession and provide relief for Canadians so they can stop turning to food banks?

• (1500)

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, there are no senators on this side of the House. The only senators within a political party are Conservative.

Perhaps the member opposite would like to ask why 13 Conservative senators did not show up to vote. Is it perhaps because they do not support the leader's position on Ukraine and recognize that if the Conservatives truly cared about making food more affordable, they might support the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement? The questions the member has to ask are for the Conservative senators who did not vote for the Conservatives' bill.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member can say whatever she wants, but when the minister is phoning his Liberal-appointed senators and instructing them to gut the bill, it is pretty hard to believe the Liberals. Common-sense Conservatives would axe the tax, removing the tax from Canadian farmers and making food cheaper for all Canadians.

The Prime Minister continues to stand in the way of Canadian farmers and punish them with this carbon tax. When will the Prime Minister set aside his ideological position on the carbon tax and remove it for all farmers, families and first nations?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the member knows full well, although he is not sharing it with Canadians, that the only senators who sit in a political party are Conservative senators, and they did not show up to vote yesterday. The member should really ask why they did not do that. Perhaps they have an issue with some of the positions that his leader has taken.

If the member cares about the high cost of living and if he cares about food prices, then he should simply change his vote on the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, because that is causing the most significant inflation when it comes to food prices, as is climate change. The member should check his ideological opposition to fighting climate change.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this desperate, panicked Prime Minister spent all weekend calling senators, begging them to kill Bill C-234. Not surprisingly, last night, the Senate voted in favour of an amendment that will gut Bill C-234. This will keep food prices high at a time when Canadians are struggling.

Oral Questions

Will this Prime Minister scrap his plans to radically increase the carbon tax on farmers and families?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, has the member been living under a rock? Where was he when there were forest fires this summer? Where was he when there was flooding? Where was he when people were being displaced? Where was he when everyone else was noticing the impact of climate change on our farmers and on our everyday lives? Where was he this morning? I was at our caucus meeting this morning, and there were no senators present, while he was surrounded by Conservative senators. He should speak the truth.

The Deputy Speaker: The minister asked the member to tell the truth. I just asked a member to leave the House because he said something similar. I just want to make sure that no one is asking these questions. It amounts to almost the same thing.

The hon. member for Beauce.

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am on the ground, whereas my colleague might not be. There are direct repercussions for farmers, even back home in Quebec. For those who may not know it, all the propane consumed in Quebec comes from outside, so we do pay the tax.

We refuse to give a pass to the economic statement that was presented last week by the government and that has not even been called for debate yet. The word “agriculture” does not even appear in the bill, even though food bank use is at a record high.

Do the Liberals really want to lower the price of food? I will repeat my question and hope that my colleague across the way will take the time to answer. When will the Prime Minister give up his plan to radically increase the carbon tax?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me set the record straight: The price on pollution reduces pollution and puts more money in the pockets of eight out of 10 families in provinces where pricing applies.

The number of families in the riding of Beauce who receive the Canada child benefit is 9,470. Nine out of 10 families in the member's riding receive the Canada child benefit. Unfortunately, even though the member was not here at the time, the Conservative leader voted against the Canada child benefit and therefore against the interests of 9,470 families in the riding of Beauce.

Oral Questions

• (1505)

VETERANS

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we now know that it was the Prime Minister who interfered in the public art competition for the monument commemorating the Afghanistan mission. We know that it was the Prime Minister who pulled some strings to overturn the decision so the Daoust team, the Quebec team, would lose. Yesterday, the House of Commons spoke. On the Bloc's initiative, the House denounced the government's about-face and its failure to play by its own rules.

Will the Prime Minister acknowledge the House's anger and reverse his decision to cast aside Quebec's winning team?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear: It was the Department of Veterans Affairs that made the decision to support the Stimson design. Why? Because we chose to listen to veterans. More than 12,000 Canadians responded to a questionnaire or survey, and the vast majority of them were veterans. They made it clear that, for them, the Stimson design best represented the bravery, sacrifice and loss of veterans. That is why we made this decision.

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are deliberately rejecting Quebec.

There was a call for tenders for the monument. Quebec won, so the Prime Minister vetoed that decision. Quebec was therefore swept aside.

In the Boeing versus Bombardier matter, the Liberals did not take any chances: They refused to issue a call for tenders. Quebec had no chance of winning because the Liberals had rejected it in advance. However, it still comes out to the same thing. In both cases, the Liberals went to great lengths to exclude Quebec so we would miss out on a federal contract. Why?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, let me be very clear: The Department of Veterans Affairs made the final decision to support the Stimson design because, as I said, we chose to listen to veterans. We put together a survey or questionnaire. More than 12,000 Canadians responded to the survey, and the vast majority of them were veterans.

I do not understand why my hon. colleague does not want to listen to veterans, because, once again, they made the ultimate sacrifice of reporting for duty on the mission in Afghanistan.

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[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, Canadians know the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. He spent the weekend making desperate and panic-stricken phone calls to senators, pleading with them to kill Bill C-234, and yesterday that is exactly what they did when they voted to gut the bill and keep food prices high for struggling Canadians.

When will the Prime Minister listen to Canadians and take the carbon tax off farmers, first nations and families who just want to heat their homes?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do not need Conservatives to tell us how to help farmers. Farmers are the most impacted by climate change. The last season was one of the worst, with 20% lower wheat yields in the Prairies. The culprit was a hotter season. That is climate change. Now, we already know that Conservatives do not believe in climate change, but it seems like they do not believe in math either as 94% of families that earn less than \$50,000 a year receive more back from the price on pollution than they spend.

However, this is typical. It is an old story. These Conservatives just want to steal from the poor and give to the rich, with the leader from Carleton and his merry climate change deniers.

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Liberal-appointed senators voted yesterday to keep the carbon tax pain on Canadian families and once again betray farmers by gutting Bill C-234. With food bank usage at a record high, the Prime Minister should have the courage to explain why he instructed senators to keep food prices high for struggling Canadians. After eight years, the NDP-Liberal government is not worth the cost.

Will the Prime Minister listen to Canadians and take the carbon tax off farmers, first nations and families who are struggling to get by?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, being a farmer, and meeting farmers right across the country, one of the first questions they ask me is, "How come the Conservative Party of Canada does not have a plan to deal with the environment when we look at all the fires, all the floods, all the destruction that's taking place?"

I tell them that we do have a plan. We do have a plan and an example of that plan is what we have done with the minister of agriculture from Ontario. We were able to announce a \$25-million program to make sure that farmers remain on the cutting edge and that farmers are able to produce crops that are strong in areas that have more moisture. As I said, we will continue—

• (1510)

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

Oral Questions

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. Yesterday, the Prime Minister's hand-picked senators voted to keep the carbon tax on farmers and keep food costs high. In Edmonton, the veterans food bank is pleading for donations to help our veterans. That is the legacy of the Prime Minister: food banks for veterans begging for help.

When will the Prime Minister listen to Canadians and take the carbon tax off farmers, first nations and families who are desperate to heat their homes?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said previously, being a farmer and having talked to farmers, they cannot understand how the Conservative Party of Canada would not have a plan to deal with the environment. People have been in situations such as hurricane Fiona in Atlantic Canada, which totally destroyed properties, destroyed dairy barns and killed animals. In fact, that is part of the price on food.

We have supported, and we will continue to support, farmers. For example, the hon. Minister Thompson in Ontario and I announced a \$25-million program to make sure that farmers stay on the cutting edge. We have supported farmers, and we will continue to support farmers.

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HEALTH

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, too often people in the Waterloo region and across Canada lose loved ones to overdoses caused by the increasingly toxic illegal drug supply. People who are struggling need all levels of government to work together, and a comprehensive and evidence-based substance use policy. We know that stigma and fear will not solve this crisis.

Could the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions inform Canadians on the harm caused by stigmatizing the toxic drug and overdose crisis?

Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, common sense without science means loved ones lost. Raising stigma is killing people who need our help. I was shocked to learn that Conservatives kept interrupting experts at the health committee. If the overdose crisis were truly a priority, they would listen to experts and follow the facts.

Our evidence-based plan includes prevention, harm reduction, treatment and law enforcement. We are not pitting one pillar against another. We are using all the tools needed to save lives. Reckless and risky games stoke fear. We need to work together, fight this crisis and save lives.

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CARBON PRICING

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a desperate, panicked Prime Minister spent this past weekend calling senators and pleading with them to kill Bill C-234. Yesterday, his NDP-Liberal government got its wish

when the senators betrayed farmers, gutting this important bill and keeping the carbon tax. This keeps food prices high and farmers struggling.

Farmers across Canada buy the goods they need retail and sell what they produce wholesale. After eight long years, farmers know that the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. If he will not help our farmers, when will he get out of the way so a Conservative government can?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I hear from everyday Canadians about affordability, and when I hear from people such as Lindsay in my riding and former classmates such as Stephanie, they say to me that the cost of food is going up, but they understand that it is a complex problem.

Climate change feeds into the cost of food, and things such as instability overseas in Europe and an illegal war in Ukraine affect the price of food. Ergo, we wonder about the sincerity of the party opposite when it votes against instrumental measures, such as an affordability piece of legislation or legislation that would assist Ukraine and stop that illegal war.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if one ate today, they can thank a farmer. If one could not afford to eat today, they can thank these Liberals.

Our farmers spend their days working hard to ensure that Canadians have enough food. The NDP-Liberal government spends its days developing new ways to tax Canadians and drive up costs.

The Conservatives proposed Bill C-234 to take the carbon tax off farmers, but this piece of work Prime Minister has pressured his appointed senators to block the bill. After eight years, will the Prime Minister finally get his hands out of the pockets of farmers, families and first nations and axe the carbon tax?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is time that the Conservative Party stopped misleading Canadians on these issues. I certainly would invite them to read the article that the University of Calgary economist Trevor Tombe put out yesterday, which basically shows that 95% Canadians with low and moderate incomes get more money back.

Rather than talking about axing the tax, Conservatives should be talking about axing the rebate and taking money out of the pockets of hard-working Canadians.

Oral Questions

• (1515)

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, farmers wanted a break on the carbon tax. Unfortunately, the Senate voted in favour of an amendment that guts Bill C-234 of all substance.

Food prices and prices overall are going to stay high even though Canadians are struggling. We certainly cannot count on the Bloc-Liberal coalition to help them.

Will the Prime Minister finally abandon his plan to increase the carbon tax on farmers and families? They cannot take it anymore.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am trying to understand the Conservatives' obsession with battling the fight against climate change. I am certain they cannot even spell it, especially given that they do not acknowledge its existence. Right now, they are doing everything they can to make sure nothing is done about it.

The other day, they told us to talk to senators. Now they are telling us not to talk to senators. We do not even have any senators. This morning, when we got to our caucus meeting, there were no senators. On their side, however, there is a whole group of senators talking to them. To top it off, their senators do not even show up to vote. That is their problem. Let them deal with it.

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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we remember the 14 young women who were killed at École Polytechnique. On this day, we remember that we must keep working until Canada is free from gender-based violence.

Could the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth talk about the work that our government has done to guarantee that a massacre like this never happens again?

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question.

Today we are taking the time to remember the mothers, sisters and daughters across the country who have lost their lives to senseless, preventable violence.

Gender-based violence must not and will not be tolerated in Canada. Our government will always fight to end violence against women. This means having firearms legislation and a national action plan to end gender-based violence.

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*[English]***INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this past summer was the worst wildfire season in Canada's history. Indigenous communities are on the front lines of the climate crisis and are disproportionately paying the price, yet Liberals are investing less than a third of all emergency preparedness money in prevention, choosing to be reactive.

First nations like Bloodvein River First Nation, which has been evacuated because of wildfires, does not have a fire truck to this day. The AFN is asking for \$30 billion in mitigation. The Liberals' spending on mitigation is a drop in the bucket.

Why are the Liberals pretending this reality is acceptable for first nations and indigenous communities facing the climate crisis?

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, our nation has been dealing with significant wildfire seasons because of climate change, and it is impacting the most vulnerable, especially when it comes to our indigenous communities.

Every time I have gone to visit the disaster-affected areas, I do meet with the indigenous communities. One of the things that we are looking at is making sure that we use their knowledge, in terms of the mitigation, and making sure that we have the appropriate response force.

We are going to get this right by making sure that the indigenous have the support to actually support us in our wildfire response.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, Sudanese Canadians have been advocating since April for the government's definition of "immediate family member" to include siblings, parents and grandparents amidst escalating violence and reports of ethnic cleansing in Sudan. Now, Canadians with family in Gaza are living the same horror.

While I appreciate that the minister has rightfully admitted at committee that the definition "probably should be expanded", nothing has yet changed.

When will the minister fix the definition so Sudanese and Palestinian Canadians can bring their families to safety?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot stress more to members of the House how difficult it is to actually get people out of Gaza, a war zone faced with a humanitarian disaster.

Our priority remains permanent residents and Canadian families. We are looking at options to expand that to make sure that people connected to Canada can be afforded a safe haven, but again, it is a work in progress. It is extremely difficult to get people out at this time, but we will continue to work hard to do so.

Orders of the Day

● (1520)

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Nils Clarke, Minister of Highways and Public Works, and Minister of Environment of the Yukon.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

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ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE DE MONTRÉAL

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

I would now invite the House to rise and observe a minute of silence in memory of the victims of the tragic event that happened 34 years ago at École polytechnique de Montréal.

[A moment of silence observed]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I think if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: Given that the CBC announced it is cutting 600 jobs, and 250 of these jobs—

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: I am already hearing a number of noes. We have changed things a bit, and when we hear a number of noes, we just move on to the next item.

The hon. leader of the official opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, there must be a misunderstanding, because surely the Liberals do not want to give bonuses to the CBC executives while they are killing jobs of CBC workers. The problem is that they have not listened to the motion. Clearly, killing jobs of the people working for the CBC while giving bonuses to the executives is not what they are calling for.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Oh, that is what they are calling for. What a terrible shame.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Earlier today, during question period, it was very clear when the member for Battle River—Crowfoot used unparliamentary language, and it was very much appreciated that he was asked to leave the chamber.

However, upon reflection, I would ask that you listen to all of the proceedings that took place during that commotion. I think you will find that some very outrageous things were said. We ask that you consider not acknowledging the member's right to speak until he formally apologizes to the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Ultimately, we will go back and listen to the event. I can rule only on things that I heard on the microphone,

and, of course, the hon. member was the one I was aware of who said it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY[*English*]**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

The House resumed from November 30 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 3:24 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment of the member for Edmonton West to the motion for concurrence in the 26th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Deputy Speaker: The question is as follows.

May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of amendment to House]

● (1535)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 475)

YEAS

Members

Aboultiaf	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barrett	Berthold
Bezan	Block
Bragdon	Brassard
Brock	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chambers	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Davidson	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Jeneroux	Kelly
Khanna	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Lawrence	Lehoux
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb

Orders of the Day

Maguire	Majumdar
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perkins
Poilievre	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Scheer	Schmale
Seeback	Shields
Shiplay	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer — 111	

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gainey
Garon	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gill	Gould
Green	Hajdu

Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Miller	Morrice
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Pauzé	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Powlowski	Robillard
Rogers	Romanado
Rota	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Sorbara
Sousa	Ste-Marie
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thériault	Therrien
Thompson	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi — 202

PAIRED

Members

Champagne	Chong
Damoff	Deltell
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Gaudreau
Guilbeault	McGuinty
Michaud	Normandin
Qualtrough	Savard-Tremblay — 14

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

The next question is on the main motion.

[Translation]

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

● (1540)

[English]

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

● (1550)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 476)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cornier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Gainey	Garon
Garrison	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jones

Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)	McKay
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Miller
Morrice	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Pauzé
Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Powlowski
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rota	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sari
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Sorbara
Sousa	Ste-Marie
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thériault	Therrien
Thompson	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 202

Orders of the Day

NAYS

Members

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bezan
Bragdon
Brock
Caputo
Chambers
Cooper
Davidson
Dowdall
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Généreux
Glada

Privilege

Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Jeneroux
Kelly	Khanna
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lehoux	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Majumdar	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Poilievre
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Scheer
Schmale	Seebach
Shields	Shipley
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer— 112

PAIRED

Members

Champagne	Chong
Damoff	Deltell
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Gaudreau
Guilbeault	McGuinty
Michaud	Normandin
Qualtrough	Savard-Tremblay— 14

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from December 5 consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment by the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable in relation to the privilege motion.

