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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 10, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

COMMISSIONER FOR MODERN TREATY IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-77, An Act respecting the Commissioner for Modern Treaty Implementation.

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

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[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, entitled “Federal Government’s Use of Technological Tools Capable of Extracting Personal Data from Mobile Devices and Computers”.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 16th report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, entitled “Reforming Transition from Military to Civilian Life”.

[*English*]

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

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CANADA HEALTH ACT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-414, An Act to amend the Canada Health Act (mental, addictions and substance use health services).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to rise today to table this landmark legislation, the mental health and substance use parity act, on World Mental Health Day. If passed, the bill will amend the Canada Health Act to expand the definition of insured services to include community-based mental health addictions and substance use services.

Currently, provincial and territorial health plans are only required to cover mental health and substance use health services provided by physicians or in hospitals and deemed medically necessary. As a result, many services like counselling or psychotherapy are not covered under public health insurance plans. Without public coverage, many Canadians do not get the care need.

Again, this landmark legislation would begin to address the disparity between mental and physical health in our health care system by creating a federal requirement for provinces and territories to include coverage of community-based supports in their health insurance plans and to ensure that timely, inclusive and accessible mental health and substance use care is enshrined into law.

I want to thank the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health, the Canadian Mental Health Association and all those advocating for mental health parity and spreading the message that mental health is health, including my NDP colleagues who are wholeheartedly behind the bill.

I want to thank my colleague and friend, the member for Hamilton Centre, for his important work in this area and for seconding the bill. I hope all members will get behind it.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. George Chalal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition signed by Canadians. It recognizes that the conflict in the Middle East has killed and displaced thousands of innocent Palestinians, and has now expanded into Lebanon, resulting in deaths and displacement of innocent Lebanese.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to continue calling for an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon and across the region; that it to continue providing humanitarian aid through the United Nations, where Canada just committed \$25 million; that it continue supporting the evacuation of Canadian citizens and their families—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We cannot wear props in the House. I know this because it has been brought up in the past when I have been giving a speech on a topic I care very much about and have been wearing a button or something. It is important that the rules be enforced equally for all members.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have to take his button off. It is not allowed in the House, unless it is agreed upon by all members for certain things such as white ribbons.

The hon. member for Calgary Skyview.

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Speaker, it said, “I love Lebanon”, but that is fine.

The petitioners call for the Government of Canada to continue supporting the evacuation of Canadian citizens and their families; and that it create a temporary resident program for Lebanese citizens. Last, it calls on the Government of Canada to lead a peace-keeping mission to help maintain peace, rebuild the economy and infrastructure, and promote safety and security for the Lebanese people.

Canada was a leading voice 67 years ago in advocating for actions, in the words of Lester Pearson, “not only to end the fighting but to make peace”.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to come back to that point of order. It is important for members to understand that they are not to say their point of view. By wearing a button, it actually supports that point of view. When it comes to petitions, members should just table whatever the petitioners have asked for and not indicate whether they support it.

The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

SERVICE DOGS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to present a petition that was sponsored by a young woman, Emily Morasty, about service dogs in Manitoba.

We know service dogs that support people living with many neurodiverse conditions are becoming more common. These dogs are highly trained animals doing very specific jobs to assist their handlers with daily living. They assist their handlers in becoming contributing members of their communities.

Currently, there are no specific guidelines around public access for service dogs in Manitoba and several other provinces and territories. Nor are there any licensing requirements. There are also many misconceptions that result in limited access and harassment for service dogs and their handlers.

The petitioners therefore request that the Minister of Health consult with his provincial counterparts, service dog trainers and han-

dlers regarding the need for guidelines on public access; to consult with provincial counterparts, service dog trainers and handlers on licensing requirements for service dogs; consult with provincial counterparts to develop guidelines for public access and licensing requirements for service dogs; and consult with provincial counterparts to enter these guidelines and licensing requirements into federal and provincial legislation.

I commend young Emily Morasty for her work and leadership in putting this petition forward.

• (1010)

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise on behalf of a number of Canadians who have signed a petition calling on the government to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget, stop the crime and hold a carbon tax election.

The petitioners have made their thoughts very clear after the nine years of corruption they have seen from the NDP-Liberal government. It is an honour to table this petition.

PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, today I rise to table a petition on behalf of firefighters across Canada to address an urgent issue impacting the health and safety of firefighters. This petition was sponsored by the member for Edmonton Strathcona. It calls for immediate action to ban per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, PFASs, in firefighter gear and firefighting foam.

PFASs are man-made chemicals resistant to heat, water and oil, but their durability comes at a significant cost. Scientific evidence links these substances to health risks, including cancer, and puts firefighters at significant risks just by doing their jobs. Research shows that PFASs can accumulate in the body, leading to serious health issues. Alarmingly, firefighters already face a higher rate of cancer than the general population.

We must mitigate these risks by regulating what we can control within their working conditions. Several countries have already restricted PFAS use. Canada must follow suit. Our firefighters deserve gear that is free from toxic chemicals. We need to protect those who put their lives on the line for us.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to present a petition on behalf of constituents. I rise for the 49th time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of crime.

The community of Swan River is alarmed by the extreme levels of crime caused by the Liberal government's soft-on-crime laws, like Bill C-5 and Bill C-75. Bill C-75 allows violent offenders to be in jail in the morning and back in our communities in the evening. Bill C-5 allows criminals to serve their sentences from home.

It is no surprise that after nine years of the Liberal government Statistics Canada reports that violent crime has risen by 50%. The people of Swan River see crime in their streets every day. That is why they are calling for jail, not bail, for violent repeat offenders.

The people of Swan River demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies that directly threaten their livelihoods and their community. I support the good people of Swan River.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, an important part of public service is presenting petitions on behalf of one's constituents, whether one agrees with them. I am tabling a petition, without commenting on my personal perspective, asking the government to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

The petitioners, of their own accord, have observed that after nine years it is clear that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost, the crime or the corruption. Further, the failed Prime Minister and his failed NDP-Liberal government have increased the cost of everything and failed to take responsibility for their failures. Further, the petitioners believe that crime, chaos, drugs and disorder are filling our streets due to the failed policies of the Prime Minister and his NDP-Liberal government.

The petitioners therefore are calling on the government to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. Further, they would like to see an immediate non-confidence vote in order to replace the NDP-Liberal government and bring about a carbon tax election in which Canadians would be able to vote to end the carbon tax everywhere and for good.

I thank the constituents for their public service in helping me bring this petition to the House today.

• (1015)

FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition I am tabling is in support of Bill C-257, a private member's bill that I put forward in the House, aimed at combatting the pernicious phenomenon of political discrimination.

The petitioners note that Canadians have a right to be protected against discrimination and that they can and do face political discrimination, which is discrimination on the basis of their political views. There is no reference to political belief or activity currently in the Canadian Human Rights Act as a prohibited grounds of discrimination. Bill C-257 would add political belief and activity as prohibited grounds of discrimination.

The petitioners therefore call on the House to support Bill C-257 and to defend the rights of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions free from political discrimination.

Routine Proceedings

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next group of petitioners would like to bring to the attention of the House that killing children is always wrong regardless of the circumstances, the level of development or dependency involved.

The petitioners draw attention to a recommendation by Dr. Louis Roy, of the Quebec college of physicians, recommending the expansion of euthanasia to “babies from birth to one year of age who come into the world with severe deformities and very serious syndromes.” The petitioners are opposed to this proposal. Frankly, they are horrified that someone would propose it in Canada's Parliament.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to block any attempts to allow the killing of children in Canada.

ERITREA

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition draws attention to the human rights challenges in Eritrea, as well as foreign interference that is being caused by the Eritrean regime.

By way of introduction, the petitioners note that Eritrea has been called the North Korea of Africa. It has been ruled by an authoritarian, brutal dictator under a totalitarian system for the last 30 years. It has no constitution, no elections, no parliament, no freedom of the press and no freedom of movement or association.

Eritreans continue to flee indefinite military conscription, religious persecution and political repression. Hundreds of thousands of Eritreans have fled to escape these severe human rights abuses. These abuses have been documented by the UN commission of inquiry on Eritrea. Many who flee still face intimidation and extortion from representatives of the regime. When members of a family seek refuge abroad, they worry about their family in Eritrea being harassed and forced to pay huge sums of money.

The petitioners highlight various instances of foreign interference that have happened in Canada and elsewhere. They also highlight the collaboration between the Eritrean dictator and Vladimir Putin.

Therefore, the petitioners call on the government to engage actively with Eritrean political and human rights activists and pro-democracy groups; to challenge the Eritrean dictator's human rights abuses at home and his strategic collaboration with other authoritarian powers, such as the Russian government; and to do more to combat foreign interference here in Canada to ensure that we do not have refugee or other immigration applicants who are affiliated with the regime.

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The petitioners call for strengthened sanctions against human rights abusers in Ethiopia. They also want to see the release of a number of imprisoned parliamentarians, as well as Swedish Eritrean journalist Dawit Isaak, who I believe is the longest-imprisoned journalist in the world.

• (1020)

FALUN GONG

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am presenting a petition that draws attention to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners.

The petitioners note that Falun Gong is a traditional Chinese spiritual discipline. It consists of meditation exercises and moral teaching based on the principles of truthfulness, compassion and tolerance.

The petitioners note that, since the summer of 1999, the Chinese Communist Party has undertaken an intensive persecution campaign seeking to eradicate Falun Gong. That persecution has included forced labour, brainwashing centres and prisons, and torture. Thousands of people have died as a result.

Further, the petition highlights the history of forced organ harvesting and trafficking that we have combatted in the House through a piece of legislation that finally passed in the current Parliament.

Petitioners call for further steps from the government, including passing a resolution to establish measures to stop the CCP's crime of systematically murdering Falun Gong practitioners and calling publicly for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong.

NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition is from Canadians who are very concerned about the government's approach to natural health products. There are changes that are, at best, a solution in search of a problem and, at worst, a pernicious attack on these products and those who use them in order to stay healthy.

The petitioners note that changes made in the last Liberal omnibus budget have had the effect of making it much more difficult to be in the business of producing natural health products. They have driven up the cost and had an impact on the accessibility of these products, especially for middle- and low-income Canadians.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to reverse the changes made in the last Liberal budget regarding natural health products and to support the Conservative private member's bill that would do precisely that.

HONG KONG

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, next, I am presenting a petition regarding the human rights situation in Hong Kong as it relates to potential immigration to Canada.

The petitioners note that the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act renders foreign nationals inadmissible to Canada if they have committed or been convicted of an offence abroad. However, many people in Hong Kong have been arbitrarily charged and convicted

simply because of their involvement with the pro-democracy movement. That includes national security law-related offences, as well as cases where people have been arbitrarily charged and convicted under other statutes, not the national security law.

The petitioners call on the government to create a mechanism by which Hong Kong people with pro-democracy-related convictions may provide an explanation for such convictions. On that basis, the government could grant exemptions to Hong Kong people who would otherwise be deemed inadmissible based on this criminality determination.

The petitioners also want to see our government work with other like-minded governments on a fair and reasonable mechanism to achieve this end.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[English]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from October 9 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to come in here and finish my speech.

As has been described, what has effectively happened is that, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal government has completely lost the plot. There has been scandal after scandal, and the Auditor General of Canada's findings have continually shown all kinds of misgivings in terms of spending and any kind of compliance. In fact, Sustainable Development Technology Canada, SDTC, turned into a slush fund for Liberal insiders. We have heard from a variety of different whistle-blowers about just how bad this is.

In fact, one SDTC whistle-blower said, "Just as I was always confident that the Auditor General would confirm the financial mismanagement at SDTC, I remain equally confident that the RCMP will substantiate the criminal activities that occurred within the organization."

Another whistle-blower said:

The true failure of the situation stands at the feet of our current government, whose decision to protect wrongdoers and cover up their findings over the last 12 months is a serious indictment of how our democratic systems and institutions are being corrupted by political interference. It should never have taken two years for the issues to reach this point. What should have been a straightforward process turned into a bureaucratic nightmare that allowed SDTC to continue wasting millions of dollars and abusing countless employees over the last year.

These quotes are exceptionally troubling. This is not the first time the current Parliament has had to have conversations that are very serious in nature regarding the government's trying to cover up scandal. One part that I am actually quite frustrated with when it comes to this particular piece is the number of conflicts of interest in which Liberal insiders were getting money.

In fact, the Minister of Environment served as a strategic adviser for a venture capital firm called Cycle Capital from 2009 to 2018, prior to joining cabinet. This was not a short period of time. The Prime Minister has entrusted the same person to handle Parks Canada. We have seen that this is an absolute failure in terms of what has happened in Jasper, where those at Parks Canada were either completely incompetent or negligent and let 30% of the homes in that community burn as a direct result of mismanagement. However, the minister still has shares in Cycle Capital, which is interesting, and this company actually got money from the green slush fund. It just continues to show the number of conflicts of interest, and this is where it becomes a serious problem.

We have Canadians who are struggling to make ends meet and to put food on their table. We are approaching Thanksgiving, yet the homes of 30% of the people in Jasper are gone. The NDP-Liberal government sat on its hands for the last nine years, mismanaging the forests because it failed to accept that the pine beetle was a real threat. There are emails. There is correspondence that went back and forth as to whether the government should consider the political optics of prescribed burns. The Liberals completely neglected forest management. Then, to add insult to injury, they turned away fire trucks and firefighters who were there, ready and willing to help. The Liberals also, interestingly enough, decided to install fire hydrants in the townsite of Jasper, but they were actually not compatible with the fire trucks in Alberta and British Columbia. This seems to be a total miss because it basically means that people are very limited in the amount of outside help they can get. That is because Parks Canada officials do not understand the western Canadian perspective. However, I digress here.

The problem is that the government has completely lost the plot. It continues to funnel money to Liberal insiders, giving them almost a blank cheque to mismanage Canadian funds. In addition, they put real people at risk day in and day out. It is exceptionally clear that Canadians have had enough. Every single weekend, when I go home to my riding of Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, I hear from people who tell me, “We just need an election. When are we going to have an election? We cannot handle the pressure of the mismanagement by the NDP-Liberal government any longer, with its waste, its corruption and its chaos.”

• (1025)

They see crime rising at an ever-increasing rate as a direct result of the catch-and-release bail policies the government pats themselves on the back for bringing forward. They are currently fighting this and preventing documents from going to the RCMP because

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they are afraid of what is in the documents. They make arguments that this is about charter rights, ignoring the fact that the Parliament of Canada has the right to have these. The Speaker has ruled very clearly that these documents were not to be redacted, yet we received redacted documents.

It is clear that these documents have to go to the RCMP, completely unredacted. Canadians deserve it.

• (1030)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is beyond me how Conservative member after Conservative member can stand in their place and mislead Canadians on the reality of what is happening on this issue. This will go to the procedure and House affairs committee, and the Conservatives are filibustering. They are using the excuse of asking who cares if Stephen Harper never did it. They have a new position that they are applying to this particular government, even though it counters what the RCMP and the national Auditor General are saying. They are saying that this tactic that is used by the Conservatives with respect to the information being unredacted puts the issues into jeopardy, whether in terms of charter violations or other things. However, the Conservatives close their eyes, put their head in the sand and ignore that.

Why do they ignore the RCMP and the Auditor General?

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, it is actually quite lovely to be able to address my colleague from Winnipeg North. I hold in my hand a—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry. The hon. member cannot reference a document she may want to speak about.

The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake has the floor.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North cannot help himself. He has gotten up to speak to the bill at every single possible opportunity; as of last night, he had filibustered it to the tune of 10,151 words, which is over an hour of speaking time. If he had no problem with this, he would simply stop speaking and allow the documents to go unredacted; however, the Liberals have something to hide. That is precisely why the member for Winnipeg North continues to get up on his feet and filibuster, preventing Canadians from getting to the bottom of it and getting to the truth.

We are simply asking for the government to allow these documents to go to the RCMP. If they have nothing to hide, why do they continue talking about the bill?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, one thing that strikes me about the whole SDTC saga is that the government is hiding behind excuses founded on noble principles when, basically, Parliament is asking it to produce documents.

Privilege

Can my colleague tell me a little more about Parliament having the right to demand documents from the government and the government having a duty to turn them over to Parliament?

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, it is not very often that I agree with the Bloc Québécois, but this is one subject on which we very much agree. It is true. Parliament has the authority to demand documents. What is more, the Speaker ordered the government to provide the documents.

There is now a question of privilege before the House, which is rather rare in Parliament. However, over the past nine years of this NDP-Liberal government, there have been increasingly frequent conflicts of interest and questions of privilege. That is a direct result of the fact that the Liberal government does not want to tell Canadians the truth.

It is imperative that the RCMP get these documents to carry out a full investigation.

[*English*]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, certainly I do not think anybody disagrees that the Liberals need to produce the documents. What I find bizarre though is that the Conservatives have stopped any sort of movement in the House by filibustering their own motion. What are they filibustering? There is the bill that the survivors circle is trying to put on record to ban forced sterilization of indigenous women. The only thing blocking the tabling of the bill, a bill that apparently the Conservatives have said they support, is the Conservatives' blocking their own motion.

What does that mean? It means that indigenous women are still at risk of experiencing forced sterilization in this country. Why is that? It is because the Conservatives use this place as a game, when lives are on the line and when there are serious matters that we need to deal with.

Why is the member actively participating in blocking the Conservatives' own motion?

• (1035)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, the wonderful people of Fort McMurray—Cold Lake elected me to bring their voices to Parliament. They elected me to stand up for what is right and to stand up against corruption, chaos and all the challenges that have happened after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government.

The only person in here filibustering on the bill is the member for Winnipeg North, who, as I said earlier, as of last night had spoken over 10,000 words on this piece alone, over an hour's worth, because he cannot help himself. He is so concerned about having the documents go unredacted to the RCMP that he gets up on his feet at every single opportunity. If NDP members have a problem, perhaps they should talk to the member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the things we continue to hear from the Liberals is around charter rights. I did not hear anything in the member's speech around charter rights that the Liberals have been talking about, so I was wondering whether she could mention a little bit about that. My understanding of the charter is that it protects individual Canadians from overreaches of the government; it does not protect the government from having to disclose documents.

The Liberals also talk about the police needing to have independence. However, my understanding is that if a person sees a crime or if they are concerned that somebody has stolen from them, they call the police and provide them with the evidence that they think proves their case. In this case, we are asking for the documents so the House of Commons can pass the information on to the RCMP. What are the member's comments on this?

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, I find it truly bizarre that the government has changed its tune as to why it cannot release the documents unredacted. It did release some of the documents, but they were redacted. It used a big black marker to cross out wide swaths of information because it does not want it to be seen. However, the interesting piece here is that the most recent argument as to why the documents cannot be released is supposedly charter rights. The government is failing to accept the privilege of Parliament and where we are at.

The Speaker has made a ruling on the case of privilege that is something exceptionally rare, or at least it was prior to the last nine years of the Liberal government, which thinks its job is to decide what Canadians do and do not get to see and what is best for Canadians. Frankly, I am going to stand up for Canadians each and every day, because they deserve better than this.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the ruling from the Speaker was that the documents were going to go to PROC. I am wondering why you are saying that the ruling was for them to go to the RCMP—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Questions and comments need to go through the Chair.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, it was clear that the ruling was that the documents would go to PROC, and we are in agreement with that. I am wondering why the member opposite and her party are filibustering and refusing to let the documents go to PROC, where the question can be studied.