● (1605)

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

(*Division No. 477*)

YEAS

Members

Aboutaif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Block	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Bragdon
Brassard	Brière
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Cannings
Caputo	Carr
Carrie	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Chambers
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cooper
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Dalton
Davidson	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Epp
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferri	Fillmore
Findlay	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Gallant	Garon
Garrison	Gazan
Généreux	Genuis
Gerretsen	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gould
Gourde	Gray
Hajdu	Hallan
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Jeneroux

Johns
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Kelly
Khanna
Kitchen
Koutrakis
Kramp-Neuman
Kusmierczyk
Lake
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lapointe
Lattanzio
Lawrence
Lebouthillier
Lemire
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lloyd
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Majumdar
Martel
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McKay
McLean
McPherson
Mendicino
Miller
Morantz
Morrison
Motz
Muys
Nater
Noormohamed
Oliphant
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Plamondon
Powlowski
Reid
Richards
Robillard
Rogers
Rood
Ruff
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Schiefke
Seeback
Sgro
Sheehan
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sinclair-Desgagné
Small
Soroka
Steinley
Stewart
Strahl
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Thompson
Tolmie
Turnbull

Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Khalid
Khara
Kmiec
Kram
Kusie
Kwan
Lalonde
Lametti
Lantsman
Larouche
Lauzon
LeBlanc
Lehoux
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lightbound
Lobb
Longfield
MacAtulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maguire
Maloney
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
Mazier
McDonald (Avalon)
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod
Melillo
Miao
Moore
Morrice
Morrissey
Murray
Naqvi
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Petitpas Taylor
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Rodriguez
Romanado
Rota
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Scheer
Schmale
Serré
Shanahan
Shields
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
Sorbara
Sousa
Ste-Marie
St-Onge
Stubbs
Tassi
Thériault
Thomas
Tochor
Trudel
Uppal

Private Members' Business

Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Virani
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Wilkinson
Williamson
Zahid
Zimmer

Van Bynen
Van Popta
Vandenbeld
Vidal
Viens
Villemure
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Weiler
Williams
Yip
Zarrillo
Zuberi— 310

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Champagne
Damoff
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Dzerowicz
Guilbeault
Michaud
Qualtrough

Chong
Deltell
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Gaudreau
McGuinty
Normandin
Savard-Tremblay— 14

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR A SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM ACT

The House resumed from November 29 consideration of the motion that Bill C-322, An Act to develop a national framework to establish a school food program, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-322.

● (1615)

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

(Division No. 478)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Ali
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bérubé
Bittle
Blair

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bergeron
Bibea
Blaikie
Blanchet

Private Members' Business

Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney	Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Blois	Boissonnault	Sorbara	Sousa
Boulerice	Bradford	Ste-Marie	St-Onge
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe	Sudds	Tassi
Cannings	Carr	Taylor Roy	Thériault
Casey	Chabot	Therrien	Thompson
Chagger	Chahal	Trudeau	Trudel
Champoux	Chatel	Turnbull	Valdez
Chen	Chiang	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cormier	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Coteau	Dabrusin	Vignola	Villemure
Davies	DeBellefeuille	Virani	Vuong
Desbiens	Desilets	Weiler	Wilkinson
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal	Yip	Zahid
Dhillon	Diab	Zarrillo	Zuberi — 204
Drouin	Dubourg		
Duclos	Duguid		
Ehsassi	El-Khoury		
Erskine-Smith	Fillmore		
Fisher	Fonseca	Aboutaif	Aitchison
Fortier	Fortin	Albas	Allison
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Arnold	Baldinelli
Freeland	Fry	Barlow	Barrett
Gaheer	Gainey	Berthold	Bezan
Garon	Garrison	Block	Bragdon
Gazan	Gerretsen	Brassard	Brock
Gill	Gould	Calkins	Caputo
Green	Hajdu	Carrie	Chambers
Hanley	Hardie	Chong	Cooper
Hepfner	Holland	Dalton	Davidson
Housefather	Hughes	Doherty	Dowdall
Hussen	Hutchings	Dreeshen	Ellis
Iacono	Idlout	Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Ien	Jaczek	Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Johns	Joly	Ferri	Findlay
Jones	Jowhari	Gallant	Généreux
Julian	Kayabaga	Genius	Gladu
Kelloway	Khalid	Godin	Goodridge
Khera	Koutrakis	Gourde	Gray
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Hallan	Jeneroux
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Kelly	Khanna
Lametti	Lamoureux	Kitchen	Kmiec
Lapointe	Larouche	Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Lattanzio	Lauzon	Kusie	Lake
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier	Lantsman	Lawrence
Lemire	Lightbound	Lehoux	Leslie
Long	Longfield	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)	Liepert	Lloyd
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor	Lobb	Maguire
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney	Majumdar	Martel
Martinez Ferrada	Masse	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)	McLean	Melillo
McDonald (Avalon)	McKay	Moore	Morantz
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod	Morrison	Motz
McPherson	Mendès	Muys	Patzer
Mendicino	Miao	Paul-Hus	Perkins
Miller	Morrice	Poilievre	Redekopp
Morrissey	Murray	Reid	Rempel Garner
Naqvi	Ng	Richards	Roberts
Noormohamed	O'Connell	Rood	Ruff
Oliphant	O'Regan	Scheer	Schmale
Pauzé	Perron	Seeback	Shields
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon	Shipley	Small
Powlowski	Robillard	Soroka	Steinley
Rodriguez	Rogers	Stewart	Strahl
Romanado	Rota	Stubbs	Thomas
Sahota	Sajjan	Tochor	Tolmie
Saks	Samson	Uppal	Van Popta
Sarai	Scarpaleggia	Vecchio	Vidal
Schiefke	Serré	Vien	Viersen
Sgro	Shanahan	Vis	Wagantall
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Warkentin	Waugh
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard	Webber	Williams

NAYS

Members

Private Members' Business

Williamson

Zimmer— 110

PAIRED

Members

Champagne

Chong

Damoff

Deltell

Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)

Duncan (Etobicoke North)

Dzerowicz

Gaudreau

Guilbeault

McGuinty

Michaud

Normandin

Qualtrough

Savard-Tremblay— 14

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

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

* * *

● (1620)

[*Translation*]**CRIMINAL CODE**

The House resumed from December 4 consideration of the motion that Bill C-295, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, be read the third time and passed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-295 under Private Members' Business.

● (1630)

[*English*]

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

(Division No. 479)

YEAS

Members

Aboultatif

Aitchison

Albas

Aldag

Alghabra

Ali

Allison

Anand

Anandasangaree

Angus

Arnold

Arseneault

Arya

Ashton

Atwin

Bachrach

Badawey

Bains

Baker

Baldinelli

Barlow

Barrett

Barron

Barsalou-Duval

Battiste

Beaulieu

Beech

Bendayan

Bennett

Bergeron

Berthold

Bérubé

Bezan

Bibeau

Bittle

Blaikie

Blair

Blanchette-Joncas

Blaney

Block

Blois

Boissonnault

Boulerice

Bradford

Bragdon

Brassard

Brière

Brock

Brunelle-Duceppe

Calkins

Cannings

Caputo

Carr

Casey

Chagger

Chambers

Chatel

Chiang

Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)

Cooper

Coteau

Dalton

Davies

Desbiens

Desjarlais

Dhillon

Doherty

Dreeshen

Dubourg

Duguid

El-Khoury

Epp

Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)

Fast

Findlay

Fonseca

Fortin

Fraser

Fry

Gainey

Garon

Gazan

Genius

Gill

Godin

Gould

Gray

Hajdu

Hanley

Hepfner

Housefather

Hutchings

Idlout

Jaczek

Johns

Jowhari

Kayabaga

Kelly

Khanna

Kitchen

Koutrakis

Kramp-Neuman

Kusmierczyk

Lake

Lambropoulos

Lamoureux

Lapointe

Lattanzio

Lawrence

Lebouthillier

Lemire

Lewis (Essex)

Liepert

Lloyd

Longfield

MacAulay (Cardigan)

MacGregor

Maguire

Maloney

Martinez Ferrada

Mathysen

Mazier

McDonald (Avalon)

McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)

McLeod

Carrie

Chabot

Chahal

Champoux

Chen

Chong

Collins (Victoria)

Cormier

Dabrusin

Davidson

DeBellefeuille

Desilets

Dhaliwal

Diab

Dowdall

Drouin

Duclos

Ehsassi

Ellis

Erskine-Smith

Falk (Provencher)

Ferrerri

Fisher

Fortier

Fragiskatos

Freeland

Gaheer

Gallant

Garrison

Généreux

Gerretsen

Gladu

Goodridge

Gourde

Green

Hallan

Hardie

Holland

Hussen

Iacono

Ien

Jeneroux

Joly

Julian

Kelloway

Khalid

Khera

Kmiec

Kram

Kusie

Kwan

Lalonde

Lametti

Lantsman

Larouche

Lauzon

LeBlanc

Lehoux

Leslie

Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)

Lightbound

Lobb

Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)

MacDonald (Malpeque)

MacKinnon (Gatineau)

Majumdar

Martel

Masse

May (Cambridge)

McCauley (Edmonton West)

McKay

McLean

McPherson

Private Members' Business

Melillo	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Miller	Moore
Morantz	Morrice
Morrison	Morrissey
Motz	Murray
Muys	Naqvi
Nater	Ng
Noormohamed	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Perkins
Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Poilievre
Powlowski	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rood	Rota
Ruff	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Schmale	Seeback
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Shields	Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Small
Sorbara	Soroka
Sousa	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
St-Onge	Strahl
Stubbs	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thériault	Therrien
Thomas	Thompson
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudeau	Trudel
Turnbull	Uppal
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Weiler	Wilkinson
Williams	Williamson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zimmer
Zuberi — 309	

(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL BILL OF RIGHTS

The House resumed from December 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-219, An Act to enact the Canadian Environmental Bill of Rights and to make related amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-219 under Private Members' Business.

● (1640)

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

(Division No. 480)

YEAS

Members

Angus	Ashton
Bachrach	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Bérubé
Blaikie	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Boulerice	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Chabot
Champoux	Collins (Victoria)
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Fortin
Garon	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gill	Green
Idlout	Johns
Julian	Kwan
Larouche	Lemire
MacGregor	Masse
Mathysen	McPherson
Morrice	Pauzé
Perron	Plamondon
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Ste-Marie
Thériault	Therrien
Trudel	Vignola
Villemure	Zarrillo — 54

NAYS

Members

Aboultatif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Berthold
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Block	Blois

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Champagne	Chong
Damoff	Deltell
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Gaudreau
Guilbeault	McGuinty
Michaud	Normandin
Qualtrough	Savard-Tremblay — 14

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I declare the motion carried.

Private Members' Business

Boissonnault
Bragdon
Brière
Calkins
Carr
Casey
Chahal
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davidson
Dhillon
Doherty
Dreeshen
Dubourg
Duguid
El-Khoury
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferrerri
Findlay
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Gallant
Genuis
Godin
Gould
Gray
Hallan
Hardie
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Joly
Kayabaga
Kelly
Khanna
Kitchen
Koutrakis
Kramp-Neuman
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lantsman
Lattanzio
Lawrence
Lebouthillier
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lightbound
Lobb
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Majumdar
Martel
May (Cambridge)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McKay
McLean
Melillo
Mendicino
Miller
Morantz
Morrisey
Murray
Naqvi
Ng

Bradford
Brassard
Brock
Caputo
Carrie
Chagger
Chambers
Chen
Chong
Cooper
Coteau
Dalton
Dhaliwal
Diab
Dowdall
Drouin
Duclos
Ehsassi
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Gainey
Généreux
Gladu
Goodridge
Gourde
Hajdu
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hutchings
Ien
Jeneroux
Jowhari
Kelloway
Khalid
Khera
Kmiec
Kram
Kusie
Lake
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lapointe
Lauzon
LeBlanc
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lloyd
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
Maguire
Maloney
Martinez Ferrada
Mazier
McDonald (Avalon)
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Moore
Morrison
Motz
Muys
Nater
Noormohamed

O'Connell
O'Regan
Paul-Hus
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Reid
Richards
Robillard
Rogers
Rood
Ruff
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Schmale
Serré
Shanahan
Shields
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Small
Soroka
Steinley
St-Onge
Stubbs
Tassi
Thomas
Tochor
Trudeau
Uppal
Van Bynen
Van Popta
Vandenbeld
Vidal
Viersen
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Wilkinson
Williamson
Zahid
Zuberi— 257

Oliphant
Patzner
Perkins
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Rodriguez
Romanado
Rota
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schiefke
Seeback
Sgro
Sheehan
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
Sousa
Stewart
Strahl
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Thompson
Tolmie
Turnbull
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandal
Vecchio
Vien
Virani
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williams
Yip
Zimmer

PAIRED

Members

Champagne
Damoff
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Dzerowicz
Guilbeault
Michaud
Qualtrough
Chong
Deltell
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Gaudreau
McGuinty
Normandin
Savard-Tremblay— 14

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I declare the motion lost.

[*English*]

I wish to inform the House that due to the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 79 minutes.

● (1645)

[*Translation*]

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 Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Small Business; the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, Persons with Disabilities; the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona, Housing.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

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

* * *

ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE DE MONTRÉAL

Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, 34 years ago, a horrific act of gender-based violence shocked and devastated our country. On December 6, 1989, a man walked into a classroom at École polytechnique de Montréal, separated the women from the men and opened fire on the women.

[Translation]

Fourteen young women lost their lives that day, and 13 others were injured.

[English]

This is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

[Translation]

We remember the lives lost by saying their names: Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte and Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz.

[English]

These 14 brilliant lives were tragically cut short. They were students, daughters, sisters and friends. One was an athlete, another a musician. One spoke five languages. Another wanted to be an engineer just like her dad.

Who could they have become? How might they have changed the world? We will never know. This tragedy was a wake-up call when it happened and remains a reminder of the violent consequences of unchecked misogyny.

Today and throughout the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, we acknowledge that the sexism and hatred that motivated the tragedy at Polytechnique Montréal remains a very real threat for women in Canada, with more than 6.2 million women in Canada age 15 and older having experienced some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetime.

In 2021, 173 women and girls were killed violently in Canada. That is one woman every two days.

This violence has a direct impact on our health, social and justice systems.

[Translation]

It costs the Canadian economy billions of dollars every year.

[English]

While anyone can be impacted by this violence, we know that people with intersectional identities suffer the most. This includes indigenous peoples, Black and racialized women, immigrant and refugee women, 2SLGBTQI+ people, women living in northern, rural and remote communities and people with disabilities.

We know that this issue is deeply rooted in our society and requires a coordinated response, which is why I worked with governments from every province and every territory to launch the national action plan to end gender-based violence last year. Since the launch of the plan, we have been able to sign 10 agreements, alongside provinces and territories, to get this funding to people working on the front lines, to help women and children fleeing violence and to prevent violence from happening in the first place.

We have been able to get these agreements signed quickly because we are all unified and focused on eliminating gender-based violence from our communities, our schools, our workplaces and our country.

● (1650)

[Translation]

We must prevent tragedies like the one at Montreal's École Polytechnique by listening to survivors and experts.

[English]

We need to learn more about gender-based violence and take action to end it. That action must include men and boys as part of the solution and making sure that we break intergenerational cycles of violence. Gender-based violence is not a women's issue. It is a societal issue that we must all stand against.

I look forward to seeing members at the Centennial Flame for a moment of silence later today.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for her inspiring speech.

On December 6, 1989, 14 female students were killed at Montreal's École Polytechnique. As they were excitedly preparing for their final exams and the holiday celebrations that were fast approaching, the unthinkable happened.

These women, Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault and Annie Turcotte, were murdered because they were women. How unspeakably cruel and horrible it is to think that a woman could suffer this fate just for being a woman.

Routine Proceedings

The murders shocked the nation and led Parliament to designate December 6, which we are marking today, as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. I was especially shaken by this tragedy. Those women were the same age as me. They were at school. They had dreams. They had ambitions. All of that was destroyed forever. Their journey ended, and mine goes on. They are always in my thoughts.

Today, we pay tribute to these women. We also pay tribute to the women in Canada and around the world who have been, and continue to be, victims of hate and violence in all its forms. Thirty-four years later, this day is still necessary. Unfortunately, intimate partner violence, sexual assault and misogynistic rhetoric remain a fact of life.

All of us have a role to play in eliminating these horrors. Everyone must work together, including the various police forces, municipalities, social services and, of course, all parliamentarians.

I would like to acknowledge my colleagues on the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. These members, several women and one man, are accomplishing amazing work. We are fortunate to have an outstanding chair in the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London. Together, we are pulling in the same direction, as we work for women.

In committee, we have conducted difficult studies on violence against indigenous girls and women. Some courageous survivors came to share their painful experiences with us. Our various recommendations to the government reflect their moving pleas. We owe it to them to continue our work.

It is also important for people to be aware of the resources available to help victims escape violence. Help is out there. In Quebec, the toll-free hotline SOS Violence Conjugale receives more than 25,000 calls a year. Its staff are there to provide information, guidance and support to women who are victims of violence and, of course, to their loved ones. Hundreds of centres and shelters are ready to take in women. I would like to acknowledge two organizations in my community, the Centre-Femmes de Bellechasse and Jonction pour Elle. I want them to know that their work is very valuable.

As the minister pointed out, education is a key part of the solution. Respect must be integrated and learned from a very young age. Everyone must understand that violence is never the answer. In an ideal world, women would be completely free, free from all fear and free from all violence. Women should not have to walk the streets in a state of hyper-vigilance, as we all too often do. They should be able to trust people and develop healthy, respectful relationships.

Today we remember the victims of École Polytechnique, but women are making progress. Montreal's École Polytechnique got its very first female president in 2022, and two women have been appointed to lead two of McGill University's most prestigious faculties, specifically medicine and engineering.

• (1655)

In their minds, they hold the memory of the victims, of course, but they also have hope. We have come a long way since that fate-

ful day in 1989, but let us be clear: We still have a long way to go. Let us keep on working for these 14 brilliant young women.

We remember them.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault and Annie Turcotte. Year after year, we insist on repeating those names. We keep saying that we have not forgotten them, but that is not true. We have forgotten those women.

The sound of the sirens on that December day has faded away, and with the passing of time, so have the faces of the Polytechnique women. We rise in the House on December 6, and we are moved as we take turns delivering our liturgy of speeches. December 6 should not be a necessary step, speeches, a candlelight vigil and then nothing until next year comes. Time is a thief and we cannot mourn forever, keeping the sadness and anger inside. Time erases them. It rips them away from us, and we move on to something else.

Would these women, who were murdered because they were women, be any safer today? Are the speeches we are giving right now helping to stop this from happening again, and is this helping give us peace of mind?

What have we done and what are we doing, as elected officials, to ensure that Polytechnique never happens again? A gun registry that was torn up at the first opportunity? A mandatory buyback program for assault weapons that is being postponed until 2025, when we know, or at least suspect, that the Conservatives will be the ones in charge of implementing it? We know what they will do with that program.

The most beautiful speeches in the world will not have as much impact as real action. We want to commemorate Polytechnique and push ourselves to remember the women we lost so cruelly on December 6, 1989, but what are we actually doing? What am I doing to honour their memory? Have we made the best use of the tools democracy has given us to better protect women?

I am far from certain of it. There has been a sharp increase in femicide. In 2022, it was up 20% from the year before. A woman was killed every two days: 184 femicides. It is not slowing down. The Polytechnique tragedy continues. There is not just one killer, but many. The victims are not grouped together, they are isolated, over and over again. What are we doing to stop the cycle of violence? Are we doing enough to ensure that a woman is not killed simply because she is a woman?

The mandatory buyback of assault-style weapons is not a panacea and this Parliament cannot do everything. We must count on everyone. We must count on the federal government. We must count on the governments of Quebec, the provinces and the territories. We must count on the municipalities, community organizations, police, education in our families. We must count on women and we must count on men. Whenever something can be done, we must do it. It takes a will and courage.

Routine Proceedings

● (1700)

Today is December 6, 2023. Thirty-four years ago, a man walked into a school and entered a classroom. He lined women up against a wall and then shot them at point-blank range. He did this because they were women, women with ambitions, dreams and talents, women with lives. All of that was ripped away from them. They were ripped away from us. We will remember them.

We say their names so that they will never truly die, so that we can keep them with us in our hearts. They are Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault and Annie Turcotte.

This must never become a routine or a habit. These women do not deserve to die a second time. Let us keep their memory alive in our hearts. Let us keep the fires of their memory burning bright so that these women, their names and their deaths act as a catalyst, driving us to take action and to do more to combat violence against women. If we succeed in making progress in the fight against violence, if misogyny subsides and if femicides go down, then we will also owe that to these women.

[*English*]

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I too would like to rise today and honour the memory of the 14 women who were murdered 34 years ago at École polytechnique de Montréal. These women, studying to become engineers, were trailblazers in a male-dominated field. They were going to change the world. They were going to build, create and inspire other women to follow in their footsteps, but they did not have the chance. Their lives were cut short by an act of unspeakable misogynistic violence. I too want to say their names as my colleagues have here today, because this provides that memory with power in this place.

Today we remember Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault, Annie Turcotte and Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz. We will remember them.

These women were killed because they were women. They were killed by a man who was consumed by hate. He shouted, “You're all a bunch of feminists, and I hate feminists”. Then he opened fire in a classroom.

It is just as true now as it was then that hate kills. Gendered violence is still a clear and present danger to the safety of women, girls and gender-diverse people; moreover, that violence is rising. In the last year alone, three women in my city of London, Ontario, have been killed by the men in their lives. We lost Carolyn Carter, Caitlin Jennings and Tiffany Gates to femicide. Across Ontario, 62 women and gender-diverse individuals were killed by a man in their life. Anova's emergency shelter for abused women and their children in London has helped 342 women in our city this year, but

the shelter was forced to turn people away more than 2,400 times because of a lack of beds.

The experience is the same for so many organizations fighting on the front lines against gender-based violence. The London Abused Women's Centre, Le carrefour des femmes, Atlohsa and My Sister's Place are all seeing a rise in demand for the support and services they provide. The people who work in these organizations are incredible. They are doing everything they can to save people's lives. Of course, that rise in demand is not just happening in London, Ontario. Across Canada, more than four in 10 women have experienced intimate partner violence and a woman or girl is killed every 48 hours.

Yesterday, we received new numbers from Stats Can showing that more women have faced sexual violence and gender-based violence in the military. After years of repeated promises for systemic change and an overhaul of the toxic culture, after so many false starts from senior leadership in terms of making those reforms, the sexual misconduct crisis is only growing.

In this country, there is a hard truth that, if I went missing, it would mean something different than it would if an indigenous woman or girl went missing. In Canada, indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people are 12 times more likely to be murdered or go missing compared with any other woman in Canada. It is important that we take today to remember the victims of violence against women, but that is not enough. Year after year, government after government has kept women waiting on action for systemic injustices.

There are real, tangible solutions that we can take up in this chamber to support women. Today is a day for us all to find the political courage to act. My colleague spoke about that action that we need to see now. It is possible. We hold that position here today. We have bills from my NDP colleagues, such as Bill C-332, to criminalize coercive and controlling behaviour, from the member for Victoria. Over 95% of victims of intimate partner violence report coercive behaviour and control as a precursor to physical violence. We can take a meaningful step towards ending femicide with this bill by allowing women to speak out early.

● (1705)

On other important changes, I have two bills, Bill C-362 and Bill C-363, that would give women in the military access to justice. Since Justice Arbour's recommendations came forward, we have heard from every party in the chamber that members want to end the rampant abuse and cover-ups that protect perpetrators and hurt survivors of military sexual trauma. We can come together and pass all of these bills.

Finally, in the spring, we unanimously passed the motion from my colleague, the member for Winnipeg Centre, to create a red dress alert system to find and protect indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people. We can act to create that system.

On this National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, I hope we all reflect on the actions we can take and the responsibility we have as parliamentarians. We must renew our efforts to end gender-based violence with the urgency it requires and demands.

• (1710)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I ask for the consent of the House to speak.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, it is an honour to join in rising to commemorate the 14 victims of this horrific act of femicide at École Polytechnique 34 years ago: Geneviève Bergeron, Héléne Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault and Annie Turcotte.

I was five years old when these women were murdered simply for being women. Coming from a suburb of Montreal, I grew up in the shadow of this hate. Thirty-four years later, let us forget neither the women killed nor the fact that femicide not only continues to this day but also has worsened. In Canada today, a woman or girl is killed by violence every two days, every 48 hours, and that number is rising. Indigenous women and girls are 12 times more likely to be murdered or go missing than any other women in Canada. Let us also recognize that the perpetrators of gender-based violence are, more often than not, men.

As the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth rightfully pointed out earlier, this is not a women's issue. As men, we have a critical role to play in ending gender-based violence. If we are going to root out misogyny and patriarchy, we must stand up, call it out and lift up the voices of women, girls and non-binary folks, such as my incredible colleagues who spoke this afternoon, including the minister, the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, the member for Shefford and the member for London—Fanshawe.

I am proud to represent a community that has at least acknowledged and declared that intimate partner violence is an epidemic, but as other colleagues have called out, we need far more action, and this includes providing more sustainable funding for organizations, such as those in my community, that are working every day on the ground to end gender-based violence. This violence leads to not only physical and emotional harm to women and their kids, but also increased risk to their mental health, of social isolation, and of housing and financial strains.

This action also must include following all 231 calls to justice from the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and, as the member for Winnipeg Centre has championed in this place, creating the national red dress alert system, which would immediately raise alarms for indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people who are missing, because commemorating the lives of the 14 women who never had

Routine Proceedings

the opportunity to live out their days means committing to work together to ensure this never happens again.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I wish to inform the House that, because of ministerial statements, Government Orders will be extended by 29 minutes.

* * *

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly respecting its participation in the 30th annual session, held in Vancouver, British Columbia, from June 30 to July 4, 2023.

* * *

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FINANCE

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Finance, entitled “Canada Pension Plan”.

[*Translation*]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 32nd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. The committee advises the following.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business met to consider the item added to the order of precedence on Thursday, November 9, 2023, and recommended that the item listed herein, which has been determined should not be designated non-votable, be considered by the House.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the report is deemed adopted.

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): I have the honour to present, in both official languages, two reports from the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

[*English*]

The first is the 17th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in relation to Bill C-321, an act to amend the Criminal Code, assaults against health care professionals and first responders. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

Routine Proceedings

The second is the 18th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, and is about a motion adopted by the committee on Tuesday, December 5, 2023. It is entitled “Measures to Protect Canadians”.

* * *

PETITIONS

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first has to do with the environment. I believe this is the 17th or 18th petition to this effect that I have been asked to present on behalf of Canadians. It calls attention to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's most recent report, which warns about the next two decades and the widespread devastation and extreme weather that will occur as result of global warming.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to immediately move forward with bold emissions caps for the oil and gas sector that are comprehensive in scope and realistic in achieving the necessary targets that Canada has set to reduce emissions by 2030.

FOOD SECURITY

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the second petition I am presenting today comes from the Lord Strathcona Public School community in my riding of Kingston and the Island.

The petitioners are specifically calling upon the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to develop and prioritize funding for a national school food program through budget 2024 for implementation in schools by the fall of 2025.

The petition draws attention to the fact that Statistics Canada data from 2022 indicates that one in four children in Canada lives in a food-insecure household, that Canada is the only G7 country without a national school food program, and that school food programs are recognized around the world as essential to health, well-being and education of students, with over 388 million children in at least 161 countries receiving free or subsidized school meals at their schools.

● (1720)

PORNOGRAPHY

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I present a petition from residents of Canada who are concerned about young people being exposed to sexually explicit material and the harms associated with that.

The petitioners recognize that online age verification technology is increasingly sophisticated and can now effectively ascertain the age of users without breaching their privacy rights. Knowing that was one of the primary recommendations made by stakeholders during a 2017 study by the Standing Committee on Health, the petitioners are calling upon the House of Commons to adopt Bill S-210, the protecting young persons from exposure to pornography act.

HOUSING

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition that recognizes that 22% of Canadians have a disability and that housing policy discriminates against people with disabilities. The petitioners specifically cite that no building code in Canada mandates that housing be accessible. They note that this leads to thousands being forced out of their dwellings at the most vulnerable time in their lives and that millions of health care dollars could be saved by enabling people to remain in their own accessible homes.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to amend the national building code to make universal design mandatory in all new multi-unit housing developments under the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada consistent with current legislation and conventions. They also call for ensuring the Canadian table for harmonized construction codes policy, the Canadian Board for Harmonized Construction Codes and the CMHC collaborate to defining and illustrate in the national building code what is “visitabile”, “adaptable”, “accessible”, “barrier-free” and “universal design”. Finally, the petitioners call on the House of Commons to require public funds or concessions for housing conferred on municipalities, developers or other organizations to be exclusively used for universally designed housing.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a petition that has been shared with me by constituents within the riding of Waterloo and surrounding areas.

The petitioners are calling on the House of Commons, in Parliament assembled, to demand an immediate ceasefire in the Israel-Palestine conflict. They request that the blockade of the Gaza strip be lifted and that the creation of a humanitarian corridor be authorized, as well as emergency humanitarian intervention. They further ask that all parties involved meet their commitments under the Geneva Convention and international humanitarian law and that the international commitment to promote and defend human rights be upheld.

These citizens and residents of Canada are calling upon the House of Commons, in Parliament assembled, to take any other measures necessary to protect civilians, both Israeli and Palestinian, and to help foster a climate conducive to building a lasting peace.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a petition from the membership of the Fleetwood Christian Reformed Church asking for the expedition of the private sponsorship of Afghan refugees to Canada. The church has been active in sponsoring refugees for 40 years. Right now it is seeking to bring 16 Afghan refugees to Canada. Its concern is that the processing time is lengthy and it would like it reduced to a maximum of one year.

Routine Proceedings

I am pleased to present this petition on behalf of the petitioners.

HOME CHILDREN

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition today on behalf of over 550 members in my community of Etobicoke Centre and communities across Canada.

The petitioners note the fact that, from 1869 to 1948, over 100,000 British children were sent to Canada from Great Britain. These home children often found themselves in indentured servitude on farms or as domestic labourers. Many faced cruel abuse.

Today it is thought that more than 10% of Canada's population, about four million Canadians, are descendants of the British home children. The petitioners call on the Prime Minister to apologize to the home children, child migrants, who suffered in shame and isolation; to those who died while being ashamed of their history and deprived of their family; to the elderly survivors burdened by their past; and to the descendants, who are grappling with the intergenerational impacts of a system that mistreated and separated their families.

* * *

• (1725)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I present the following questions that will be answered today: Nos. 1849, 1850, 1854, 1855, 1858 and 1860.

[Text]

Question No. 1849—**Mr. Randall Garrison:**

With regard to the Enhanced Defence Agreement between Canada and the Republic of the Philippines announced in May 2023: (a) what is the status of the Enhanced Defence Agreement and has it been signed by both countries; (b) what examinations of the human rights situation in the Philippines were conducted before the Enhanced Defence Agreement was negotiated; (c) will ongoing human rights monitoring be included in this agreement and will it be a condition of Canada's continued participation; (d) if human rights monitoring is included in the agreement, how will that be accomplished; (e) will the agreement be subject to periodic review, conducted by a parliamentary body such as the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs or the Standing Committee on National Defence, to hear from witnesses on the ongoing human rights conditions in the Philippines; and (f) when will the terms of the agreement be made public?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as outlined in Canada's Indo-Pacific strategy, Canada has committed to expanding existing military capacity-building initiatives that advance joint priorities and interoperability with regional partners, including the Philippines.

As part of this commitment, National Defence is in the process of negotiating a non-legally binding defence co-operation arrangement, or memorandum of understanding, MOU, with its counterpart in the Philippines. The MOU will provide a framework for co-operation between Canada and the Philippines in the field of defence and military matters. This may include co-operation in the areas of defence and security policy, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and maritime security, among others.

Prior to entering into an MOU, National Defence ensures compliance with all applicable federal laws and government policies, directives and guidelines, including those established by Global Affairs Canada. Canada supports efforts by the Philippines to advance inclusive and accountable governance, diversity, human rights and the rule of law. The negotiation process, which is under way, involves various levels of consultations, including those among federal departments; as such, specific details have yet to be determined.

Question No. 1850—**Mr. Ed Fast:**

With regard to the fourth annual report on medical assistance in dying in Canada 2022: (a) why wasn't the report tabled in Parliament prior to the date on which this question was filed; and (b) when will the report be tabled?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the annual report, published on the Government of Canada website at least once a year, represents the collaborative efforts of all levels of government and health professionals working together to provide a comprehensive picture of the implementation of medical assistance in dying, MAID, across the country.

On October 24, 2023, Health Canada released the fourth annual report on medical assistance in dying in Canada, 2022, containing data providing insights into written requests for MAID and the delivery of MAID in Canada during 2022.

The English report can be found at this web link: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/health-system-services/annual-report-medical-assistance-dying-2022.html>.

Question No. 1854—**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:**

With regard to the workplace assessment conducted by BDO for the Canadian Museum of History and completed in April of 2021: (a) how much was BDO paid to complete the assessment; (b) what was the start date and end date of the related contract; and (c) what was the specific assignment and scope of work provided to BDO?