The documents are not only government documents; they are signed with another party. It is that party that is protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We have heard from the RCMP and from the Auditor General that they are uncomfortable with this precedent. Could you please tell me why the Conservatives are not doing what the order said, which is that the documents should go to PROC?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, questions need to be addressed through the Speaker and not directly to the member.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, the member's question is actually quite wonderful. I think it is one of the first questions I have had that has not been from the member for Winnipeg North. Perhaps it is the first time any of my colleagues has actually received a question posed by someone other than the member for Winnipeg North on this.

This is one of the big challenges we face. The Liberals are so afraid of the truth that they refuse to allow the documents to go unredacted to the RCMP. If they had a space where they were not concerned, they would turn over the documents to the RCMP. Frankly, if wrongdoing happened, the RCMP deserves to have the information. If there was no wrongdoing, then there is no risk in sending it to the RCMP.

The fact that the government is continuing to fight this really should tell all Canadians about the level of corruption in the government when it comes to the green slush fund and in just about all of its activities.

* * *

• (1040)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, during the debate pursuant to Standing Order 66 on Motion No. 63 to concur in the 16th report of the Standing Committee on Finance, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair and at the conclusion of the time provided for debate or when no member rises to speak, whichever is earlier, all questions necessary to dispose of the motions be deemed put and a recorded division be deemed requested and deferred pursuant to Standing Order 66.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed to the hon. parliamentary's secretary moving the motion will please say nay.

It is agreed.

[*English*]

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

Mr. Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House on behalf of the hard-working people of Flamborough—Glanbrook. They indeed work hard for the tax dollars they send to every level of government, and they expect that those tax dollars will be respected and spent wisely. That is why it is unfortunate that we are here today talking about growing concerns of the Liberal government's corruption and incompetence.

I am speaking about yet another scandal, this time involving the \$400 million of taxpayers' money funnelled into a cesspool of

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corruption under the guise of the Sustainable Development Technology Canada fund. It is not just a singular incident of scandal; it is the latest in a long, disturbing pattern of Liberal ethics violations. The SDTC scandal is not about some missing dollars here or there; it is about the systemic failure of the government to uphold the most basic values of transparency and accountability. It is a gross breach of trust, one that has eroded Canadians' confidence in their government institutions.

Conservatives warned about this. We have consistently called for transparency. We have called for the documents to be sent unredacted from the green slush fund scandal and handed over to the RCMP. That was the will of Parliament. What was the response from the Liberal government? It was a refusal to comply. When the government ignores the will of Parliament, it is ignoring the will of Canadians, because members are here to represent the will of Canadians.

Let us be clear that when parliamentarians demand documents, we have the legal and democratic authority to do so, yet the government violated the privileges of parliamentarians by refusing to release the requested documents related to the latest scandal.

The Speaker of the House has ruled that parliamentary privilege has indeed been violated and that we must pause the work of the House until this corruption can be properly addressed. It is because, as my colleague from Fort McMurray—Cold Lake said, Canadians deserve better. They deserve to know where their hard-earned tax dollars are going, because they do work hard for the money that they pay in taxes on each paycheque.

However, with the Liberal government, every year we see a new scandal and a new abuse of trust. We have seen them before with the WE Charity scandal, the SNC-Lavalin affair, the Winnipeg lab cover-up, arrive scam, the infamous “other Randy” and of course now the SDTC scandal. This is just the latest chapter in a Liberal government that has been defined by corruption and secrecy. Enough is enough.

Let us first examine the Sustainable Development Technology Canada fund and what it was supposed to be. SDTC was created with a noble goal in mind: to promote innovation and green technology. The fund was supposed to support small and medium-sized businesses, foster collaborations among sectors and enable the development of cutting-edge sustainable technologies that would benefit Canadians.

However, it is clear that this vision has been utterly betrayed. Instead of serving as a driver for innovation and progress, the SDTC fund has been turned into a Liberal slush fund, a vehicle for funneling millions of taxpayer dollars to the pockets of insiders and Liberal-connected businesses. Instead of supporting Canadians, it has supported the Liberal Party's friends and allies. The Auditor General's investigation found that there were 186 cases of conflict of interest, involving some \$400 million paid out.

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That is a lot of money, which could have been spent helping small businesses that are struggling. It is money that could have been spent purchasing over 400 MRI machines. It is money that could have been spent on proper equipment for our military so members do not have to buy their own helmet. As we recently saw, \$34 million was spent on sleeping bags that did not work for Canadian winters, when it was less than 5°C, which of course is the temperature a good portion of the time in parts of Canada. Imagine that. We could have bought 10 times the number of proper sleeping bags for our military with the amount of money that was funnelled to Liberal friends.

● (1045)

What kind of oversight allows this to happen? There was no oversight. The Auditor General made that clear. The blame for this scandal falls with the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry. According to the Auditor General, he “did not sufficiently monitor” the contracts that were being handed out to Liberal insiders. I would suggest this was not an accident or an oversight. There was negligence at the highest levels of government and a misuse of public funds.

The Auditor General's investigation revealed an astounding 186 conflicts of interest. Those are 186 instances where taxpayer money could have gone to real innovation, to families struggling with the cost of living and to businesses trying to stay afloat. Instead, the money was funnelled to companies with ties to senior Liberal officials. What kind of government allows this? How can Canadians trust the government when it behaves like this?

The SDTC fund received, overall, a billion dollars in federal funding, and yet \$400 million of that was funnelled into ineligible projects. These were projects that by all measures should never have received a single dollar of public funding. The promises made in these applications were overstated, exaggerated or, in some cases, non-existent. This was wilful negligence. These insiders had projects rubber-stamped, knowing full well they did not meet the criteria. A blind eye was turned so the gravy train could keep flowing.

Canadians deserve answers on this. The people of Flamborough—Glanbrook who send their hard-earned tax dollars here want to know where that money went. What did the government do when we, as elected representatives, demanded transparency? It violated parliamentary privilege by refusing to hand over critical documents related to this scandal. The Speaker made it clear that Parliament has the right, actually, the duty, to demand that these documents go unredacted to the RCMP, as was the motion of this Parliament.

We are here to hold the government accountable, to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly and in the best interest of Canadians. I am here specifically on behalf of the people of Flamborough—Glanbrook to watch over their taxpayer dollars. The Liberals have thumbed their noses at Parliament, at the Speaker and at the Canadian people. As their excuse, they claim handing over these documents would blur the line between Parliament and the judiciary. It is not about blurring lines; it is about protecting their friends and hiding their corruption. It is about a government so entrenched in scandal, so determined to shield its insiders, that it is

willing to trample on the very principles of transparency that underpin our democracy.

As we stand here discussing yet another glaring example of Liberal mismanagement, it is impossible not to draw comparisons to another scandal that took place, which was mentioned by one of my colleagues earlier this week in debate, and that is the ad scam scandal. At that time, we know, this was a scandal where the Liberal government used public funds for private gain. This was in the early 2000s and involved 40 million public dollars that was funnelled through advertising agencies for work that was never done or was grossly overpaid. That is \$40 million, which is no small sum—

● (1050)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am anticipating there might be a quorum call coming.

Can the Speaker indicate how many Conservatives need to actually be in the chamber if, in fact, they need to be in the chamber as part of the quorum call?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There have to be at least 20 members of Parliament in the chamber to call a quorum.

The hon. member for Calgary Midnapore also has a point of order.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, I was just about to say to do a quorum call.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Yes, there are over 20, between who is in the chamber and online.

Mr. Peter Julian: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, this is a Conservative filibuster. There is only one Conservative in the House—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, the hon. member is not allowed to indicate how many people are in the House. Again, I would just ask members to please be—

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if you could clarify; I believe the rules about putting out absences or presences are about specific members. I would also point out to the NDP House leader that there are several Conservative members here ready and willing to—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I have a point of order. The opposition House leader just said there are many Conservatives here. Where? Are they hiding—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is becoming a debate on who is here and who is not. Again, I want to remind members, we do have quorum, and I think that was the main question.

I am sure the hon. member for Flamborough—Glanbrook is wishing to continue his speech.

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Mr. Dan Muys: Madam Speaker, the \$40 million in ad scam was certainly no small sum, but that is one-tenth the amount of money we are talking about with this current scandal. When we look at the current scandal, we have a government refusing to turn over documents, as is the will of Parliament, to the RCMP. Back then, the ad scam was a scandal that actually brought down the government. There was the Gomery commission, which was set up to investigate.

It did not just question lower-level bureaucrats or party functionaries. It questioned high-profile individuals, the very heart of the Liberal government of the time, to explain their roles in the misuse of public money. Political operatives, heads of agencies, senior ministers, even the prime minister at that time, were dragged in front of an inquiry. That scandal actually brought down the Liberal government of the time.

We find ourselves here today talking on a motion of privilege about a scandal that has ten times the financial impact of what we saw back then. What we see from the current Liberal government is stonewalling. The Liberals refuse to hand over the documents that the House has ordered. We have to ask what they have to hide. How bad are the SDTC documents that they would require Parliament to grind to a halt rather than face the consequences of handing them over unredacted?

The Gomery commission exposed a culture of corruption within the Liberal Party that was deeply rooted at that time. This culture seems to have permeated to the current government, which puts personal gain over the interests of Canadians. Now, with the SDTC scandal, we see the same playbook. Liberal insiders are benefiting from the misuse of taxpayer dollars, while the government does everything it can to avoid accountability.

Canadians deserve transparency, accountability and leadership that understands the value of every taxpayer dollar. The government in the early 2000s, at the time of the ad scam, was held accountable for its misdeeds and faced the electorate, who sent a very clear message about the need for transparency. Just as the ad scam marked the end of an era for that Liberal government, we certainly hope it is the beginning of the end for the current government, so we can have a new type of government to lead this great country.