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Canadian Museum of History, BDO was paid \$95,000, with a contract start date of September 2020 and end date of November 2021.

The assignment of the work provided by BDO was to conduct a workforce assessment to measure the museum's overall working environment and capture employees' sentiments and comfort within the culture of the workplace.

The scope of the workforce assessment included all the museum's employees, and the approach consisted of executive interviews, focus groups, additional one-on-one interviews and the employee survey.

Question No. 1855—**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:**

With regard to medical assistance in dying (MAID): (a) how much has the federal government spent on MAID, including, but not limited to, funding for the provision of MAID, the training of medical staff, and the medications for MAID, broken down by year, from 2016 to 2023; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by item and type of expenditure?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada believes that Canadians deserve to live in comfort and dignity, with access to care, including end-of-life care, that is appropriate to their needs and that respects their wishes. It also recognizes that medical assistance in dying, MAID, is a deeply personal choice and is committed to ensuring our laws reflect Canadians' evolving needs, protect those who may be vulnerable and support autonomy and freedom of choice.

The federal legislation under the Criminal Code sets out a consistent set of eligibility criteria and safeguards for the legal provision of MAID across the country. Although the federal government plays a role in supporting health care by providing funding to the provinces and territories, the provincial and territorial governments have primary jurisdiction in the administration and delivery of health care services. This includes setting their own rules and requirements for the delivery of MAID, as well as making decisions on how and where the services are available.

The Canada Health Act, Canada's federal health care insurance legislation, sets out the criteria and conditions that must be satisfied by the provincial and territorial health care insurance plans for them to qualify for their full share of the cash contribution available under the federal Canada health transfer.

The federal government does not provide any direct funding for the delivery of MAID services or for the provision of medications or substances for the purpose of MAID.

To support transparency and public trust, the Minister of Health must make regulations to collect information for the purpose of monitoring and reporting and must publish a report on MAID in Canada at least once a year. This reporting provides greater insight into who is requesting and receiving MAID in Canada and the circumstances surrounding their request. To bolster and address existing data gaps and strengthen the breadth and quality of information on MAID delivery in Canada, the federal government is also supporting policy-oriented research through contracts and contribution agreements.

With the passage of amended legislation on MAID in March 2021, federal budget 2021 provided funding of \$13.2 million over five years, beginning in 2021-22, with \$2.6 million per year ongoing, to Health Canada to ensure that Canada's MAID framework is implemented consistently and with all appropriate safeguards. This funding has supported the development of training and guidance materials for practitioners to facilitate consistent and safe access to MAID. Funding will also support research to guide the evolution of MAID in Canada.

For example, the Canadian Association of MAID Assessors and Providers, CAMAP, will receive \$4.97 million over five years to develop and deliver the first nationally accredited bilingual MAID education program. This program was recently launched in August 2023 and is available to licensed physicians and nurse practitioners across the country. This multi-year project, going from 2021-22 to 2025-26, will develop and implement a series of training modules to advise and support clinicians in assessing persons who request MAID, including those with mental illness and complex chronic conditions or who are impacted by structural vulnerability, as well as help with the practical application of the MAID legislative

framework. It will be delivered through a combination of online and in-person learning sessions for interested health practitioners, regardless of their level of experience. Also, in 2023-24, CAMAP is creating additional clinician resources to assist assessments of complex MAID requests, such as clinical tool kits and templates. The announcement can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/news/2022/07/government-of-canada-outlines-progress-towards-recommendations-made-by-the-expert-panel-on-maid-and-mental-illness-in-their-final-report.html>.

As another example, the University of Alberta will receive \$560,000 in funding over two years, from 2022-23 to 2023-24, to conduct the first comprehensive national review of how MAID is provided across the country and to expand understanding about individual and family experiences with MAID. This project, "MAID: Descriptions of and experiences with models across Canada", will further enhance knowledge about approaches to MAID delivery across the country by gathering data and information to highlight strengths, challenges and considerations of MAID service delivery, and will identify best practices for all levels of government as well as health partners. The project will complement information collected and reported through the federal MAID monitoring system, providing a better understanding of the experiences of persons requesting MAID, including factors leading to their request. It will also help to shed light on issues such as access to MAID, quality of delivery and cultural appropriateness. The announcement can be found here: <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/government-of-canada-supports-research-to-better-understand-the-delivery-of-medical-assistance-in-dying-in-canada-831267389.html#:~:text=This%20project%2C%20MAID%3A%20Descriptions%20of%20and%20experiences%20with,levels%20of%20government%20as%20well%20as%20health%20partners>.

The Government of Canada will continue working with the provinces and territories and health partners to support MAID practice in Canada so that it operates in a consistent and safe manner across the country.

Federal spending related to federal MAID policy and program activities between the 2016-17 and 2023-24 fiscal years as of October 31, 2023, is broken down as follows:

Contracts total \$145,021, and spending was for seeking clinical expertise and research support to develop or enhance clinical or regulatory guidance and to better understand views and perspectives of various groups related to MAID. Spending was as follows: 2016-17, \$0; 2017-18, \$1,650; 2018-19, \$1,500; 2021-22, \$796; 2022-23, \$87,737; and 2023-24, \$53,337.

Routine Proceedings

Contribution agreements total \$5,213,348, and spending was for expert reviews on various MAID topics, development of MAID training programs, clinical guidance and supporting engagement with various groups related to views and perspectives on MAID. Spending was as follows: 2016-17, \$0; 2017-18, \$1,297,217; 2018-19, \$1,456,187; 2022-23, \$1,516,073; and 2023-24, \$943,871.

Interdepartmental settlements total \$1,695,136, and spending was for supporting Health Canada's mandate to develop and maintain a MAID monitoring system through the Canadian MAID data collection portal, which is hosted on Statistics Canada's secure web-based platform, and for supporting indigenous engagement activities on MAID. Spending was as follows: 2016-17, \$0; 2018-19, \$214,000; 2019-20, \$160,500; 2020-21, \$120,200; 2021-22, \$147,200; 2022-23, \$778,236; and 2023-24, \$275,000.

Question No. 1858—**Mrs. Tracy Gray:**

With regard to the Auditor General of Canada's report on Modernizing Information Technology Systems, published on October 19, 2023: (a) what are the names and descriptions of each government software application that the Auditor General identified as being in poor health; and (b) what are the names of the 562 software applications that the Auditor General identified as essential?

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, due to security reasons, the names and descriptions of the applications identified as poor health, as well as the names of the essential applications, cannot be released.

Question No. 1860—**Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar:**

With regard to the statement by the Director of Communications to the Minister of International Development that "We will continue to support civilians with life-saving humanitarian aid, while ensuring that no money goes into the hands of Hamas": (a) what specific measures is the government taking to ensure that no money goes into the hands of Hamas; (b) has the government issued any type of directives, to all foreign aid recipients in the region, to take measures to ensure that they are not aiding Hamas in any way, either directly or indirectly, and, if so, (i) what were the directives, (ii) who issued the directives, (iii) on what date were the directives issued; and (c) is the government aware of any foreign aid, or money or goods purchased with foreign aid, including any bilateral or multilateral aid, ending up in the hands of Hamas at any point in the last five years, and, if so, what are the details and the government's response to each instance?

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada disburses an average of approximately \$55 million annually to help meet the development and humanitarian needs of vulnerable Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank and neighbouring countries. All programming and funding mechanisms are thoroughly examined to be consistent with Canadian values and to meet the highest standards of transparency and accountability.

Since the onset of the October 7, 2023, attacks, the Minister of International Development has explicitly directed the department to reinforce and expand its already robust vetting procedures. This directive ensures even more thorough scrutiny is applied, going beyond our multi-tiered system, to guarantee that no aid inadvertently benefits Hamas or other non-compliant entities. This heightened vigilance is a testament to our commitment to ethical aid distribution, aligning with our unwavering dedication to upholding the integrity of our humanitarian efforts.

All Canadian funding to Palestinians goes through trusted partner organizations, such as United Nations agencies and Canadian international non-governmental organizations. Global Affairs Canada

exercises enhanced due diligence for all humanitarian and development assistance funding for Palestinians, to ensure that no money goes into the hands of terrorist groups like Hamas. These efforts are twofold, involving a systematic screening process of all implementing and sub-implementing partners against three anti-terrorism regimes. The first is the list of entities under Canada's Criminal Code, managed by Public Safety. The second is the regulations implementing the United Nations resolutions on the suppression of terrorism, RIUNRST, managed by Global Affairs Canada. The third is the regulations implementing the United Nations resolutions on Taliban, ISIL or Da'esh, and Al-Qaida, UNAQTR, which are the 1267 list and 1988 list, managed by the United Nations.

Anti-terrorism provisions figure in all of our funding agreements, wherein Canadian partners' responsibilities are made clear and agreed to by said partners. Every implementing partner and sub-implementer is screened in line with international standards and Canadian domestic anti-terrorism legislation and requirements. The Government of Canada is not aware of any foreign aid, provided by Canada, ending up in the hands of Hamas.

* * *

[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, furthermore, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 1848, 1851 to 1853, 1856, 1857 and 1859 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

[Text]

Question No. 1848—**Mr. Pat Kelly:**

With regard to Canada's immigration system, labour shortages, and housing shortages: (a) for each year, since January 1, 2016, how many successful applicants for permanent residency were skilled tradespeople; (b) how many of the immigrants in (a) were qualified to work in residential construction in the province in which they settled; (c) what proportion of the immigrants in (a) did immigrants in (b) constitute; (d) how many of the immigrants in (b) found work in their respective trades within (i) one year, (ii) two years, (iii) three years; and (e) how many of the immigrants in (b) were employed in their respective trades as of October 1, 2023?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1851—**Mr. Todd Doherty:**

With regard to government financial forecasting: what is the projected interest rate and the range of possible interest rates that the government is using to make its forecasts, broken down by year, for each of the next five years?

(Return tabled)

*Privilege***Question No. 1852—Mr. Todd Doherty:**

With regard to the Benefits Delivery Modernization programme: (a) what are the total expenditures through the programme, broken down by year, since 2020; and (b) what are the details of all external contracts signed by the government as part of, or in relation to, the programme, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount, (iv) description of the goods or services, including the scope of work, (v) manner in which the contract was awarded (sole-sourced, competitively bid)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1853—Mr. Todd Doherty:

With regard to government contracts with Avascent, since January 1, 2016, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: (a) what was the total value of the contracts signed with Avascent, broken down by year; and (b) what are the details of each contract, including, for each, (i) the date, (ii) the vendor, (iii) the amount, (iv) a description of the goods or services, (v) the purpose of the contract and the scope of work, (vi) whether the contract was awarded through a competitive bid or sole-source process?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1856—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:

With regard to palliative care: (a) how much has the government spent on palliative care, including, but not limited to, funding for the provision of palliative care, the training of medical staff, and the development of the framework for palliative care across Canada, broken down by year, for each year from 2018 to date in 2023; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by item and type of expenditure?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1857—Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:

With regard to the federal carbon tax or price on carbon, since 2018, broken down by year: (a) what was the average dollar amount collected by the government from (i) individual Canadians, (ii) individual Canadian business; (b) what is the breakdown of (a)(i) and (a)(ii) by province or territory; (c) what was the per capita dollar amount collected by the government; (d) what is the breakdown of (c) by province or territory; (e) what was the average climate action incentive payment received by (i) individual Canadians, (ii) businesses; and (f) what is the breakdown of (e)(i) and (e)(ii) by province or territory?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1859—Mrs. Tracy Gray:

With regard to Employment and Social Development Canada's Benefits Delivery Modernization programme: (a) what is the total number of government employees or full time equivalents who worked on this project from 2017 to present, broken down by year; (b) what are the government's projections of how many staff will be required to complete this programme, from now until 2030, broken down by year; (c) which consulting companies have been contracted in relation to the programme, including, for each, the (i) scope of their work, (ii) contract value; (d) what was the cost of the PwC Case Study referred to in the Auditor General of Canada's report on Modernizing Information Technology Systems, published on October 19, 2023; and (e) what is the estimated annual cost to administer the programme, in total, broken down by (i) type of cost, (ii) year from 2017 to 2030?

(Return tabled)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member for Fleetwood—Port Kells spoke in the

House a moment ago. He just put a tweet out into the public realm with regard to the leader of the official opposition. It insinuates that the leader of the official opposition should commit suicide, so I would like to give the member the opportunity to apologize for the statement and retract it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is social media information, so I am going to need to review the issue the hon. member is bringing before the House and come back to the House if need be.

On a point of order, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, did I hear correctly that you are going to be coming back to the House with something on that? If so, I would like to contribute.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I mentioned at the beginning that it was a tweet and not something that happened in the House. I have just clarified that it is not the responsibility of the House to look at social media to decide whether or not something has been done. Therefore, I will not, after all, be reviewing a social media post. I can only review Hansard and what has been said in the House.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers also be allowed to stand at this time, please.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from December 5 consideration of the motion, as amended.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Calgary Rocky Ridge.

We are continuing in the debate. We just had a vote in this place, in which we amended the motion. I am a member of the procedure and House affairs committee, which, if this motion is passed, will be dealing with the question at hand. The amendment that my colleagues have just made says that the procedure and House affairs committee would deal with the matter within the first 24 hours of the passage of the motion I am currently rising to debate, and report back to the House by December 14. That would be next week, before the House adjourns and rises for the Christmas break.

Privilege

I frankly cannot believe that I am witnessing what I am witnessing, as a member of the chamber for what will be 18 years in January. It is a rare thing indeed to have a member of Parliament get elected as Speaker and then have to resign in the middle of a parliamentary term. Normally, the member of Parliament who is elected to be Speaker jokingly resists being cast into the Speaker's chair, because, supposedly, nobody wants the job. However, it is actually an important job and an important role to serve as the independent arbiter of all of the rules by which we conduct the debates and the business of the nation.

A Speaker's resigning is something I have not seen in the last 18 years. As a matter of fact, we would have to go back a long time in our history to recall a previous Speaker's resignation due to issues in this place. Now, just two months after we have replaced one Speaker in an unprecedented situation, the House is seized with a privilege question about whether the replacement of the resigned Speaker, a new Speaker, ought, himself, to resign.

I am a Conservative member of Parliament, and my party has been very clear about whether or not we think that what the Speaker has done should constitute grounds for the individual's resigning. We are not the only political party; our Bloc Québécois colleagues in this place have also indicated that they have lost confidence in the current Speaker.

I guess we will wait and see whether the motion passes the chamber. Given the fact that it was unanimous to amend the motion, as all MPs in this place just moments ago voted in favour of an amendment, one can only presume that the question would be referred to committee and the matter would probably be dealt with in the 24 hours after the vote. Likely, if it does not happen today, it would happen tomorrow, which means that the procedure and House affairs committee would be seized with this matter as early as tomorrow, or, at the very latest, Friday of this week, and report it back to this place next Thursday at the latest.

The procedure and House affairs committee is seized with a number of issues. We are dealing with a question of privilege regarding our colleague, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, in relation to foreign interference in his duties as a member of Parliament. The procedure and House affairs committee is also still seized with the general question of foreign interference in our elections. In addition, the procedure and House affairs committee has yet to begin its study on the matter of the previous Speaker's issue of having invited a former Nazi into this place during the visit of Ukrainian President Zelenskyy. Now, it seems that the very busy procedure and House affairs committee would have to study the question at hand as a matter of precedence either today or tomorrow, should the motion continue to get support and pass.

• (1730)

Here is why the procedure and House affairs committee is seized with all of these issues: Trust has been broken. At the end of the day, this is all about trust. It is about trusting that the government has the best intentions and the ability to manage not only the institutions of government but also the institution of Parliament.

I would submit to my colleagues here in this place that we need to get to the bottom of this in a timely fashion, because it is another

stain, I would call it, but perhaps that might be too strong a word. It is a stain on the reputation and credibility of this place.

I should note that if we were to count the number of members of Parliament in this place who serve in the Bloc Québécois caucus and in the Conservative caucus, they constitute almost half of the MPs in this place. I do not know how everybody voted. Sometimes the person who is the Speaker is somebody I voted for, and sometimes the person who is the Speaker is not somebody I voted for. That is okay because up until now, I have been able to get by in this place knowing, with some confidence and semblance of trust, that the referee who was elected, whether I voted for them or not, was actually able to carry out the duties of Speaker in a way that at least appeared non-partisan.

However, here we are. The Speaker has used the privileges of his office, put on his robes and recorded a video acknowledging that he is the Speaker of the House of Commons, for an address to an Ontario Liberal Party partisan event. That is beyond inappropriate.

Anybody who has just undertaken the responsibility of Speaker would, I assume, have been given briefings. They ought to have known the roles and responsibilities of being the Speaker before they put up their hand, or in this case, not removed their name from the list, allowing their name to stand for Speaker.

It is this overt partisanship after having been elected Speaker that has put us in this scenario today. It is a question of trust. If my privileges or those of any other member of the House are in some way impacted, we would expect that the Speaker would be able to carry out a non-partisan view of the rules and protect not only the integrity of this institution but also the integrity, the rights and the privileges of every member of Parliament. This is fundamental to the ability of our democracy and our democratic chamber to proceed with confidence, the confidence not only of the House but also of all Canadians.

I will just remind my colleagues in this place that this is not the first time that the individual who is currently the Speaker has gotten himself in trouble for being partisan. I remember quite clearly that the member wrote letters, in his capacity as a former parliamentary secretary, that breached some of the ethical provisions we have in this place. I also remember the individual's vehemently defending the Prime Minister when it came to the "elbowgate" matter with former MP Ruth Ellen Brosseau, and then his actually calling into question the integrity of Ms. Brosseau; if I remember correctly, he actually said that the incident was being exaggerated by her.

One can only draw some conclusions that the individual has shown his true colours and cannot help but be partisan in a role that is specifically designed to be non-partisan. That is why I would implore my colleagues in this place to vote for the motion and refer the issue to the procedure and House affairs committee so we can deal with the matter forthwith.

Privilege

• (1735)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member has already made up his mind. He sits on the procedure and House affairs committee, like I do. I am going to vote in favour of the motion to send it to committee for committee to do the work. However, if he has already made up his mind, what is the point of even supporting the motion? He already knows what the outcome is going to be at committee. He is not going into it from an objective point of view of listening to all of the information and then making a decision. He is, effectively, a judge in this case. As a judge, he is coming before the defendant and saying that he already knows they are guilty but that he wants to hear what they think so he can make a decision. It is absolutely ludicrous.

Why even bother voting for the motion if he already knows the outcome he plans to execute when he is at committee?

• (1740)

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, far be it from me to know the inner workings of the mind of the member for Kingston and the Islands, even though he purports to know what is in the hearts and minds of everybody else in this chamber.

Of course I will listen objectively to all the witnesses who will come to the committee. I have been here longer than the member for Kingston and the Islands and everybody who seems to be supporting him. I have seen this show before, and I will say to any colleague willing to listen to what I have to say that I am looking forward to hearing from not only the Speaker, who I hope will come to the procedure and House affairs committee, but also all the other witnesses who would know what the conduct ought to be in the role of Speaker. I will make a determination at that particular point in time.

I alone am not judge and jury on the procedure and House affairs committee. I am just one member. I will have my questions, and I expect that I will get fulsome answers from all the witnesses who appear, including the Speaker.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a question for my hon. colleague concerning the party's position. The first position was not as clear as the one we have today. In other words, they were not originally calling for the Speaker to resign, and then they were. Now, they are asking for this matter to be studied in committee.

Can my colleague quickly summarize the Conservative Party's position on the subject?

[*English*]

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, the procedure to deal with this is the procedure when there is a prima facie case. We brought the issue up in the chamber, the Speaker had to make a ruling and we waited for the ruling. The Speaker found a prima facie case, which then invoked the moving of a motion. The Conservative House leader moved that motion, which is what we are debating right now. I am not sure what the member does not understand about the process. We are following the process as it is laid out, and we will see what happens should this motion get passed on to the procedure and House affairs committee.

I would like to thank her party, which has been clear in what it stands for. We in the Conservative Party want a fair and objective Speaker. We believe in this country, in this institution and that the person sitting in the Speaker's chair—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): In the interest of giving the same time for questions as answers, I have to give someone else a question.

The hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I am encouraged to hear the point of view of the member for Red Deer—Lacombe with respect to this going to PROC. My question for him is to understand better his perspective as someone who has been here longer than I have.

My aspiration is for the process to be less partisan and more focused on the best interests of Parliament, separate from any political party. I wonder if the member could comment on whether he shares that aspiration and, if he does, whether he has any advice on how the members of PROC could proceed in a way to follow that approach.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, the members of the procedure and House affairs committee, in the limited time I have been there, debate issues robustly. We all have our own thoughts and ideas and generally get good work done, so I am confident that the procedure and House affairs committee will work constructively toward a resolution on the matter at hand should it get referred.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I usually take great pleasure in speaking in this place, this hallowed chamber where Canadians send people they elect to speak and vote on matters of national policy, but this debate certainly gives me no pleasure at all.

It is a very unfortunate situation that brings us to this point. We are in the midst of the second crisis of confidence in the Speaker in this fall session alone. It has been less than three months since the resignation of the former Speaker, something that nobody in this place had seen in their time, over the incident that we all know well, wherein the Speaker recognized a person in the gallery who was later revealed to be a Nazi member of the Waffen-SS in the presence of Ukrainian President Zelenskyy.

That former Speaker was let down by the Prime Minister's Office, which had failed in its basic responsibility to ensure Canada's reputational integrity. The point is that the Speaker then understood the debacle that unfolded was serious enough to render his position untenable, and as a consequence, he did the right thing, and the only thing to do under the circumstances, and resigned.

Here we are only a little over two months later and we have another crisis of confidence in a Speaker. The facts are fairly well known. The Speaker chose to use his position as the Speaker of the House of Commons to participate in a political event. He appeared in his Speaker's robe in his Speaker's office in a video that was calculated to lend prestige to a sitting elected provincial legislator at a Liberal political convention.

Privilege

The Speaker, in his acceptance speech when he was elected as Speaker, told the House that symbols matter, and indeed they do. When the Speaker appears in his robes from his public office for a televised political convention, there is important symbolism at play. The symbols of his office are designed to convey absolute political neutrality. It is impossible to do that when, with the symbols of the office, he appears at a partisan event, a Liberal convention, lending prestige to an elected office-holder. That is an error of judgment that completely challenges the appearance of neutrality.

There cannot be any hint of political partisanship in the conduct of the Speaker in order for the Speaker to maintain the confidence of members of the House. The Speaker's decision to appear at a political convention through this video telegraphs political affiliation, which is anathema to the office he was elected to by members of this place.

Every member of the current Parliament was affiliated with a political party at the time they were elected. A few of them now sit as independents, but for every member of this chamber, a political affiliation played a role in their pathway to this place, including the current Speaker. Political affiliation has to be abandoned once a member becomes Speaker.

Given this crisis of confidence over the fact that the Speaker appeared at this political convention by video, it is worth remarking that the Speaker was an exceptionally partisan member of Parliament. That is fine. We have many exceptionally partisan members of Parliament. I am a partisan member of Parliament. I sit in a political caucus. I pursue an agenda that I was elected upon and so did he. However, once a member takes the Speaker's chair, that has to be set aside entirely.

• (1745)

At the time of the Speaker's election, it was remarked by some that the member had an extraordinarily partisan history. He had been director of the party, as I understand. I spent time at committee with him and he certainly had an agenda. He was a spokesperson for the government and was the parliamentary secretary for a variety of different ministers. I appeared on panels with him where he would, in an extraordinarily partisan role, deliver a message for the government.

That had to be set aside for the member to maintain the confidence of this place. Now with the event of this past weekend, that is being called into question, which is why this motion is before us. I understand that he has apologized. The apology is fine, but it does not resolve the question of judgment and the lack of judgment.

In the midst of this crisis, the member left Ottawa to attend meetings in Washington, as I understand. What priority could be greater than to preside over debates in this House? The trip is a part of the lack of judgment. I had a conversation with a veteran member who could not recall any time when a Speaker, other than for physical illness, chose to be away from the House of Commons on a Tuesday and Wednesday of a sitting week.

There is an able Deputy Speaker and two able assistant deputy speakers. We have one in the chair tonight. Madam Speaker is an able deputy, but the point is that the Speaker's priority is the business of the House of Commons. It is not travelling to socialize or

have appearances with other politicians in other countries or former politicians in other countries. The business of the House is the priority. For the Speaker to make priorities like appearing in the Speaker's robes to pay tribute to a partisan elected official at a convention and then to leave town while the House is sitting to attend a conference in Washington is a very troubling example of poor judgment.

The role of the Speaker is to protect the privileges of members of Parliament, period, and to ensure that the rules of Parliament are enforced. The Speaker does that by presiding over debate, not by leaving. I am very concerned about that. It is not the role of the Speaker to worry about what the press is saying, what people in the gallery might think or how our debates look on TV. The Speaker's role is to simply enforce the rules of this House to ensure that all members' privileges are upheld. That cannot be done by being absent and it cannot be done by telegraphing political affiliation.

This is the place we are at now. I hope this motion will be supported by the House so that it can have a fulsome airing at committee. I am pleased that the House adopted the amendment, which wisely ensured that this will be dealt with quickly, because we are in crisis. We are having a crisis of confidence in the Speaker and it has to be resolved one way or another.

I urge members to support this motion. Let us get this into PROC, deal with this crisis and get this place back to running properly.

• (1750)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want people to reflect on hypocrisy. The essence of the motion is, "the House refer the matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs with instruction that it recommend an appropriate remedy." The Conservative Party moved this motion. The Conservatives are saying they want PROC to come up with the remedy. Conservative after Conservative has already passed judgment. They are already calling for the Speaker to resign. In the hallway, one member said it is a farce and the Speaker has to resign.

Is there any credibility at all in believing members of the Conservative Party can be objective when this matter goes before PROC? I suspect not. Does the member believe there is a credible Conservative on the other side who can sit in the PROC committee and be impartial?

• (1755)

Mr. Pat Kelly: Of course I do, Madam Speaker. The member may heckle me if he wishes, but perhaps he could have listened more carefully to my speech, wherein I addressed the motion and the desirability of sending it to PROC where the process can unfold. If he had listened carefully to my speech, he would have known that I made no reference to remedy.

Privilege

We are debating the motion right now, but, indeed, calls for the Speaker's resignation have been made by the Conservative House leader and the Bloc House leader. This motion did not come out of the sky. This motion is the result of conduct, and we have to understand there is a reason we are even having this debate. There is a crisis of confidence, and it must be addressed through the proper remedies, including the referral to PROC, which I hope the member will vote for.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, for my part, I do not see anything contradictory about a party having an opinion on this matter and following due process is not egregious to me, that is for sure. I look forward to PROC doing its work.

One of the things I have been concerned about in the course of this debate, when we talk about the dignity of the office of Speaker, has been that the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle has been the point person for the Conservatives on this. Until the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle left the office of Speaker, we used to have a tradition in Canada that the Speaker would not go on to be partisan, never mind lead a political party or be the House leader for a political party in the House.

I wonder if the hon. member would agree with me that the Conservatives have a fair case to make, which is fine, but that the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle is not the appropriate person to make the case, and the Conservatives should not be mobilizing his experience in the Speaker's chair to give credibility to their arguments. That, too, is a form of partisanship about the office of Speaker that I think is not appropriate.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Madam Speaker, that is a bit of an unusual twist by the member, but I do not see any problem with the way the opposition House leader has conducted himself in this matter. When he was Speaker, it was before my time, but I understand he did an admirable job and certainly did not appear in Speaker's robes at conventions or did any other conduct that triggered a crisis like the current crisis. He has been a valuable resource to the debate, and he certainly has valuable experience from having been a chair occupant.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, everyone is obviously wondering whether this is a good situation for the Speaker. I would like to mention two values that a Speaker would be wise to demonstrate while in office.

There is impartiality, certainly. There is also judgment, because that is what the Speaker has to demonstrate in everyday life, on the throne obviously, but also in everything a Speaker has to embody.

In this case, can we say that the Speaker's participation in a provincial party convention reflected these two values? I would like to hear my colleague's opinion on that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I just want to make sure we do not refer to this chair as a throne. It is a chair, but certainly not a throne.

The hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Kelly: Madam Speaker, the conduct had neither the appearance of impartiality nor good judgment.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to this amended motion, a motion that I voted in favour of amending earlier today. Now we are speaking to the main motion, which I also plan to vote in favour of. For full disclosure, I will say that I am also a member of the procedure and House affairs committee. I spoke to this yesterday, and I discussed during my time speaking yesterday how I do feel there is a particular need for the committee to undertake this work, so I am supportive of this.

I was very careful in my words yesterday, as I will be today, not to cast judgment on the issue. It would be almost a conflict of interest for me to try to pass some form of judgment on this matter and then go before committee and sit there and try to pretend that I am being completely objective to what is going on. That is where I see problems arising in comments that we are hearing from the other side of the House.

The member for Calgary Rocky Ridge may not specifically have said that he thinks the Speaker should resign, and he might not be specifically calling out what he sees as the justified action. I give him credit for that in the sense that perhaps he is trying to be more objective in terms of assessing the matter and letting the committee do its work. However, he should take great offence to the fact that the member for Red Deer—Lacombe, who is a sitting member of that committee, stood in this House and went on for 10 minutes about how he has already come to a conclusion in terms of what the results of all this should be.

We have the member for Red Deer—Lacombe, who, full on, has already said that the Speaker is guilty, that the Speaker should resign, and that is his position, but said to bring it to committee and he would be as objective as he possibly can and he would sit down and listen to all the evidence and try to be persuaded one way or the other. The gentleman has already made up his mind.

I heard my colleague from the NDP moments ago say that he did not see a problem with a party taking a position—

• (1800)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. member.

The hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, I believe that the rules of this place are that members should not impugn anything upon other members as to their thoughts. He is welcome to have his own opinions on the matters at hand, but when he is actually characterizing other members and impugning what their thoughts, ideas and reputations are, I believe that is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I think he is referring to the hon. member's previous speech, but I will try to be more attentive to potential inferences.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Privilege

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the Conservatives are very sensitive. It is becoming a common theme. Every time I get up to speak, different Conservative members come out here, most likely at the direction of somebody sitting behind a desk in the lobby who is telling them to come out here and raise these pointless, ridiculous points of order.

I will let the member know that I actually take great pride in knowing that what I say obviously impacts him enough to have to run back into the room to call points of order on what I am saying. What I am saying is true. The member for Red Deer—Lacombe stood in this House for 10 minutes and went on about how he supports this motion and that he needs to see the work happen at PROC, even though he already knows what the outcome is.

What I was saying a few moments ago is that my NDP colleague said that he does not see a problem with somebody having a position on something and then still undertaking the work. The difference here is that it was the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, a Conservative member, who put forward this motion.

I will go through what happened, so that Canadians really, fully understand what is going on here. This shows a bit of the partisanship and the game-playing.

The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle came in a couple of days ago, stood in front of this House and put out a lengthy point of order on the issue. I think it was a valid point of order. Perhaps I do not agree with every detail of what he said, but I think he brought forward a valid point of order that the House needed to reflect on. He left. The point of order was over.

Then the Bloc Québécois stood up and called on the Speaker to resign. Then, as if he just could not possibly be outdone by the Bloc Québécois, the Conservative House leader, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, ran back in here on another point of order and said that he thinks the Speaker should resign, too.

That is what is going on here. This is an issue of one opposition party not wanting to be outdone by the other opposition party. Here we have this motion that has been put in front of us by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. The motion at this point is pointless from his perspective, because he already knows the outcome of what he wants from this. He has already predetermined what he believes the outcome should be, and that is that the Speaker should resign.

For me, being a member of the committee, I have problems with being able to walk into that room to sit at the table with my colleagues, like the member for Red Deer—Lacombe, and genuinely talk about who the witnesses would be. Perhaps one would be Peter Milliken, a great former speaker of this House, the longest serving speaker of this House, who is from Kingston and the Islands—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1805)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind hon. members that this is not a conversation, and the hon. member has the floor and is making a speech. This is not a conversation.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, my colleague from north of the 401 has properly pointed out that Mr. Milliken no

longer resides in Kingston and the Islands. He now resides in Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston. However, Mr. Milliken was one of the people who felt so under-represented by their MP they demanded that with the new redistribution they once again be included in Kingston and the Islands. We are very excited to see that the commission made that recommendation.

My point is, how am I supposed to go into that room with the member for Red Deer—Lacombe and other Conservative members? They have stated in here that they will be objective, that they are going to look at all the evidence, work on getting witnesses together, bring them in and listen to the evidence, and then they will make a recommendation, but they have already stood in this House and said that they think the only outcome is for the Speaker to resign.

It is absolute hypocrisy. It is just like a defendant going before a judge, and the judge says, "Listen, I know you're guilty, but I want to hear from the prosecution and defence. Put your case forward so I can make a judgment." That is basically what Conservatives are doing.