Let us not forget about another, more recent example of Liberals' rampant misuse of taxpayer money, the arrive scam scandal. An app that arguably could have been developed with a case of beer and a few techie people in the basement of someone's house over the weekend was going to cost taxpayers \$80,000 but in the end ballooned to \$60 million. That is what we know about so far.

At the centre of that scandal was, as we know, GC Strategies, which was a two-person IT firm that actually did not do any of the work but rather was simply a middleman, brokering contracts. Even the subcontractors did not perform a lot of the work or make an app that worked properly. This is, again, another example. The reason we raise this is because it speaks to a pattern.

Taxpayers deserve answers about what is happening here with the Liberal government and this particular green slush fund scandal. I wonder how Canadians can trust the government when it refuses to follow basic principles of transparency and hand over the docu-

ments, as requested by Parliament, to the RCMP. How can we believe in a government that has repeatedly put the interest of its ministers, insiders and friends above the interests of Canadians?

The SDTC scandal is just the latest in a long line of breaches, cover-ups and corrupt behaviour. The Liberal government has shown us time and time again that it will do whatever it takes to protect itself and its friends. We saw that in its proroguing of Parliament back with the WE Charity scandal, but also in its refusing to release documents with the Winnipeg lab scandal, and other cover-ups.

There is a very clear pattern. The government chooses secrecy over transparency, corruption over accountability, greed over public good.

• (1055)

Let me clear. The cost of this corruption is not just the billions of dollars of mismanaged funds. It is also the erosion of public trust. Canadians are struggling right now, and they are seeing \$400 million going to line the pockets of Liberal insiders, all while small businesses are fighting to stay open, mortgage holders are renewing their mortgages and facing a whopping increase in their mortgage payments, and seniors are going to the grocery store. We have seen a 36% increase in grocery prices in Canada, which is ahead of what we have seen in the U.S., so grocery inflation is worse here. All of these things are happening, and our communities are struggling with the fact that money is being wasted and with the carbon tax. What we see from the Liberal government is our hard-earned tax dollars being wasted by going to the pockets of Liberal insiders.

The government has focused on protecting its friends rather than helping Canadians, and Canadians see this. Every dollar of that money that was misused by the government, every dollar that was funnelled to friends and insiders, is a dollar that could have went to a family to help put food on the table, to a struggling small business, to a community that is struggling with various issues or to defending our north, but instead it went to the pocket of a Liberal insider. Canadians have had enough, and they are tired of the excuses. They are tired of the corruption, and they are tired of a government that refuses to be held accountable.

The Conservative Party is committed to restoring that accountability, and we believe that taxpayers' money should be respected and should be spent responsibly on projects that actually benefit Canadians, not enrich the pockets of insiders. Taxpayer dollars need to be monitored properly and conflicts of interest need to be eliminated. We have seen the Auditor General comment on the 186 cases of conflict of interest. Safeguards need to be put in place. It is time for a change.

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Only a Conservative government would make the changes necessary to restore accountability and put Canadians first to ensure that taxpayer dollars are respected and spent on projects that actually make a difference. We will fight for that transparency. We will fight for that accountability. That is why we are asking that the will of Parliament be respected and that the documents be turned over, unredacted, to the RCMP.

Before I close, I would like to move that the amendment be amended by adding, after proposed subparagraph (a)(ii), the following: (ii.1) the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, who respected the order of the House and deposited unredacted documents; (ii.2), Paul MacKinnon, the former deputy secretary of the cabinet, governance. He was briefed by the Privy Council Office in the context of the Winnipeg lab documents, that in the event that parliamentarians press for the release of confidential information, the appropriate minister or ministers should take responsibility for the decision to provide or to withhold the information, and who, in turn, advised the government House leader that, consistent with the principles of responsible government, the ultimate accountability for deciding what information to withhold from or release to parliamentarians resides with the responsible minister.

• (1100)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, he has been referencing the waste of taxpayer dollars and I agree. Filibustering in the House is certainly a waste of taxpayers' dollars. We have had a ruling from the Speaker saying that this matter should go to PROC. The subamendment just suggested by the member is something that could be considered by PROC, rather than extending this filibuster further. There are important matters that taxpayers and my constituents expect us to be dealing with.

Will the member agree to put this to PROC, as has been ruled by the Speaker, and end this filibuster?

Mr. Dan Muys: Madam Speaker, we are talking about \$400 million. The Auditor General has identified 186 cases of conflict of interest. There has been a motion in Parliament to produce the documents. The simple answer for the government is to produce the documents, unredacted, for the RCMP. If someone breaks into our home and steals something, do we send that to a committee or do we call the police?

What I would suggest that we are saying, if there is nothing to hide, turn over the documents to the RCMP.

• (1105)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I get a kick out of listening to each of the Conservatives. It is like a crocodile knocking on one's door, offering to babysit their children and saying, "Trust me on transparency." If someone has no sense of the history, it might sound like a great idea to let the crocodile in the house, but we do have a sense of history.

There is a blatant hypocrisy in the Conservatives talking about accountability on documents, when Stephen Harper was found in contempt of Parliament and shut down Parliament for three months. It was found to be threatening the very Constitution. What was that over? That was over the issue of the torture of people in Afghanistan. It let down Canada's standards around the world and

suppressed evidence that parliamentarians had a right to. Stephen Harper did not care at all about transparency, and neither did the Conservatives because they shut down Parliament and refused to let us work.

When I hear the Conservatives talking about transparency and accountability, I refer to Tony Clement and his \$50-million slush fund, to Nigel Wright and the secret \$90,000 cheque, and to Brian Mulroney and money in a brown paper bag being paid in a hotel room. That is Conservative accountability and transparency in a nutshell.

Mr. Dan Muys: Madam Speaker, the NDP, the coalition partners of the Liberals, will try and deflect from the matter at hand, which is the production of documents to the RCMP.

I can tell members what people remember of the Harper government. I will be going to the eighth fair and festival this coming weekend, and I can tell members what constituents are saying and what they remember about the Harper government. They remember the lowest inflation in 40 years, the best-performing economy in the G7, and the cost of their mortgage or their rent being half of what it is now. Those were good times. That is what people remember, and that is what we are fighting for. We want to get back to Canadians actually being able to afford to live in this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have the opportunity to sit on the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities with my colleague.

In my experience, every time we say the word "document", panic sets in on the other side of the House, that is, with the members of the governing party. It is as though they have gone mad all of a sudden and feel the need to stop everything, block everything. A kind of hysteria suddenly breaks out, and they usually begin stonewalling. They try to buy time and actually discourage us when we ask for documents.

Last June, the House voted to demand that the government produce documents. We have yet to see them. How does my colleague explain the fact that the Liberals, who paraded about, talking about transparency before taking power, did the exact opposite once in power when asked to produce documents? Canadians and Quebecers deserve government transparency; they deserve to know more about this.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Muys: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from the transport committee for his excellent question. He is exactly correct. The answer is quite simple, and it is to produce the documents. If there is nothing to hide, why would it be so difficult to produce the documents and turn them over to the RCMP? He raises an excellent point, whether on behalf of Quebeckers or on behalf of all Canadians, that this is the will of Parliament. We want the documents turned over to the RCMP, which is investigating this slush fund.

I would also like to congratulate the member on the concurrence of the report of our committee, the transport committee, on shoreline erosion, on which the Conservatives worked together with him at committee. It was interesting when it came to the debate of that report earlier this week. I am sure the member for Winnipeg North had not read the report. He had a very flowery speech of many words, as my colleague from Fort McMurray—Cold Lake pointed out, but not a lot of substance.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague what is at the base of this debate that is taking place? I believe it is the fact that the majority of the House ordered the government and the Prime Minister to produce these documents

Is that not really the root of this whole debate? The government and the Prime Minister are defying the will of 338 elected members, or at least the will of the members of opposition parties.

• (1110)

Mr. Dan Muys: Madam Speaker, my colleague from North Okanagan—Shuswap's question distills this down to the essence of what this is about, which is the will of Parliament to produce the unredacted documents and turn them over to the RCMP. If there is nothing to hide, why would that be so difficult? Why is there this stonewalling by the Prime Minister and the government to turn over the documents related to the SDTC scandal to the RCMP?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me provide a bit of an answer for the member opposite.

The RCMP and the Auditor General have been very clear in their comments on this Conservative tactic. They are very uncomfortable with what the Conservatives are doing. This new-found faith they seem to have was never applied when Stephen Harper provided redacted documents.

What adds insult to the issue is that the Conservatives are not saying that they want to get the unredacted information so they can give it to MPs. They want to hand it directly over to the RCMP, even though the RCMP is objecting to the manner they are suggesting. Why should we listen to the Conservative Party over the RCMP?

Mr. Dan Muys: Madam Speaker, we are talking about \$400 million. The Auditor General said that there were 186 cases of conflicts of interest. We trust the Auditor General that, where there is smoke, there is fire. That is why the will of Parliament, the 338 MPs who were sent here to speak on behalf of our constituents, to watch out for how their taxpayer dollars are spent and to ensure that

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money is respected and is spent wisely, is asking for these documents to be sent over to the RCMP, where there is an ongoing investigation. If there is nothing to hide, why is that so difficult?

Where there is smoke there must be fire. The point we have been trying to make throughout this privilege debate is that these documents could simply be turned over to the RCMP, as was the will of Parliament and the will of the motion, and that it be done within a certain period of time, which was not done by the government.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): On the subamendment, I understand the hon. member for Flamborough—Glanbrook will reread it, as I have taken it into consideration to make sure that it is in the proper format. I will then be better able to determine that.

Mr. Dan Muys: Madam Speaker, I move:

That the amendment be amended by adding, after the proposed subparagraph (a) (ii), the following:

(ii.1) the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, who respected the Order of the House and deposited unredacted documents,

(ii.2) Paul MacKinnon, the former Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet (Governance).