If Conservatives want to at least have the appearance of being objective, they should have just said that they support this, that it is the right motion and we should do this. Then they could have let it go to committee and then started putting their hyper-partisanship into it. However, they could not resist for even just a few moments to allow a little self-reflection and say that maybe it is not a good idea to be so partisan right now, that maybe they should at least wait until the committee hears something to suggest, and then they could pick a piece of evidence that would support their predetermined notion.

However, the member for Red Deer—Lacombe could not even do that. He had to get up right away and say that he knows the outcome of this, that the man has to resign, end of story.

I will support this motion. I will vote in favour of this. I will go to the committee. I will listen to the evidence. I will contribute in any way I can. Then, with the committee's work, I look forward to producing a recommendation or recommendations that we can deliver back to this House for the House to act on.

I believe that is why committees are formed. I believe that is what our role is. I look forward to my participation and being able to do that.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, of course, I would never suggest that my hon. colleague was deliberately misleading the House. I am sure it was an unintentional error with regard to the riding in which our esteemed former speaker, Peter Milliken, resides.

I will just make an observation about having views on a subject and then sending them off to a committee such as procedure and House affairs to have them studied. Of course, we all come here with views. It would be very strange if we did not have some kind of view formed. For some people, it is more than tentative; for others, it might only be tentative. The point is this: If we are serious about being members of Parliament with open minds, then we must be serious about the idea that, when we send it to a place such as procedure and House affairs, our minds might be changed.

Privilege

The member knows full well that there was a previous matter that went before procedure and House affairs relating to an Ethics Commissioner's report, in which everybody voted on partisan lines, but I did not, based upon a PROC proposal. One can break party lines. One can work against simply following party lines on a matter that is of importance to the whole House. I have done it myself; he knows that. The possibility exists, and that is a really good reason for sending this to procedure and House affairs. Does he not agree?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I actually do not disagree with a lot of what the member said, and in particular, when he talked about the fact that people can have opinions and still be influenced. That is absolutely correct.

The error here was in the member for Red Deer—Lacombe stating that publicly. The perception now is that the member cannot be objective. Whether or not he has an ability to do that, he has made it very clear what he thinks the outcome should be. It would have been in his best interest and in the best interest of all Conservative members, especially those who sit on the procedure and House affairs committee, to have restrained themselves from putting forward what they believe the outcome should be.

Do I agree with him that it is possible for people to be influenced? Of course I do. Everybody is human. In my case with the judge, a judge is human. A judge might have a thought in their mind about what they think about a case when walking into it, but the offensive part is when the judge would sit there and say that he already knows the person is guilty but to let him hear the facts so he can make a decision. It does not show any semblance of trying to be impartial, and that is what one has to at least try to demonstrate one is doing, which the member for Red Deer—Lacombe failed miserably on.

• (1810)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I think that the member for Kingston and the Islands is known in the House as someone who is not at all partisan. He is someone who, during a debate, completely steers clear of partisanship. He is beyond partisanship. He relies on facts and does not want to score political points other than in the interest of his own party; that is well known.

Imagine if the situation were reversed, that the Liberal Party was hypothetically in the opposition and the Conservative Party was in power; then imagine that the Speaker from the Conservative Party had made a video, for example, at a provincial Conservative Party convention.

I know that the member for Kingston and the Islands is not a partisan guy and that he relies on facts, so I would like to know how he would have reacted to this hypothetical situation.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I do not disagree. I learned early in my political career never to try to answer hypothetical questions, but the member raises a good point. I actually do not have an issue with Conservatives who have already made up their mind. What I have a problem with is that Conservatives have al-

ready made up their minds but are simultaneously tabling a motion sending this to a committee, so it can presumably do the work in an objective fashion.

Why would they bother tabling this motion if they already know what they believe the outcome should be? That is my point. I do not disagree that there are people out there who might already have their position on this, which is fair and fine. I have a problem with members of the committee who stand here, say what their position is and then go to the committee room and try to be objective on the matter.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very proud to rise here to represent the people of Waterloo. Not everyone knows this, but the history of the francophone community in our region is very important to the people who live in Waterloo.

[*English*]

I am also the chair of the procedure and House affairs committee, and I have a lot of regard and respect for this debate. I welcome the debate at PROC. I do not make any decisions, because I chair the committee; members will determine the outcomes. However, within the parameters of this motion is reporting back to the House of Commons by Thursday. As the chair, I am uncomfortable with this issue: Do we have the resources to ensure that we are reporting back in both official languages? This motion and this issue are of utmost importance to all members in this House, and I am really hoping that all parties will agree to find a way forward, where we work as much as we can to ensure that not only do we respond as a committee but also that we respond to the House in both official languages.

I am not sure what other members think, but as a person who represents a community where people often do not feel that they are represented for their two official languages, and as someone who supports and will always fight for Canada's two official languages, I just want to bring to members' attention as chair that I know that our interpreters are working around the clock. Members should understand that reporting back to the House has to happen in both official languages. Are members willing to ensure that we do the work, so that they have the time to do their work with regard to the official languages of our country?

• (1815)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, one thing that committees struggle with quite a bit is having those resources. I recognize the fact that the amendment to the motion instructs the House to put all the resources necessary towards the committee, and I hope that is enough; it is a short timeline. The chair of the committee would know how difficult it is, sometimes, to get witnesses to come when they are given a two weeks' notice. Now we are talking about a day or two in order to do all this properly. However, I do have great faith in the people who work here, our interpretive services and the people who translate the documents for us. A lot of people work behind the scenes, and they do this incredible work so that our country can continue to operate in two official languages, as it is supposed to do.

Another thing I will promise the chair is that I will not ask a witness to answer in any particular language. I will allow them to answer in the language they choose.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is important that, when we have this discussion for the next hour or so, people who are following the debate appreciate what the motion is actually calling for. I appreciate the fact that the member is pointing out what I have typically said is a bit of hypocrisy, where the motion is asking PROC to provide the remedy, but there is also the positioning of the Conservative Party. Could the member provide his thoughts on that issue again?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I think it is very important that Canadians know exactly what we are voting on.

We are voting on a motion that is asking the procedure and House affairs committee, which deals with issues relating to the House, to members and to the working of our Parliament for that matter, to look into this. As part of that, we will listen to evidence, hear from experts and, hopefully, hear from some former speakers, as I suggested earlier. Then we will be able to find out how we can properly deal with this particular situation.

I will be the first to admit that, when I heard about this situation, I thought, “Oh, that does not seem right.” I wanted to get the context to understand how this actually came to be. However, let us deal with what our recommendations are for this Speaker; more importantly, let us try to set some parameters and put rules in place that dictate what the expectations would be moving forward.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, this is an extraordinary circumstance, certainly. We find ourselves in a position where we all agree, at the very least, that this should go to the committee at which a recommendation would be put forward regarding the future for our Speaker. Part of that process should also take into account what was mentioned earlier, which was the use of House resources in direct relation to what had taken place in the Speaker's office. It is no secret that we commit ourselves, as members of Parliament, to ensuring that when it comes to taxpayer money, we respect that and we do not abuse that for a partisan purpose. That is clear for all members of this House. It has been so clear for us, as a matter of fact, for so long that we do not engage in that kind of activity.

The fact that the Speaker of the House of Commons was able to use resources by which it was then broadcast to the Ontario Liberal convention is a real concern. I just want to know how the member would advise those members at PROC to conduct themselves in relation to what is a pretty serious issue and one that hopefully does not fall victim to partisanship.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, my first question at the procedure and House affairs committee would be to understand the context in which the video was made. Did the Speaker know when he was making that video and sitting in that room that it was going to be broadcast to thousands of people on a big screen, or did he think it was going directly to the individual who was the recipient? I do not know. It is not that it particularly makes one situation better or worse, but did he know that it was going to be used in the context in which it was used? I actually really do not know the answer to that question and I would like to know the answer.

Privilege

Second, I would like to know what exactly the rules are that we currently have in place, but also how those have been followed in the past. For example, in the four years that the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was the speaker, were there instances? We know that the Leader of the Opposition showed up to a Government of Canada event wearing a Conservative jacket, and we know that was not right. It is important to understand the context to get to the bottom of this and then pass judgment.

● (1820)

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, it gives me no pleasure to rise this evening to speak to the motion in respect to the prima facie finding of a question of privilege in relation to the conduct of the Speaker of the House and to refer the matter immediately to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

The role of the Speaker is to be impartial and to demonstrate non-partisanship. There are many reasons why a Speaker must be impartial and non-partisan. The Speaker carries enormous powers over the House and the members who serve in the House. It is the Speaker who has the authority to make rulings that directly impact the rights and privileges of the members of the House. It is the Speaker who has the sole power to make decisions as significant to hon. members as expelling a member from the House. It is the Speaker who is the chair of the Board of Internal Economy, which oversees the very large budget of Parliament and decides how the resources of the House of Commons may be used by the members of the House. The Speaker is like a referee or a judge. He or she makes decisions, makes calls. When the Speaker makes a ruling, there is no appeal. The ruling is final and must be respected by members.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston.

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, third edition, at page 323, explains, “In order to protect the impartiality of the office, the Speaker abstains from all partisan political activity”. The Speaker, unfortunately, has failed to abide by the standard that is expected of him as Speaker. He did so last weekend when he was quoted in the *Globe and Mail* praising the outgoing leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, the sitting Liberal MPP for Ottawa South, in which he made such partisan comments as referring to the Liberal Party of Ontario as “our party”. I would submit that that demonstrated a lack of judgment on the part of the Speaker, but the real reason we are here on this prima facie finding of a question of privilege is what the Speaker did after that.

Privilege

A video message of the Speaker was played at the ultra-partisan venue, being the Ontario Liberal leadership convention, in which he paid tribute to Mr. Fraser. He said such partisan things as “We had a lot of fun together through The Ottawa South Liberal Association, through Liberal Party politics, by helping Dalton McGuinty get elected.” Even worse is that the Speaker's video message was introduced to party delegates as a message from the Speaker of the House of Commons, as if he were speaking for the House. He shot the video on the parliamentary precinct in the Speaker's office and wore the Speaker's robes. This is more than a lack of judgment on the part of the Speaker. It is a fundamental breach of trust to the House and all hon. members of the House.

• (1825)

The Speaker has said that this is an issue of perception. I cannot think of anything more important than perception for the Speaker, who must not only be impartial but also be seen to be impartial. On that basis, the Speaker completely failed in his obligations to members of the House.

I have to say that this is the same Speaker who, when he was running for the office of Speaker only weeks ago, spoke at great length about decorum and respect and how words matter. He even made a pronouncement for the House, in an unprecedented fashion before question period, for all intents and purposes lecturing members about decorum and respect in this place. Only weeks later, we see the Speaker has shown a lack of respect to the hon. members in this place and to the high office in which he serves.

The Speaker, in dismissing this as a matter of perception, has offered no meaningful apology. It does not even appear that he takes the matter seriously. One would think he would demonstrate some level of humility in the face of an unprecedented situation. Never before in the history of our Westminster parliamentary system has a Speaker conducted him or herself in quite this way. We really are in uncharted territory.

Instead of attending to the responsibilities he has to preside over the House, the Speaker, at taxpayers' expense, decided to go on a junket to Washington, D.C., where he is hanging out with a whole lot of elites. He did so during a sitting week. Not only that, but he spoke at an event, in which he recollected his days as president of the Young Liberals. This is another partisan statement on the part of the Speaker using, by the way, the Speaker's office budget. Once again, this demonstrates a complete lack of judgment on the part of the Speaker, as well as his failure to understand his responsibilities not only to be impartial but also to be seen as impartial.

We now find ourselves in the untenable situation where the House leaders of His Majesty's loyal opposition and the third party have called on the Speaker to resign. Those House leaders represent 150 members, or nearly half the members in the House. In the face of that and the need for the Speaker to retain the confidence and trust of all hon. members in all corners of the House, he should reflect very hard on whether he can continue in his role.

• (1830)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is a legitimate argument to be made when the official opposition, on the one hand, tries to give the impression of the im-

portance of the institution and the Speaker's role in Ottawa, and on the other, says the remedy is to go to PROC and allow its members to come up with a remedy to the situation. It is as if the Conservatives are pretending to be apolitical and have confidence in the PROC committee, yet their membership, the Conservative Party, is calling for the resignation of the Speaker. To make matters even worse, at least one member is now on public record indicating that he believes the Speaker should resign. Does the member not see any problems with that?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, I would note that the government House leader has expressed full confidence in the Speaker. The deputy government House leader, the member for Kingston and the Islands, sits as a member of the procedure and House affairs committee. As a loyal deputy of the government House leader, is he going to follow her direction? Is he going to be impartial? I would question that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would just remind members that we do not try to infer positions of other members.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague to remind us how the former leader of the Conservative Party, who was Speaker of the House, broke with a long tradition of impartiality and neutrality. We all agree that the current Speaker made a monumental mistake, had a lapse of judgment and made a gaffe.

However, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle broke the standing tradition that once someone has been Speaker of the House, they do not return to partisan activities. Nevertheless, he later became leader of the Conservative Party.

Does he not see that as a contradiction in his own speech?

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, I have to say I do not know exactly what tradition the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie is referring to.

I can think of many examples of former speakers who have served many years, even decades, in this House, playing partisan roles, including the speaker who was born in my community, St. Albert, the Hon. Marcel Lambert. He was speaker of the House in 1962 and continued in this House until 1984.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, it seems to me that what is being referred to, and I am looking for my colleague's input on this, by both the member for Elmwood—Transcona and, most recently, the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, is a convention which does exist in the United Kingdom.

In the U.K., when one is elected Speaker, the expectation is that they shed their partisan identity. They can choose to run again as an independent, if the parties choose not to run candidates against them, and they fill out the rest of their career. This is the capstone of their career, and they leave the House of Commons as Speaker. Upon their leaving the House of Commons, they go to the House of Lords in retirement and serve there on the crossbench. That is the expectation. It has been explored in a committee. This convention was built out in a committee, which is their parallel to the procedure and House affairs committee.

It is an interesting convention, and one that may have many merits. I actually discussed the idea of adopting this in Canada with the previous speaker when he was running for Speaker following the last election.

However, it does not exist right now, because we have not discussed it, at least in my opinion. I wonder if the member for St. Albert—Edmonton agrees with my assessment of things.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, my learned colleague is quite right in citing what has been a long-standing convention in the U.K. Parliament, but one that does not exist in Canada and has never existed. Whether it is something that should be adopted going forward, that is a matter for further study and consideration.

• (1835)

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, never has the Kingston part of my riding name been more important than today, as my colleague from Kingston and the Islands and I wrestle over whose riding is home to the illustrious former Speaker of the House Peter Milliken. He is a man who served with great distinction for many years and who will make, if this goes to the procedure and House affairs committee, an excellent witness providing some information as to how we have done things in the past and how Speakers have behaved in the past.

There are many, many parallels to draw upon here. There have been many Speakers in this House and in all of our 10 provincial assemblies over a period of well over a century. There are parallels not only in the Parliament in the United Kingdom but also at the House of Representatives in Australia, in the one in New Zealand, in the various Australian states, in the world's largest democracy in India and in a number of African and Caribbean countries. The parallels here are enormous.

The precedents are significant. If the behaviour of the Speaker is such that it would warrant our judgment that he has been acting inappropriately, or acting outside of what is the normal expectation of the Office of the Speaker, there is no better place to determine that than the procedure and House affairs committee. If the reverse turns out to be true, then there is no better place to establish that than the procedure and House affairs committee as well.

I want to deal with a few of the things that the procedure and House affairs committee ought to consider in its deliberations on this subject. The committee will have limited time, so it will have to structure its sittings with some care. I say all of this as someone who served on the procedure and House affairs committee for 15 years. Although I am no longer on that committee, I believe that still stands as not merely a record for serving on that committee, but for the length of service on any House of Commons committee

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for any member of Parliament in the course of the 21st century. There is no question that the procedure and House affairs committee is the right place to go. It looks at technical issues.

We think of the procedure and House affairs committee as dealing with, for example, proposed changes to the Standing Orders. That is the right place to consider those changes. It is also the right place to consider and discuss conventions. We sometimes think that conventions or unwritten rules are literally unwritten, that they exist only in the ether, and we have a common understanding that is inchoate and for which there is no language. That is not actually what conventions in the Westminster tradition look like, whether they are the constitutional conventions of the British constitution, which have a reflection in some unwritten parts of our own Constitution. There is the convention, for example, that there is a prime minister, who serves as the voice of the House of Commons to the sovereign, and that cabinet speaks with a single voice. These are conventions, and they are embodied in a few very important words in the preamble of the Constitution Act, 1867, which says “the Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick” being desirous of “a Constitution similar in Principle to that of the United Kingdom”. All that is contained in that wording. If we dig into that word, we find that that “convention” has built out considerably from there and there is a considerable amount of written material that was around at that time that explained exactly what the fathers of Confederation had in mind when they wrote that wording.