• (1115)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The amendment to the amendment is in order.

The hon. member for Tobique—Mactaquac.

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege as always to rise in this, the people's House, to bring forward the concerns of Canadians. I do that today with mixed emotions. I do that recognizing the weightiness of the matter that is before the House and what is being considered by the House, but also with hope about is coming in the future.

The motion we are debating is on the fact that the privilege of this House was violated. The Speaker gave a very clear directive and has ruled that indeed our privilege was violated in that the documents should be unredacted and released to the RCMP for investigation. It has been very clear, and a majority of this House has spoken to that and voted to that effect.

Right now, the Prime Minister and his government are ignoring the will of the people's House. They are not acting in accordance with the wishes of the duly elected representatives from across this country and across parties. This goes beyond partisanship. This is the will of Parliament that was clearly expressed. Right now, what is holding up everything else in this House is the fact that the Prime Minister is not listening to what the Speaker has asked of him. It is time that the Prime Minister listened to the will of this House, the representatives of Canadians from coast to coast.

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There is no doubt that right now there seems to be a malaise across the country from coast to coast to coast. There is a heaviness on Canadians, and all this current circumstance, situation and scandal does is further the cloud that hangs over our heads, and in particular the heads of this government. Nearly \$400 million, nearly a half a billion taxpayers' dollars, has been spent and issued to friends and has been deemed, in over 186 cases, to have been issued in direct conflict of interest. This is raising serious concerns across the country among Canadians as to how their tax dollars are being utilized and really how they are being abused by this current government. However, this only adds to the state of malaise and the shaking of confidence that is going on within the hearts of Canadians.

It does not matter where I travel or whom I speak with, and I think that everyone here would recognize that part of the job of parliamentarianism is to consult with those who send us to this place, to spend time hearing their concerns, and take time to sit down, maybe over a cup of tea or at a community function, and hear what they are saying. I can tell members I have the privilege of visiting and talking with Canadians in my region and those in New Brunswick and hearing what they are saying, and what they are saying is very clear.

It is direct. They are tired of what they are seeing. They are frustrated, but more concerning is that they are truly troubled by what they see happening within Canada. I hear it expressed over and over again. This does not feel like the Canada that we grew up in. This does not feel like the Canada that we have come to love and adore. There is a cloud over us, and somehow they are wishing and longing for that cloud to break.

We are in the midst of this uncertainty and malaise. We have scandal after scandal and dysfunction after dysfunction, and it seems that the great ship of Canada is rudderless, lost upon a sea in a gale without a sail, wondering who is at the helm steering the ship. Canadians are getting concerned, and they are saying that we need a change in direction and that if we do not get that change in direction, they are very worried about the direction that we are going as a country. It is time for change, and that voice is being heard more and more in every conversation that I have.

I was reflecting on what I would share today, and it is funny how things come back to me. I recalled a book that I had read many years ago. It was written by someone who worked in a senior position in the White House, a previous administration of over two decades ago. This lady was writing of her experiences, and she was telling how after a very traumatic event in her time of service she was taking the commuter train on her way back to the White House, and she was rocked and emotionally distraught.

● (1120)

She looked at the time, and she remembers very clearly when she looked down at her watch, and it hit her. She thought, "Right now, I personally, and our country collectively, and our world collectively, are ten minutes past normal." Hence the name of her book, *Ten Minutes from Normal*.

What I hear, coming from Canadians coast to coast to coast, is something very similar. Canadians feel like we, as a country, are somewhere past normal, and not just 10 minutes but perhaps nine years. They are feeling a malaise and a heaviness in their hearts,

saying that we are not the country we used to be, we do not have the priorities we once had and we do not have the confidence that we used to have.

Canadians are not used to seeing the displays that we are seeing in our streets. It has troubled and rocked all Canadians, and I am sure it did all members of this House, to see the Canadian flag being burnt, and hear chants of "Death to Canada" and death to our allies going up from our streets.

People are concerned. They are saying that this is not the Canada they envisioned. This is not the Canada of their childhood. This is not the Canada where we could dream of having families, building a home, and being able to live, thrive and pursue those things that they thought were lofty ideals but yet felt were still attainable. Right now, there is insecurity. There is fear. Canadians are feeling like they are a long ways past a place called normal. They are almost longing for normal like a long-lost friend.

I am hearing it from our seniors. They are dealing with the rising cost of living, and they are wondering, on a fixed income, how they can make ends meet at the end of the month. Then they see billions of dollars going out the door, and hundreds of millions of dollars being spent on those who are well-connected to government. That troubles them. They get frustrated.

I hear it in the voices of young couples who are dreaming of one day building a home, but that seems so distant. Now they are wondering when they can actually move out of mom and dad's place. They are not even sure if they can afford rent, because it has doubled and tripled in some places.

I hear it in the voices of families who are struggling just to pay the bills. They have more bills at the end of the month than they have paycheques. They are wondering how they can keep their kids in sports, let alone plan to pay for their college or university. They are struggling under the burden of the soaring cost of living.

I see it in the faces of our energy and resource workers, and those who work in our mills and our factories. Their livelihoods have been assaulted through oppressive legislation and burdensome and cumbersome regulation. They are saying all they wanted to do was make a good living for their family. They are crying out for change. They are saying that we are somewhere past normal, where an honest day of work made a decent paycheque, where Canadians could still dream and even maybe take the odd vacation with their family. That is getting further out of reach for more Canadians.

Citizens are feeling increasingly threatened by rising rates of crime. Even in rural communities like the areas I represent, they are genuinely concerned. The addiction epidemic is touching family after family. Despair has been rising. Why is this happening? It is because we are like a people adrift and our leadership has no vision for the future of our country. Inscribed on our beloved Peace Tower, right here in Centre Block, is that famous verse, timeless and true, "Where there is no vision, the people perish".

Right now, in Canada, we are struggling as a result of a visionless leadership, and a Prime Minister and a government that seem to have no overarching goals or high ideals for us to attain, other than preserving their place in power. Right now, Canadians are saying that they want to be the priority again. They want their dreams and aspirations to be attainable again. They want to be able to make a decent living, provide for their families and pursue those things that they have longed for.

Canadians love our country and want what is best for our country. They are saying that what we need is a leadership that gets it.

• (1125)

Well, I have hope that on this side of the House, there is vision for a future Canada where Canadians can prosper and pursue their dreams. On this side of the House, under the leadership of the member for Carleton, the Leader of the Opposition, we have a vision where taxes can be axed, budgets can be fixed, houses can be built and crime can be stopped. It is a common-sense, Conservative vision that is from the ground up and not from the top down. It is coming from the people across this country who are desiring a positive change and a return to the Canada that they love and cherish. That opportunity is before us, and it is rising from our people.

I could not help but reflect on an old story. It took me back because I find when we are talking about these matters and we are talking with Canadians, we hear almost a homesickness in their voices. They are longing for a place called home. It is like the Canada they love. They are saying, “Oh, I feel homesick for that.” Have others ever experienced homesickness? I have. As a young person, I remember feeling it. It is not a good feeling. It is a lonely and rough feeling to experience, and it was captured so well by the great actor who has now passed. Members will recognize his name: the great Robin Williams. Perhaps some members have watched the old film that has been out several years now, *Patch Adams*. It is a great story, a story of Dr. Patch Adams. It is amazing and Robin Williams does a great job in it. He opens the movie with this monologue, and it captures what we are experiencing. It says:

All of life is a coming home. Salesmen, secretaries, coal miners, beekeepers, [waitresses and mill workers]...all of us. All the restless hearts of the world, all trying to find a way home. It's hard to describe what I felt like then. Picture yourself walking for days in the driving snow; you don't even know you're walking in circles. The heaviness of your legs in the drifts, your shouts disappearing into the wind. How small you can feel, and how far away home can be. Home. The dictionary defines it as both a place of origin and a goal or destination.... Or as the poet Dante put it: In the middle of the journey of my life, I found myself in a dark wood, for I had lost the right path. Eventually I would find the right path....

I conclude with this. Canadians are discovering the right path. They have been wandering, as it were, a long way from home, wondering if they could ever get back there, but they are discovering the right path before them and that will lead them to a home; to a Canada where opportunity abounds, freedom thrives and where we can all belong and where we can all become all that we once dreamed of. That home is not that far away and we can get there if we make the right choices in the coming election. I appreciate this time. It is a joy to be before this House.

• (1130)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened

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to the member opposite's speech, and I would like to ask him a question. Is it the anti-terrorism scandal, the Phoenix scandal, the G8 spending scandal, the F-35 scandal, the Senate scandal or the Elections Act scandal that saw one of the Conservative members actually going to jail and leaving in leg irons? Are those the days of, and I wrote this down, leadership with “high ideals” that he wants Canada to return to?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Madam Speaker, I am glad to talk to this. Canada was respected around the world without question at that time. We were respected and when our prime minister spoke, he was heard at that time. I have come to understand, very much so, that many Canadians, when that question is put them, reflect back and say, “Wow, we were much better off nine short years ago when we were there.”

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will stop the member there.

If members who have already asked a question have other questions, they should wait until the appropriate time. I would ask members to please not interrupt other members when they have the floor.

The hon. member for Tobique—Mactaquac has 30 seconds left for his response.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Madam Speaker, when we reflect on a time when Canada was respected around the world, we were achieving possibilities, were not denigrating our workers and were not attacking the very sectors that provide much of the prosperity that this country has leaned upon. Many of the provinces and regions of the country do not have as much wealth to generate, and we are thankful that we had a prime minister, a little over nine years ago, who fostered an atmosphere where people could grow, develop, thrive and prosper. He was proud of our energy sector, proud of our resource sector and proud of what Canadians could build. He stood up for Canada and stood up for Canada's workers rather than talk down Canada's regions, talk down Canada's livelihoods and talk down Canadian workers. Canadians had a prime minister who stood on their side, and I think they want one who will do the same thing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I found my colleague's speech entertaining. I appreciated his quote from *Patch Adams*, an excellent movie starring Robin Williams. I also liked hearing about his vision for Canada. The Bloc Québécois has a wonderful vision for Canada's future, too. We envision a Canada that lives in accordance with its values and its vision of multiculturalism. We envision a wonderful country with nine provinces and three territories, whose neighbour is an independent Quebec that also lives in accordance with its values, such as environmentalism, secularism and government transparency.

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Lack of transparency is not solely down to the Liberals being in power. There always has been a lack of transparency. There was a lack of transparency under the Conservatives as well. I find it strange that the Conservatives say the Liberals lack transparency and honesty considering that these issues have come up over the decades and have always made Quebeckers feel very uncomfortable.

Of course, we agree that the documents requested by the House of Commons must be tabled in the House of Commons. The motion we are talking about today calls for this matter be referred to a committee, and the amendment adds instructions we agree with.

Can my colleague talk to us about this lack of transparency epidemic running through the federal government?

Does he see any solution to this kind of problem, which seems to keep occurring no matter the political stripe of the government in power?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his great question.

We have to work together to create a more transparent government that speaks with Canadians and, more importantly, that listens to them. Canadians have been very clear. They want a government that truly reflects their voices and their views. That is what they need. My French is not that great and I am sorry for that, but I am trying.

• (1135)

[English]

What we need is a government that will turn the lights on, because as we always say, light is the greatest disinfectant of all.

What are the Liberals afraid of? What are they hiding? They need to be transparent.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member is clearly passionate about what he was talking about and certainly spent a great deal of time on it in his speech, which, I will honour, was well-written. However, sitting in the House listening to Liberals and Conservatives fight about who is more scandalous is a colossal waste of time and has included the Conservatives filibustering the House and blocking their own motion. They are talking about how hard things are, but they are planning to cut pharmacare and cut dental care and were so callous as to vote against a school food program.

If the member is worried about people struggling across Canada, why is his party filibustering its own motion to get the documents put on the table rather than letting us get back to business to make sure that people across Canada are getting what they need?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Madam Speaker, I thank the New Democrats and the Bloc for voting along with us to bring transparency to this matter.

The one holding up the proceedings of the House is none other than the Prime Minister himself because of his refusal to listen to the edict of Parliament, the vote of Parliament and the decree of the Speaker of the House, who has said to release the documents. If he would co-operate, do what is asked of him and not violate the privi-

leges of parliamentarians, this matter would be resolved quickly. He is not doing that, and as a result, we have an obligation as His Majesty's loyal opposition to hold the government to account and make sure it follows through on what Parliament has passed here in the House. Otherwise, parliamentarians have no authority.

We should have authority and it is being recognized by the Speaker, so I think it is time the Prime Minister listen to the Speaker and release the documents.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, one part of the member's speech that really intrigued me was the notion of returning to some sense of normalcy in this country. That is something I am hearing in my riding of Barrie—Innisfil, where the apparatus of government has been used to divide people along regional lines, race lines, faith lines and gender lines. The health status of our neighbours has been another reason to divide people in this country.

People are sick and tired of the apparatus of government being used to divide this nation. It is time we unify it. The member spoke about that, and I want to give him another opportunity to speak to that issue.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Barrie—Innisfil, for whom I have a lot of respect.

There is nothing that unites a people like vision. As I referred to in my remarks, right here on our landmark Peace Tower in Centre Block, there is an inscription that says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Nothing will unite this country faster than a vision for what Canada can be, and nothing frustrates people more than living beneath their potential. Right now, the government is holding back the vast potential of this country. We can move beyond our perils and start to attain our potential with a change in leadership, and that is on its way.

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I certainly believe in a unified country. My question is about Bill C-49, which was quite unifying in my province and I believe in Nova Scotia as well. There is a need to move with speed toward a green economy, a need for wind and a need for protection by the provinces and the federal government in how we move forward with this exciting, important industry for our children's future and for the betterment of all Canadians.

Could the member please tell me why his party voted against this bill every step of the way?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Madam Speaker, on this side of the House, we believe in all of the above when it comes to utilizing Canada's resources, and we want a comprehensive approach. Rather than throwing up roadblocks to the development of resources, we believe in getting out of the way. That is why we have committed to making sure that Bill C-69 gets repealed and that we see the development of energy resources and a renewed focus on getting Canadian energy to world markets. What has happened is that the Liberals did not do proper consultation and did not talk with all the key stakeholders, and several industries were put at a complete disadvantage and felt isolated from the process.

We wanted to make sure their voices were heard. That is why we stood against the bill.

Privilege

● (1140)

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very honoured and happy to rise to share some opinions, feedback and thoughts on this very important debate today.

I will start by quoting Tupac, who said, “everyday I read the paper there's another lie”. That is what it feels like after nine years of the corrupt, incompetent Liberal-NDP government. Every day, whether someone is opening the news on their phone or opening a newspaper, there is another scandal. There is something the Liberal-NDP government does every single day to embarrass Canadians and embarrass us on the world stage.

We can only expect from the Prime Minister more corruption, more scandals and more crime. This guy has been caught breaking the law more than once. In fact, he has broken the law more than every single prime minister before him. It has not stopped there. As our leader has said, the rot is from the top down. He was such a great role model in breaking the law and having more scandals than any prime minister before him that his ministers did the exact same thing. They were also caught breaking the law. That is the kind of example the corrupt Prime Minister has set for the Liberal-NDP government, which continues to hide from accountability and tries to take advantage of every single possible position that Canadians get put into because of his incompetence, whether through the pandemic, through trying to reward his friends at WE Charity or through this recent slush fund scandal. The new green economy was just an excuse to create the slush fund for him and his corrupt Liberal insiders.

Along with this scandal there are massive conflicts of interest and massively corrupt misuses of taxpayers' money, at a time when there are two million Canadians lining up at food banks in a single month, with a million more projected for this year, a third of whom are children. For the first time in my entire life in Canada, one in four Canadians is now skipping meals. That is not something I thought Canada would be associated with, but that is the sad reality. As Canadians continue to line up at food banks, the corrupt Liberal-NDP government continues to line the pockets of its insiders. As they get richer, Canadians are getting poorer.

There is no hope under the government, which once promised the Canadian dream for millions of Canadians. Whether they have lived here their entire life or moved here for a better future, it is gone; it has become a nightmare. They cannot afford a home. They cannot afford groceries. They cannot fill up a tank of gas like they used to without getting hit with high taxes. All of this is only done so that the Liberal-NDP government can continue to shovel millions and billions of dollars toward rich Liberal insiders.

What is the government doing right now? It is doing anything and everything it can to avoid accountability. It is literally blocking and hiding documents. These documents are so damning that it is doing everything in its power to not have them released, including seizing Parliament and freezing it the way it is right now. One thing is clear: The Liberal-NDP government never acts in the best interests of Canadians. The Liberals only care about the Liberals.

● (1145)

That the government does not want to turn over these documents is a clear sign that there is corruption on many levels, which the Liberals are trying to hide. There is wrongdoing, something so damning to them that they cannot afford to have it come to light so Canadians can see clearly how corrupt the Liberal-NDP government really is. It covers up and blocks this investigation so it can continue to fill the pockets of Liberal insiders. The \$400 million of taxpayers' money is not a small amount, at all, for everyday Canadians, but not for the Liberal-NDP government.

Money was sent to board members of these companies that the Prime Minister created a slush fund for to reward them. The Liberal-NDP government talks a big game about going green and the economy of the future, but it is so clear that these are all just words to cover up the corruption so the Liberals can try to get away with it. However, Canadians are smarter than that. With the record of the Liberal-NDP government, Canadians question anything and everything because they know the government does not have their best interests in mind. All the government does is take advantage when someone is down.

As I said before, during the pandemic, the government did everything it could in order to reward its friends. Now, at a time when Canadians are lining up at food banks, it does not care. It created a slush fund of \$400 million for its Liberal insider buddies. Whether this money was stolen or wasted, Canadians cannot afford to feed or house themselves now, yet they see a corrupt government that continues to feed more corruption to its insiders. That is the track record of the government.

Canadians are paying for this corruption and greed. They are the only ones being affected. This does not hurt the trust-fund Prime Minister or his other cronies. It does not affect carbon tax Carney or any of the other corrupt insiders who are rewarded for doing absolutely nothing except being friends of the Prime Minister. Everyday Canadians are those hit with higher costs on gas, groceries and home heating, and for what?

In everything the government has done, it has always tried to put a blanket over Canadians' eyes with some type of buzzword. That is how it sold the carbon tax scam. When it first tried to sell this to Canadians, the government said it would introduce a carbon tax that would increase every year and fix the environment. It said that all the forest fires and floods would go away, and it would make sure there would be sunny ways and sunny days for everybody. That was one really big lie it sold under the guise of the environment or climate change. Those were the buzzwords for the government.

Privilege

Because Liberals do not respect the intellect of Canadians, they said that Canadians would pay into a tax and the government would give them more than they pay. That was another blatant lie by the government under the buzz phrase “climate change”, which all ties into the green slush fund. Both of those lies were proven wrong by their own Parliamentary Budget Officer. Forest fires and floods have not been fixed as a result of the government starting to raise Canadians' taxes. In fact, the environment department admitted that the carbon tax scam is not measured on how much emissions go up or down. It is all a fairy tale.

• (1150)

The second side to it, which the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed once again today, is that the majority of households are worse off in what they pay for this scam than what they get back in these so-called rebates. Canadians know that. They do not need anyone to tell them that. They see it every time they fill up a tank of gas, whether to go to work or to drop their kids off at sports or tutoring. When they go to the grocery store, they see prices have gone up. Because it is getting cold now, they turn up the heat in their houses and they see it when they get their bills. They know it has been a scam all along.