I say all of this by way of saying that conventions are the product of usage, but they are also the product of discussion and deliberation and are to be found in places such as committee reports. Therefore, we have an opportunity to deal with some of the issues that are being discussed here. Is it the case, on a go-forward basis for example, that we ought to be looking at some aspects of the U.K.'s practice, in which the Speaker is expected to take a certain course of action upon retiring from the role of Speaker? Where is that not appropriate? In the past, we have not had such a limitation, and the result has been that Speakers have become Governor General and they have become ambassadors. The potential exists, in theory if not in practice, that it can influence how Speakers behave.

• (1840)

It was with exactly this kind of consideration in mind that the Fathers of Confederation, when dealing with the issue of senators, who, they felt, might be subject to similar pressures, had to —

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. There is a lot of noise in the courtyard.

The hon. member, please continue.

Mr. Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, I was actually thinking of making the exact same observation. Even I am having trouble hearing myself right now.

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I was talking about how the Fathers of Confederation tried to incorporate unwritten conventions in a written instrument, or by reference to incorporate them. To understand this instrument, we have to go back and look at what was said at the Quebec Conference at the so-called Confederation debates that took place in the ancestor of this chamber in 1865, 900 pages' worth of which are recorded.

It is interesting that those who ran the Parliament of the Province of Canada thought it was important enough that they, though there was no Hansard in those days, should have a special Hansard recorded of that debate so the general public could read and understand all of the aspects of the constitutional deal they were making that would not be written down. The same kind of rules ought to apply to the internal governance of this place. Those offices have their powers and authority largely due to convention, as well as due, to some degree, to what is written in the Standing Orders. That would be very profitable.

PROC is the master of its own proceedings, within the parameters of the motions presented to it; however, I do not think it is appropriate to start by asking whether the Speaker was aware of exactly where the video would be used, and whether he is therefore guilty in the sense that one is found guilty in a criminal trial. He is not on trial for a crime, so *mens rea* is not actually a relevant consideration. It is equally possible he could simply have been exercising bad judgment, a sign of an inability to consistently make wise judgments, or of a weakness in the way he chooses to conduct himself, that makes him, although an honourable member and an honourable person, simply an inappropriate occupant of the chair.

The fact is that many people would be inappropriate occupants of the chair. In fact, a majority of the people in this room, I suspect, if asked, would say, "I am not the right occupant for the chair", for one reason or another. It has nothing to do with their character; it has to do with the fact that they are unilingual or they have to be away from this place because of family considerations, so can participate online, but not here. The Speaker should be here. There is a whole range of reasons; perhaps someone may not have the attention span or the energy they used to have when they were a younger person, and cannot sit for all those hours. One feature of being a Speaker is having a certain degree of stamina. They cannot drift off, and some debates are kind of dull. The Assistant Deputy Speaker even agrees with me.

These are considerations that are relevant to a hearing of this sort. It is really a question of determining what the standards are and doing a reset so we can all be clear that these are the standards we regard as being reasonable and acceptable. We either do or do not think that the incumbent in the role of Speaker is fitting in with those expectations, now that we have had a chance to examine them in more detail.

I hope that, on that basis, we will go forward and decide to vote in favour of the motion, we will trust PROC to make an intelligent report back to us, and we will have a chance to consider its report and to vote on the report in the House of Commons. It would come back to us. I have indicated in the past that I think it is best, when dealing with PROC reports, that we try to do so on a non-partisan basis. I would encourage that to happen here. I do not control that, but I think that at least one committee should be treated as being non-partisan as much as possible, both in its own behaviour and in

how the House responds to its reports. That, by the way, was exactly the approach it took when a motion I proposed was considered by PROC a few years ago to change the way the Speaker is elected. I think that was beneficial. I hope we can all do the same thing here.

● (1845)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it has been suggested by a friend and colleague of mine that the member should become a member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. It might be a healthy thing to do for the committee process.

I have raised this previously. The Conservative Party justifiably raised the issue as a point of order. The Speaker then reviewed everything that had been said and came back and said to have a motion that would provide a remedy.

The Conservative Party then provides a remedy. The word "remedy" is incorporated into the motion that the member just finished speaking to.

For many, including myself, I do not quite consider how one can have a sitting member on PROC who has already committed to the Speaker having to resign sit and try to be objective to those people who are coming forward with ideas.

Does the member not agree there is at least the appearance of conflict?

Mr. Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, actually, in my remarks, I had meant to mention the issue of conflicts of interest and the appearance of a conflict of interest. I was going to say that the Speaker must be impartial and must be seen to be impartial, which is somewhat like a conflict of interest versus the appearance of a conflict of interest.

In this case, I do not think that is what is going on, if we are talking about members of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. I think it would be more accurate to say that there is the appearance of having an opinion.

I cannot think of a subject out there, from professional hockey to astrophysics, on which I do not personally have some kind of opinion. I also hope that I am in a position where I can be convinced by the evidence to think differently at the end of the process than I started out thinking. Sometimes I think that is unlikely, quite frankly, but I do not know how one gets around the fact that everybody has opinions. Some would be more valuable in expressing their opinions than others.

All I can say is that if the member is this concerned, he could suggest to people that they recuse themselves, I suppose, although I have to say that if I were invited to recuse myself by someone from another party, I would probably say, "Thanks, but I am going to stay here."

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I always appreciate hearing the hon. member's reflections on parliamentary process and procedure.

We were talking earlier about the difference in culture around the U.K. speakership, but it does seem to me that if one were to lay down a list of former speakers and former political party leaders, one would have little, if any, overlap at all. In fact, I think one would only find one person who appears on both lists, and that is the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

Of course, when we were debating Motion No. 79 in this place, which was a motion that I brought about prorogation and the confidence convention, I did hear from some Conservative members who wanted to remind me of the important tradition of establishing conventions through practice and not writing them down.

I think there was a convention around the speakership in not engaging in partisan roles post-speakership, certainly at the federal level in Canada, prior to the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle blazing his own trail in that regard.

I wonder, as we are talking about this issue of partisanship in the Speaker's role, if he thinks it might be appropriate for the procedure and House affairs committee, in its investigation of this incident, to turn its mind a little bit toward that topic, being encompassed by the question of partisanship and the Speaker's office. Perhaps the committee could provide some reflections on that to the House in the course of their deliberation.

Mr. Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, the first thing I would say with regard to whether a convention of that nature exists is that the man who invented the concept of constitutional convention was Albert Venn Dicey. In his outstanding work, *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*, which everybody should have at their bedside, by the way, he says that there is a way of testing whether a convention exists, and that is to see whether one watches, in their actions, whether the two major parties in the House are both in agreement. He lived in a time when there were two major parties in the United Kingdom. He points to the confidence convention's development during the period of Disraeli and Gladstone as being the example. Before that, one could lose what we would regard as a confidence vote in the House and carry on.

I think that this is the way one judges whether a convention exists. I would say, based on that and the fact that it was uncontroversial that our House leader was the leader of the party after being speaker, that no convention existed. It might be starting to gel. It is possible.

To answer the question that was specifically asked about what the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs should study, I would say that, among other things, the British practice of having a Speaker shed the partisan energy in the expectation that they can run again and will run again as an independent has some merit.

It was tried here once, by the way, in Canada. As we may know, Speaker Lamoureux did that. I suspect it might have stuck had some other accidental things not come along. It is very much worthwhile to consider that for the future.

• (1850)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise and talk about the issues of

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the day. I must say, I appreciate a number of the comments that were just made, especially one that was brought over to me. One of my colleagues on this side suggested that the previous speaker should be seriously considered for placement on PROC. I think the system might be a bit better if, in fact, that were to take place. However, I recognize that a recommendation from me to the leader of the Conservative Party to do that probably would not get him very far.

Having said that, I often hear a great deal about the institution, the Speaker and the important role the Speaker's office plays. People want to talk about that. We even had some very detailed explanations of what the Speaker does inside the House. I concur with many of those comments, such as how important it is to have a Speaker and recognize the role the Speaker plays.

Not that long ago, we did not elect Speakers; rather, they were political appointments. In the Province of Manitoba, when I was first elected, the Speakers were appointed; when I left, they were elected. I went through that transition. First and foremost, there was a great sense of pride as parliamentarians around the horseshoe inside the Manitoba legislature elected our first Speaker; for the first time, Manitoba felt that was the best way to ensure that the Speaker understood, in a very real and tangible way, that he or she represented, in that case, the interests of all MLAs on all sides of the House. We saw that as a very important step forward in Manitoba.

We did not come up with the idea. We knew Ottawa was electing a Speaker, so we took the idea and brought it into the Manitoba chamber. I sat on the Legislative Assembly Management Commission, what we call here the Board of Internal Economy, which is an important committee that the Speaker actually sits on. I recognized the role the Speaker played with respect to that committee, just as I recognize the important role, as others have emphasized, that the Speaker plays inside this chamber.

The Speaker has significant power. We saw that today when one member of the House made an unparliamentary allegation and would not withdraw it. As a direct result, the Speaker asked the member to leave the chamber, and he was unable to participate today. Because of the decision of the Chair occupant, he could not even participate in the votes. That is why, when I talked about this yesterday, first and foremost, I talked as a parliamentarian. I highlighted my experience in Manitoba, because I truly believe, given the very nature of the institution and the office, and the importance of the Speaker's chair, that we need to put partisan politics to the side.

When a member of the opposition stands up on a point of order, I often respond to it for the Speaker to take into consideration. When the leader of the official opposition came forward the other day and expressed his concerns about the Speaker in the form of a point of order, I was quiet. I listened.

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• (1855)

We then had the Deputy Speaker, because the Speaker recused himself of the issue, canvass other members and, after canvassing, ultimately made the decision, which flowed to the Conservative Party of Canada coming up with a solution: What does the House of Commons collectively, members of Parliament on both sides of the House, have to say about the issue? This is actually what we are debating today. We are debating that the Conservative Party believes it was in the best interest of all to have this matter go to the procedure and House affairs committee, PROC, and have PROC come up with a remedy. In fact, the essence of the motion reads that the House “refers the matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs with instruction that it recommend an appropriate remedy.”

When I heard the motion, I did not hear one Liberal oppose it. I did not hear anyone inside the chamber oppose what was being recommended by the Conservative Party at the time. In fact, I thought that was a reasonable ask. After the opposition House leader finished his speech and after a second speech, I then stood up and made it very clear that I support the motion and, I believe, members in the entire chamber support the motion. However, we then had the member for Mégantic—L'Érable, who followed the House leader of the official opposition, say, “The solution for the Speaker is none other than to ask for his resignation, because he has lost the confidence of the House.”

I do not understand how we could have the opposition House leader move a motion saying that we should use PROC in order to come up with a remedy, but then, just minutes later, is immediately followed by the member for Mégantic—L'Érable, who I believe is the deputy House leader for the Conservative Party but I could be wrong on that, come out saying that the Speaker should resign. The best I could tell from sitting on this side, virtually right across from the member, is that the Conservatives felt they were being outmanoeuvred by another political entity inside the House. That may be why the member said what he did. However, the bottom line is that is what the member said.

The member went on to say, “That is why Canadians need to pay close attention to what is happening right now and to the recommendations that will be made by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.” After making his previous statement, he seems to be under the impression that everyone should support the motion itself, and that it is okay to go to the committee even if a member had already made up his mind. I did not understand that, but then it was reinforced earlier this afternoon by the member for Red Deer—Lacombe.

The member for Red Deer—Lacombe is a member of the procedure and House affairs committee. The remedy that is being recommended is that the matter go to PROC. I want to mention what the Conservative member sitting on the committee had to say.

• (1900)

During his speech, he reinforced that he believes the Speaker should resign. My colleague asked him why he would say such a thing when he is on the PROC committee and if that would put him in an awkward position. He responded, “Of course I will listen objectively to all the witnesses who will come to the committee.”

How can he possibly be objective? He even said he is hoping the Speaker will go to the committee.

The member, along with the Conservative Party collectively, has already said he wants the Speaker to resign, that he hopes the Speaker will go to PROC and that he is going to be objective. He wants the Speaker to go to the committee so he can ask him some questions and be objective. Who is he trying to kid? The Conservatives have already made a determination. They already know what they want. They have a set agenda.

The longer the debate goes on, the more I witness the Conservatives trying to discredit the Speaker and the Speaker's office. They talk here about how important the Speaker's office is, but I would suggest that their actions are speaking louder than their words. As one member said on a political panel I was on just outside this chamber, when referring to the process and the issue with the Speaker, it is a farce. That is what the Conservatives are attempting to turn it into, making it look as if the chamber is dysfunctional. This is not the first time they are doing this.

I would argue they are using the Speaker's chair as part of their master plan to be a destructive force in the chamber. They do not care about being fair. They have demonstrated that very clearly. They want to demonstrate to the far right that the Speaker's office, the Speaker's chair and the institution or Parliament itself are dysfunctional.

On the sustainable jobs act, Bill C-50, do members know how many amendments the Conservatives have put forward? There are 19,938 amendments, just on one piece of legislation. Many times I stand in the chamber to talk about how the Conservative Party is a destructive force in the chamber in the way they prevent things from taking place. They constantly give Canadians the impression that everything is broken in Canada, including the House of Commons itself.

They will stand in their places, much like they are doing with the motion we have today, to say it is the government's responsibility to get legislation passed and it is the government that sets the agenda, but it is the Conservatives who consistently mess it up. They do it by using concurrence motions for reports, adjourning debates or moving motions that cause the bells to ring. They have 19,938 amendments on one piece of legislation. They are trying to convince the MAGA right that, at the end of the day, this is all broken and dysfunctional. That is what the real objective is.

• (1905)

I made the assumption that when the opposition House leader stood in his place and moved the motion, he was being genuine. I honestly thought that when he was looking at what had taken place, he was being genuine. However, the more I hear Conservatives speak on the issue, the more I come to the conclusion that this is just another partisan act we are seeing from the Conservative Party of Canada.

To demonstrate that, I suggest that in PROC, we will see a Conservative Party that will do whatever it can to emphasize that the Speaker has to resign. The Conservatives have already been told what they have to do. I hope I am wrong. If I am, I will apologize to the House. I do not believe I am going to be apologizing.

I believe the Conservative Party already has an agenda, and that agenda is just an extension of the behaviour we witness time and time again on the floor of the House of Commons on government legislation that has been very important to Canadians. It has the backs of Canadians and is developing an economy that will be there for every Canadian in every region of our country. Whenever it comes time to vote or debate, we see Conservative games on the floor of the House, whether it is the filibuster of debates, the many different dilatory motions they move or the many different actions they take. That is why I say that actions speak louder than words. If the Conservatives were serious about this issue and about saying that it should be apolitical and non-partisan, they would not be giving the types of speeches they are giving now and I would not be giving the type of speech I am giving.

This motion should be passed, even though the Conservative Party has already taken a position. We know that and understand that. I am somewhat grateful that I am not on the PROC standing committee. Hopefully, a majority of the members on the committee will at least be fair in their assessment of what has taken place before they pass judgment.

I can guarantee that if the Conservatives do not see the resignation aspect, we will see a minority report coming from the Conservative Party. Then, of course, I would not be surprised if we see a concurrence motion on the report. They will do anything to prevent government legislation from passing, no matter what the legislation is, including the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. That is the Conservative agenda. The far right has taken over the leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada today. It is unfortunate.

I would like to think there are some things inside this chamber for which partisanship can be put to the side. I would suggest that members recognize the issue at hand, read the motion and allow PROC to do what it needs to do: meet with people, talk to witnesses and come up with a remedy that is fair to all.

I always see my waterglass half full. I am going to continue to be a bit of an optimist. Maybe we will see something miraculous coming from the Conservative Party at PROC. I will keep my fingers crossed.

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I wish to inform the House that, because of the delay, pursuant to Standing Order 30(7), the period provided for Private Members' Business is cancelled.

[*English*]

Accordingly, the order will be rescheduled for another sitting.

[*Translation*]

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Winnipeg North mentioned that more than 19,600 amendments had been tabled at the Standing Committee on Natural Resources. I would like him to tell us more

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about this matter. How is it humanly possible to produce so many amendments in such a short time?