I will never forget, when I was first running for election, going to the door of a single mom in one of the communities in my constituency. When I introduced myself, she told me to hang on. She closed the door, took about a minute and came back with tears in her eyes, holding a bill. It was her natural gas bill. I will never forget this. She had a sign on her lawn because her house was for sale. She had to sell her house because she had just been laid off from her oil and gas job, and she was already saying that it was because of the policies of the Liberal government. We already heard about Bill C-69 and the damaging impacts it had on Canadians, our industry and our economy.

This constituent was one of the people affected by the bill. She has two kids. First, she said that she had to sell her house because she could not afford to pay her mortgage anymore. She needed to feed her kids. With tears in her eyes, she then showed me her natural gas bill. She pointed to the line that shows the carbon tax and said that she and her parents had been heating their houses the same way her whole life. She asked, “Why am I being punished with this carbon tax now? What did I do wrong?” She had not changed anything. She had lost her job and wanted to know why she was being punished because it was cold outside. What did she do wrong?

That is the pain the Liberal-NDP government refuses to understand. Its members refuse to acknowledge the pain it causes to these families, all under the guise of climate change. They use these buzzwords and think they can get away with all the corruption. It is the same single mom who will now have higher taxes because the Liberal-NDP government, under the guise of climate change, wants to reward its friends so it can collect more from Canadians, the same ones who are lining up at the food banks.

Liberals do not care that they get hit with all these scandals. It is their track record. That is who they are. They do not care about Canadians. Biggie Smalls once sang *Mo Money Mo Problems*. With the government members, it seems to be “no scandals, no taxes”. Canadians get hit with more taxes because of their scandals. The

government members are less concerned about accountability and governing this country; they would rather keep protecting themselves from accountability by covering up as much as they can.

In committee after committee, the common-sense Conservatives bring these scandals to light, but the Liberals are okay and laugh it off because they know they have a partner in corruption in the NDP. Many times, Conservatives bring forward motions and studies so Canadians can see accountability for their money, but the Liberals just laugh it off every single time. Their accomplices and partners in the NDP are covering up these scandals, and the Liberals know they do not need to worry. At the end of the day, Canadians have to pay for all of that. Liberals are totally okay with that because they can all just hide under this cloud of climate change somehow.

During the pandemic, we saw the WE Charity scandal, where \$900 million went to Liberal insiders who paid off the Prime Minister's family. There was no accountability until common-sense Conservatives brought this scandal forward.

• (1155)

The Prime Minister would rather prorogue Parliament, as we have seen, than face accountability. That is exactly who he is. He is someone who has probably never filled a gas tank in his life or gone grocery shopping before. That is exactly why he does not care.

The arrive scam scandal sent \$60 million to Liberal crony insiders for an app that did not work and that nobody wanted. Once again, under the guise of the pandemic, the corrupt Liberal-NDP government tried to reward its insiders. There were people who literally did no work and got paid off. As Liberal insiders line their pockets and Canadians line up at food banks, the NDP has helped get the corrupt Liberal government through all these scandals one by one.

The SNC-Lavalin case not only unravelled a lot of the corruption and scandals of the government but also proved how much of a fake feminist the Prime Minister truly is. When his brave indigenous justice minister, Jody Wilson-Raybould, stood up to his corruption, what did he do? He did not admit it. He did not take any accountability or responsibility. He fired her. As a fake feminist would, he threw her under the bus.

Not only is the Prime Minister corrupt and scandal ridden, but he also proved how much of a fake feminist he is through that scandal. That is a pattern of the Prime Minister, of being a fake feminist and throwing women under the bus when they stand up to his corruption. He is full of scandals and corruption.

Privilege

This \$400-million scandal is on Canadians once again. The Prime Minister gets to be corrupt. He gets to do whatever he wants to reward his Liberal insiders because it is all on Canadians' dime. He has the Canadian credit card in his hand, and he is spending as though there is no limit. All we have seen from the Liberal-NDP government is more scandals, more corruption and more cover-ups.

The economy is in the toilet right now. We know the carbon tax scam puts a big hole in our GDP, but because of the failed policies, GDP per person in this country keeps on declining. It is at a lower level today than it was in 2014. Can people believe that Canada's output per person is lower—

The Deputy Speaker: We have a point of order from the hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Speaker, I have never raised this issue, but I understand there can be a matter of privilege raised on misleading statements. I have been sitting here listening to the member opposite for the last however long it has been and heard many misleading statements that I think are detrimental, not only to our Prime Minister but also to me. I am part of the environment committee that put these policies in place.

When can a matter of privilege for misleading statements be used when we sit and hear them over and over again?

The Deputy Speaker: I would suggest the hon. member go to her House leader and have that discussion. Of course, questions of privilege would need an hour's notice to be able to come to the floor. If the hon. member finds there is a question of privilege and her privileges have been moved upon, then she can, of course, bring that to her House Leader and notice can be given to the Speaker.

The hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

• (1200)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Speaker, I was actually doing research on it and found that some can be made directly, without an hour's notice, and one of them was on misleading statements.

I am just wondering what are the circumstances under which that can be done and how many misleading statements have to be made before one can actually raise that point.

The Deputy Speaker: As I said, when it comes to such information, this is a point of debate. We expect individual members to be honourable when they bring information forward.

Again, if the member wants to bring it forward and talk to the table for a few moments, maybe we can come up with something. For the time being, I believe this is debate. The debate we have been having for the last seven days has all been very similar. No one has called anything else out. I would ask the hon. member to maybe bring it to the table and have that discussion.

The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, a Liberal finally admitted, and took some accountability. She just said it is their policies. They helped form those policies. It is those same policies that sent two million Canadians to a food bank and that allowed all the corruption, something we are talking about.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a question of privilege. The member opposite is now saying that I forced two

million Canadians to go to a food bank as part of the government's bringing forward policies. That is completely misleading, and I take it as a question of privilege.

The Deputy Speaker: We are getting to points of order; that is really what we are doing.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, it was hardly an impressive speech from my hon. colleague from the Conservatives, but I am sorry that the member for the Liberals is getting in such a flap. That is not a question of privilege; it is a point of debate. Let us stay focused on the issue at hand.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake has the floor.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Yes, it is a point of order, not a question of privilege. If the member really wants, I would suggest she read Bosc and Gagnon, which sets these out quite clearly.

The Deputy Speaker: Again, I think we are descending into a lot of debate here.

The floor is, of course, with the hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Liberal member for putting forward another example of another unhinged Liberal. That is how they all become once their corruption and scandals come to light.

The Deputy Speaker: I guess we are into point of orders today. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, the member cannot make an accusation that someone is unhinged because she raises a point. That is just cheap. If he cannot do a debate without being cheap, I think you have to call that out.

The Deputy Speaker: I believe we are falling into debate even more deeply. We cannot be debating the debate.

The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn has the floor.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, not only do we have unhinged Liberals in here, but we also have another example of what I have been talking about in my speech: that it is always the NDP that covers up all the corruption and scandals. It is on full display in the House again. This is exactly why Canadians have lost trust in the Liberal-NDP government. They have lost faith in them.

That is why they want a carbon tax election now. They are fed up with the scandals. They are fed up with the cover-up, like the slush fund of \$400 million that rewarded Liberal insiders. It is time to call a carbon tax election. Canadians want back the Canada that no longer exists under the Liberal-NDP government. All we hear across this country is that Canada is not the same Canada anymore.

Privilege

That is why we and Canadians are calling for a carbon tax election, so our common-sense Conservative leader can axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget, and stop the crime, including the corruption and scandals, and bring back the Canada we all once knew and still love. Now it is up to them to call it. Let us do it now.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to give some compliments to my colleague. It was probably the least self-aware speech I have ever heard in the House of Commons. He talked a lot about lies the Liberals have made, and I agree that the Liberals are not honest and have not shown that they have a lot of moral fortitude.

However, I want to quote from a Twitter account that many of us follow. It is called, “Pierre Is Lying To You”. It was found that in just three days—

The Deputy Speaker: Maybe we are talking about someone else, but if we are talking about a specific member of the chamber, I will ask that we not use their name. Even if it is quoted from Twitter, we cannot use it.

The member for Edmonton Strathcona has the floor.

• (1205)

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, just to be clear, I was not quoting anyone in particular; it is the name of an account. The particular account says that the leader of the official opposition lied 215 times in the House of Commons over three days. I did not say that; the—

The Deputy Speaker: I know that we are quoting information on here.

The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake is rising on a point of order.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, we cannot do indirectly what we cannot do directly. Quoting someone saying that someone is lying is not parliamentary.

The Deputy Speaker: That is correct.

The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, you should have stood in this place when the member opposite giving his speech said “lying” several times. If that is the new standard, then I would ask that—

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry. I just took the chair; I was not in the chair when the majority of the hon. member's speech was going. The hon. member was here when I did take over the chair. I apologize for missing that, and I will try not to miss it next time.

I know that the hon. member still has not gotten her question out. The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona has the floor.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, the member spoke about lying, about embarrassment and about all of these things. Of course, I think, “a pox on both their houses”, to be perfectly honest, because this is a debate in this place on which is worse, and that is not very helpful for Canadians who are struggling right now.

One of the things the member's leader said just recently in the media is that he thought it would be a gift to humanity if a nuclear facility were bombed. This would obviously escalate war and cause unbelievable pain and suffering to innocent people. I wonder

whether the member agrees with that statement and finds that to be an embarrassment on the world stage.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, the only embarrassment is the NDP, which does not condemn people who are sympathizers of a terrorist regime that would burn a Canadian flag and say, “death to Canada”.