Does he think that the Conservatives used artificial intelligence to help with this? If so, and in the circumstances, does that raise an ethical problem?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, to be honest, I am not sure how they came up with 19,938 amendments. That is what I have been told. I do not know how a committee could deal with that. That legislation is about sustainable jobs; I guess they are somewhat allergic to anything related to the environment. AI might have played a role in that.

However, I say it just to reinforce a general pattern of behaviour we are seeing coming from the Conservative Party and, to be more specific, the leader of the Conservative Party's office. We should all be concerned about that. I am sure Donald Trump would be proud, but my constituents are not.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was pleased that, in the course of his remarks, the member for Winnipeg North did not quote himself from Hansard. This was something he did several days ago. The reason I thought that was so interesting is that, as we all know, and it is no secret to members in this place, the member for Winnipeg North is far more concerned about the quantity than the quality of his words. He often brags at home about how many words he says in the chamber. When he quotes himself from Hansard, it raises the question of double counting. Given that he was quoting himself from Hansard, will he subtract those words from the word count he publishes to his constituents, so they have an accurate count of how many words he actually says as opposed to when he repeats himself by—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member could perhaps have linked the relevance of his comment to the speech the hon. member just made.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, maybe some people are counting. I could not say how many words I have actually said in the House, because I do not count. To the best of my knowledge, there is no counter, nor do I publish anything. Maybe during an election, I might say that I stand up a few times. I like to think I can be humble at times. I am very grateful to the people of Winnipeg North and to my colleagues for entrusting me with the ability to share my thoughts. I always take it very seriously. I enjoy being able to contribute to debate, both as the parliamentary secretary to the House leader and as the representative of Winnipeg North.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

[*Translation*]

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

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1915)

If a member participating in person wishes that the motion, as amended, be adopted or adopted on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the will of the chamber, from what I understand, is to pass the motion unanimously without a recorded vote.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I declare the motion, as amended, carried and referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent at this time to call it 7:18 p.m.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, small businesses are struggling to survive and entrepreneurship has fallen off a cliff. The minister and the government love to claim that they have the backs of small businesses, yet they have ignored their concerns and the issues they face time after time.

According to the most recent data from the Superintendent of Bankruptcy, total business insolvencies increased by 23.5% month over month from September to October 2023, and for the 12-month period ending in October, the increase was 39.9% year over year.

The recent Statistics Canada survey on small business conditions, fourth quarter 2023, revealed that the majority of businesses, that is 73.7%, expect to face cost-related obstacles over the next three months. Rising inflation was the most commonly expected obstacle, followed by rising input costs, interest rates and debt costs.

Another StatsCan report on GDP, income and expenditures for the third quarter of 2023 found that exports of goods and services fell 1.3%. Inventories accumulated at the slowest pace in two years with the manufacturing industry recording a withdrawal after six consecutive quarters of accumulations. Fewer businesses are invest-

ing in engineering structures in the wake of the completion of the Coastal GasLink LNG pipeline in my province.

In its business barometer for November 2023, the CFIB reported that business confidence remains low. The 12-month small business confidence index dropped another 1.5 points to 45.6, a third consecutive decrease in optimism.

The Conference Board of Canada paints a similar picture. Its index of business confidence dropped by another percentage point in the third quarter, bringing the index to 33.9 points below its latest peak in 2021. This was driven by a 7.7% decline in businesses that think now is not a good time to expand.

The CFIB also published a report in November on labour shortages, highlighting that 53% of Canadian small business owners report that labour shortages are preventing them from expanding their business. Canadian business owners have been clear: Some of the biggest challenges they face right now relate to inflation, red tape and repeated tax hikes. Those are all challenges imposed on them by the government.

When I asked the minister whether her government would stop its punishing tax hikes and inflationary spending, her response was to brag about more spending. Hearing all of these alarming trends for small businesses, the minister will have to excuse me for not jumping on her bandwagon of empty announcements, flashy photo ops and cheerleading the government's reckless spending that have failed to address the real challenges faced by small businesses across our country.

I will give the minister another chance this evening. Will her government commit to stop raising taxes on small businesses and bring spending under control to address inflation?

• (1920)

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business and to the Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am happy to respond to comments made earlier by the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon regarding support for small businesses and restaurants. The government understands the important role that small businesses and restaurants play in communities from coast to coast to coast. Let me outline some of the measures the government is taking to support businesses dealing with inflation, which is affecting all Canadians.

The government was there through the pandemic and provided direct support to businesses. We introduced wage and rent subsidies, advice and training to help businesses adapt to a digital marketplace, and loans to provide liquidity relief to ensure businesses' survival through the recovery period. The Canada emergency business account, or CEBA, provided \$49 billion in support to nearly 900,000 businesses across the country. The program offered interest-free, partially forgivable loans of up to \$60,000 to eligible small businesses. It kept their lights on and helped workers remain employed. We recently extended the deadline for partial forgiveness, and the CEBA term loans deadline was extended by one year, to December 31, 2026, to offer more time to businesses for their loan repayment.

The government is also supporting small businesses by cutting credit card transaction fees and by cutting the small business tax rate from 11% to 9%, which is essential to businesses coming out of the pandemic. We have enhanced the Canadian small business financing program by increasing annual financing to small businesses by an estimated annual \$560 million, helping businesses access liquidity for start-up costs and intangible assets. For businesses looking to bring their offerings to the digital marketplace, the Canada digital adoption program has supported enterprises of all sizes to digitize and reach more markets. The government is supporting businesses in their efforts to strive for even greater inclusivity, with the women entrepreneurship strategy, the Black entrepreneurship program, the 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurship program and targeted supports for indigenous businesses.

The government will continue to work hard for Canadian small businesses and restaurants because we know that they are the backbone of our economy.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, we are now past the pandemic, and I am getting tired of hearing the government raise the pandemic-related responses for small businesses time and time again, when it fails to acknowledge that the extension it provided for small business owners, to January 18, was woefully insufficient. Every single member of Parliament in the House has heard from those restaurants and small businesses that the government simply got it wrong.

The real problem is that the government is not paying attention to the structural challenges facing the Canadian economy. Time and time again, small business owners have outlined all of the red tape they face along with the challenges of doing business. The numbers speak for themselves. Statistics Canada has reported time and time again in the last year that more businesses are closing than opening and that many business owners do not see an opportunity to expand because they do not believe the government has created the right conditions for them to do so—

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

Mr. Bryan May: Madam Speaker, I am not surprised that the member opposite does not want to talk about the supports we provided to small businesses, because, frankly, I wonder whether they would have done so if they had been in power.

We know that inflation is a global phenomenon that is a lingering result of the pandemic and exacerbated by worldwide events. It is making life harder for many businesses, particularly restaurants.

Adjournment Proceedings

The government has introduced measures to ensure that doing business in Canada is as easy as possible, including cutting taxes for growing small businesses, lowering their credit card fees by up to a quarter and helping them access more financing to grow their businesses.

We will continue to support small businesses and restaurants across the country as we deal with the very real challenges of the global economy and inflation.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, persons with disabilities are continuing to live in poverty with no relief from the government. We have seen rents soar over the last year, pushing many Canadians out of the housing market and into being unable to afford safe and adequate housing.

For persons with disabilities, accessing housing that meets their needs is nearly impossible. Add discrimination on top of that, and more and more stories are coming out from across Canada about the reality of persons with disabilities having to live rough. In Duncan, British Columbia, Jon Harry was forced onto the street to sleep on a tarp when he lost his housing. He and many other persons with disabilities are forced into homelessness because of the lack of affordable housing options. Organizations, including food banks and shelters, are at a breaking point because more people are relying on these services. Many persons with disabilities also do not have the level of income due to discrimination. Many persons with disabilities are currently paying 80% to 90% of their income on housing. In British Columbia, that leaves many people with less than \$200 for all of their monthly expenses.

I tabled a petition earlier this year, and very recently I tabled a petition brought by the community around a disability emergency relief benefit. This week, the government responded that, given its limited resources, rolling out an emergency relief could have an effect on delaying the Canada disability benefit. That response from the government is an insult to persons with disabilities because it is the government that is delaying the rollout of the Canada disability benefit.

Canadians need support now, and without a clear timeline of when in 2024 this Canada disability benefit will be rolled out, persons with disabilities are left with questions, not solutions, and deteriorating living standards. The government must deliver, with the Canada disability benefit, an adequate and timely benefit.

Adjournment Proceedings

While the government is holding back on rolling out that benefit, and even during the rollout of the benefit, it must be building more affordable, accessible homes. I will take this moment to recognize the member for Nunavut, who continues to stand up in the House to talk about the absolutely devastating conditions of housing in Nunavut.

Without adequate income supports for persons with disabilities, they are being legislated into poverty by the current Liberal government and the Conservative governments before it. Federal support was needed yesterday, as I mentioned in the House already this week in question period, and persons with disabilities cannot wait any longer.

My question to the minister is this: When will the government deliver the Canada disability benefit it promised? It has been seven years of promises, and it is still not here, which is hurting people.

● (1925)

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would start off by thanking the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam for her advocacy for the disability community.

Since 2015, our government has worked tirelessly to lift millions of Canadians out of poverty. This includes persons with disabilities.

[Translation]

We know that too many people are facing additional costs related to their disability.

[English]

I am speaking of expenses limited to accessible housing, to accessible transportation and to disability supports, among many others. We know that a mix of poverty and disability can create physical and social isolation. The disability benefit is a major milestone in helping to alleviate poverty for those who have disabilities. We will not cut corners on meaningful consultation. We have committed to deliver this benefit quickly.

[Translation]

We know that the need is urgent.

● (1930)

[English]

Poverty is complex and multi-dimensional. The Canada disability benefit is meant to supplement income and not replace existing benefits. We want to make sure that its impact is felt and that it is real. Other levels of government and the private sector need to join us in this mission of eliminating poverty among persons with disabilities.

We need to recognize that decades of relentless advocacy on the part of the disability community have helped us get to the point we are at today. In the spirit of “Nothing Without Us”, we could not have gotten to the point where we are. “Nothing Without Us” means that we are working with the disability community to get to a point where this benefit will be realized and will help those who are impacted. Everything we have achieved thus far has been done by working with the community each and every step of the way.

The Canada disability benefit is a cornerstone of the disability inclusion action plan. The action plan includes key priorities identified by the disability community. Our government has held round table discussions with members of the community, with advocates and with experts. At the same time, community- and indigenous-led engagements have been held on separate tracks to make sure the action plan is comprehensive and effective. The next step is to make the Canada disability benefit a reality through regulations and implementation.

We will continue to work with the disability community, stakeholders, indigenous organizations and provinces and territories. We have started the engagement and the design of the regulations. We are confident that the benefit will help ease the stress and hardship of those who need it.

I want to again thank the disability community, advocates, actors and those who have been pushing to help us get to the point where this benefit will be fulsome, will be real and will help alleviate poverty. I also thank the member opposite for her advocacy.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, I can feel that there is support and desire there, and I really appreciate that. However, the problem is there are people who are unable to pay their rent and unable to pay for food and medication. With the cost of living, they cannot wait any longer.

The government is hiding behind consultation, trying to scare people by saying that the success of this benefit is tied to how long it is delayed, which is a cop-out. There has been plenty of consultation, and the number one pillar that persons with disabilities expressed to the government over years of consultation is the need for economic support. They need it to uphold their human rights and for us as a country to uphold our commitments on the rights of persons with disabilities.

To ask again, why does the government—

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

Mr. Sameer Zuberi: Madam Speaker, I would like to again thank the member opposite for her advocacy.

We are moving quickly on historic investments and measures. The legislation, Bill C-22, which is now law, requires that we consult with the community in a fulsome fashion, and we are doing so. It requires that we make regulations to have the benefit realized, actualized and in people's pockets, and we are doing so. The benefit will reduce poverty and will increase financial security for those who need it most.

The Canada disability benefit is important to all of us. It is important to our government, it is important to the member opposite, it is important to me and it is important to Canadians. We are working with the community tirelessly.

We need to get this right and we will get it right. It will help create real change. It will transform the realities—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

HOUSING

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, all of us in this place know that Canada is facing a housing crisis and it looks different for different people. For some seniors it means pitching a tent in the community park that used to be the place they would go for recreation. For some families it means cutting back on food in order to make the rent payment. We know that we got here because we had decades of Liberal and Conservative governments that did not invest in non-market housing for a very long time. Now we are trying to address this crisis.

I think the most important number for Canadians to bear in mind with respect to the success or failure of the national housing strategy is from Steve Pomeroy, who said that for every one unit of affordable housing we build in Canada today we are losing 15. That should give everyone a very clear picture of how inadequate the federal government's efforts so far have been in addressing the housing crisis.

In the fall economic statement the government announced a replenishment of some funds, like the rental construction financing initiative and the co-investment fund, but it put that off for another two years. That money is not even going to begin to flow until 2025, which means that the construction of those units is even further down the road when Canada is currently experiencing a housing crisis.

My question is very simple. Instead of regaling me with things that have been built under the national housing strategy, and there are some but they are decisively inadequate, I want to hear a simple answer as to whether or not that money that has been announced for these programs that already exist will be moved up from 2025 to 2023.

• (1935)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I agree with the hon. colleague on a few things.

I agree that the lack of investment on the part of previous governments, Liberal and Conservative, has taken us to this point where Canada has a genuine housing crisis in front of it. We have to recognize that first and foremost.

I would also say that the housing crisis and the lack of affordability we find is ultimately underpinned by a supply crisis. We need to build more. I know the member cites numbers from Mr. Pomeroy and others. I heard his citations given at committee. That is all well and good, but the key point is that when we build more, we add to supply, and when we add to supply, we bring down costs. That is true for renters and it is true for prospective homeowners.

Adjournment Proceedings

I will point to the fact that, in just the past few months, this government has waived the GST on the construction of apartments. It has also introduced funding through the housing accelerator fund, a \$4-billion fund, that is going to result over the next four years in 45,000 additional homes and 200,000 homes over the next decade. The homes that have been constructed have led to the housing of individuals who had unfortunately found themselves on the street. There are 200,000 people who were either homeless or very close to being homeless who have found themselves housed, quite often with wraparound supports, which I know the member who raised this question appreciates. This involved collaboration with not-for-profits as well.

The member points to the fall economic statement. I think there is something quite substantive there. As for when funding will be allocated, those decisions will be made. What we are looking at is more funding for non-market housing dealing with short-term rentals.

These are not small things. These are meaningful movements forward, which contrast quite strongly with the approach of the Conservatives. They have put forward a private member's bill through their leader that would lead to fewer homes, which we heard from the Department of Finance through an analysis. They want to tax homebuilders and cut funding for the housing accelerator fund. That is not going to lead to any meaningful movement toward greater supply. In other words, it is not going to address the affordability issue that Canadians face when wanting to rent or buy a home. It is also not going to do anything for the people who unfortunately still find themselves homeless. That is something that we all have to collaborate on.

The national housing strategy is there. I would remind my colleague of this. Half of the funding in the \$80-billion national housing strategy is still in place and has been supported and supplemented now in the fall economic statement.

I think these are important points to keep in mind.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I would remind my colleague that some of that funding is in abeyance, because it has been accorded to projects that cannot move ahead because interest rates have gone up. That is why New Democrats have been advocating so hard to ensure that the GST rebate also applies to non-profit projects with federal government financing that have been stalled because of rising interest rates, regardless of when they began construction. That is part of making good on the commitments the government has already made. We cannot seem to get a positive answer with respect to that extension of the GST rebate.

Adjournment Proceedings

We have heard the finance minister brag that Canada is doing the best among the G7 or the OECD, depending on the day, with respect to its deficit, its debt and its credit rating. We have heard from the Governor of the Bank of Canada that spending on housing supply would not be considered inflationary. There is no better time to invest and there is no more urgent time to invest. Why is it we continue to see the government, when it announces new funds, back-end load that funding several budget years down the road?

• (1940)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Madam Speaker, I remind my colleague, and he knows this very well, that funding has been allocated and we are seeing results in his own province, in his own community.

I would point to funding that was announced. There was \$13 million for 78 homes for indigenous peoples throughout Manitoba that came through the rapid housing initiative. In June 2023, \$12 million was announced for 57 units; this goes to indigenous people, youth who have experienced homelessness and women and their children who have lived through domestic violence. It will go to individuals in Winnipeg.

Quite recently, in November 2023, through the rental construction financing initiative that was mentioned, \$132 million for 447 apartments was announced. That is for a low-interest loan that goes to developers that put up purpose-built rentals. Again, this is for just one city in one province.

More can be done, of course, and more should be done. The results of the national housing strategy need to be emphasized. They are not nothing; they are very serious, and we continue—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are done.

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 7:42 p.m.)

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