The member brought up a phrase; she said “[no] moral fortitude”. “No moral fortitude” is how I would describe the NDP leader, someone who faked and put on a dramatic scene, ripping up their supply and confidence agreement, only to flip-flop two weeks later and tape it right back up just so the NDP could win a seat in Manitoba and use the people of Manitoba. That is no moral fortitude.

The NDP continues to prop up the most corrupt government in Canadian history. Maybe what it needs is some moral fortitude and some clarity to Canadians that we will not stand for anti-Semitism anymore in this country.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the topic of moral fortitude, let us ask a question. The Leader of the Opposition was caught red-handed putting in hashtags in order to court individuals who hate women.

The member opposite spoke about fake feminism. so why will he not stand in this place today and actually condemn using hashtags that court individuals who hate women and call for violence against them? He can do that right now. Will he?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, I will not take any lessons from a member who refused to call out racist blackface that was done by her Prime Minister and who refused to speak up when strong women in her caucus were fired for standing up to the Prime Minister's corruption. She stayed quiet about it.

We will continue to condemn racist blackface and fake feminists like the Prime Minister, in the House and outside the House. I hope that she will join in, finally get some moral fortitude and do the same.

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what I am hearing in the House today is not particularly edifying. I get the impression that both sides are simply trying to capitalize on the obstruction. I can confirm that it was my Conservative colleague who talked about lies. I would actually like to point out that a big one was told, specifically that the carbon tax applies in Quebec. We have a party on the other side that refuses to hand over documents and refuses to co-operate with the House.

Privilege

Farmers are on the Hill today because we need to move several issues forward in the coming weeks, including protecting supply management with Bill C-282. There is also Bill C-319, which seeks to increase OAS by 10% for people aged 65 to 74. We have work to get done in the House. Members on both sides should stop standing in the way and shirking their responsibilities. This does nothing to advance democracy.

• (1210)

[*English*]

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, the member brought up taking advantage. The only people taking advantage of anyone are the members of the Liberal-NDP government, who are taking advantage of Canadians. When the government slammed them with a carbon tax scam, it took advantage of them. Now, under the guise of climate change, it is once again trying to take advantage of Canadians and their hard-earned money by awarding \$400 million in a slush fund to Liberal-connected insiders. Canadians are tired of being taken advantage of.

The member also talked about farmers. Common-sense Conservatives are always on the side of farmers. That is why we brought Bill C-234 forward to lower the cost of food and once again reward the hard work of our patriotic farmers. What did the corrupt Liberal-NDP government do under its woke, radical environment policies? It made it impossible for anyone to be able to support the bill when the radical environment minister—

Mr. Charlie Angus: What a moron.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I just heard the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay refer to another hon. member as a moron, so I would suggest that he retract that.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I do not remember whether I said the word “moron” when I referred to him, but if I did, I would recognize that calling someone a moron is unparliamentary. I would not want to take down anything I know about people I know who are actually moronic and who actually have good hearts, so I do retract.

The Deputy Speaker: I would suggest that maybe the hon. member wants to unequivocally retract that, without the commentary. I, as Speaker, would really appreciate that.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I have such enormous respect for you. I absolutely retract.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn can finish up his thought before I go to one more question.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, I will leave it at that. I think it is on clear display how irrelevant some members are in the House.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the debate is actually a very clear signal of how things have gotten in the House. Because of scandal and waste from the Liberal government propped up by the NDP, we are seized with the privilege motion before us. The fact is that there are not any solid questions coming from the left rump over there of the NDP, the eco activists. The fact is that they are okay with the Liberals' continuing to use tax money to enrich their friends. They are taking from the have-

nots and giving to the have-yachts. The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle said it very well: Liberals are going to be liberal.

There are 186 conflicts of interest. Why can we not get the documents so that we can find out how much money the Liberal government has given to its friends?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, I will admit that my friend from Regina—Lewvan is a great hockey player, and so is his son.

The heart of the discussion we are having in the House is about corruption, something that obviously, with the questions we are hearing from members of the Liberal-NDP costly coalition, they are not taking seriously, because they think they can cover it up again.

There were 186 examples of conflict of interest with a \$400-million slush fund given to connected Liberal insiders. What Canadians want, all everyone is asking for, is to release the documents to the RCMP so we can shed some light on another scandal by the current government that only costs Canadian taxpayers at the end of the day. Otherwise it is time to call a carbon tax election so common-sense Conservatives can kick the costly coalition to the curb for good.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with the member for Drummond. I hope his speech is good. It usually is. I will listen to it closely.

On June 10, the House was clear when it gave the government the order to submit a series of documents to the law clerk of the House so that he could hand them over to the police. Why did it do that? That is the question.

The Liberals get all worked up, saying that it is crazy, that we cannot hand over documents to the police, that we cannot do their job for them. The Conservatives say that it is crazy, that the Liberals across the aisle are corrupt, that they do not want to hand over the documents.

In fact, the answer may be somewhere in between, because we still do not have enough information, so we cannot yet say whether they are corrupt. Neither can we say whether the documents should be given to the police. What we can say is that this whole thing smells, that money was mismanaged, and that, for that reason, we are justified in asking for access to the documents to see what really happened. That is why we support this motion.

It all began at the end of 2022, when whistle-blowers informed the Office of the Auditor General of Canada and the Privy Council, in other words the government, that they were uncomfortable with the way that Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC, was being managed. In 2023, things took off. An audit conducted by Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton appeared to confirm what the whistle-blowers had said.

Privilege

At that time, the government appeared to be stalling. The whistle-blowers grew impatient, disappointed at the government's failure to act. We began seeing leaks in the media, which increased the pressure. Then, the president and CEO resigned, followed by the chair who managed the fund.

On June 4, 2024, a bomb went off, figuratively of course, when the Auditor General decided to investigate the fund because she, too, had been alerted. She looked at 58 out of a total of 420 projects. That is a substantial number of projects, but she did not look at them all. In the 58 projects she looked at that spanned from April 1, 2017, to December 31, 2023, she mostly found serious governance issues. Conflict of interest management was sorely lacking. Some directors voted for the allocation of funds to businesses in which they had a personal interest. That is the sort of thing that does not usually happen. It is basic good judgment. Usually, directors with a personal interest recuse themselves. It appears, however, that the people around that particular table did not possess good judgment.

The Auditor General found 90 cases of conflict of interest amounting to \$76 million. Obviously, we do not have the details, but we would like to. She found 10 ineligible projects with funding that totalled \$59 million. She only looked at 58 projects out of 420, but she discovered all that. Imagine if she had reviewed all 420 projects.

We do not have all the details. That is why on June 10 the House asked for access to the documents. We are now into October, and June 10 is starting to feel like ancient history. Five months have gone by, but the government has not responded to the House's order yet. When the other side of the House claims that this question of privilege is not justified, I would reply that there are limits. This question of privilege is totally justified. The Liberals may not like it, but it is not up to them to decide how the House votes. They do not hold a majority; they are the minority. They are not above Parliament, but beholden to it. There is a difference.

The only limit on the House's ability to demand information is the House's good judgment, not the government's willingness to comply. The government must honour Parliament's orders. It is not a choice or an option; it is an obligation. If the Liberals are unhappy with the composition of Parliament, all they have to do is call an election. We will see whether they are happier with that result.

• (1215)

In fact, that is the principle behind responsible government. It was the main demand of the Patriots. People died for that. The British Crown burned down villages and put people in prison. Some were deported, while others were hanged. Ten years later, the people had responsible government. Almost two centuries later, I hope that the Liberal government will have the courage to honour this principle, the legacy left by the Patriots.

As for Sustainable Development and Technology Canada, SDTC, I have my own little story. In 2019, I was the economic development and industry critic. Navdeep Bains was minister of industry at the time. Good student that I am, I looked into the portfolios assigned to the minister to see how money was being spent under his watch, and I discovered the existence of the famous fund

managed by SDTC. I wondered what the purpose of the fund was, so I looked into that as well.

I found that the fund's mission was to “support Canadian companies with the potential to become world leaders [in clean technology]”. That was interesting. I wanted to know which companies and consortiums had benefited from funding. Names like Shell Canada, TransCanada Pipeline, Suncor Energy, Colonial Pipeline Company, Enbridge and Pipeline Research Council International came up—all nice French names by the way. It seems to me that when we talk about world leaders in clean technology, these are not the companies we think of.

In 2016, the fund gave a \$5-million grant to a Calgary-based company to test and market a technology that would make it possible to exploit deeper or hard-to-reach oil sands deposits. Money was taken from a fund for green technologies to help get more oil out from deeper in the ground. That is what the money was used for. Money for green technologies was literally diverted to benefit the oil companies. I was scandalized. We were paying the polluter, which made no damn sense. In fact, only the Bloc Québécois condemned this at the time, not the NDP or the Liberals, and especially not the Conservatives. It made the front page of the *Journal de Montréal*, but that was not enough to change anything. I could understand the Conservatives, who wake up each morning and check the oil share prices but, in the case of the other parties, we have a problem.

More specifically, I analyzed the years 2011 to 2015 to compare what happened with the green fund under the Conservatives and under the Liberals. Under the Conservatives, between 2011 and 2015, \$50 million from the green fund went to companies connected to the oil and gas sector. Between 2015 and 2019, it is the same story: \$50 million was misappropriated by the Liberals to the benefit of oil and gas companies. Meet the new boss, same as the old boss. Oil companies have already loaded up on taxpayer money to the tune of billions of dollars, but I guess that was not enough. They had to steal money from the green fund too. If we scratch the Liberals' green veneer, it will soon be apparent that it is completely brown underneath.

The Liberals promised us they would change, that they would bring a halt to oil company subsidies. They have since changed their vocabulary and no longer talk about this. They talk about ending inefficient subsidies. Not quite the same thing, is it. I would like to know what an efficient oil subsidy is. The fact is that they promised to reduce subsidies to oil companies, so the Bloc members put two and two together.

We told ourselves that things were not going well for the Liberals and that they would get smoked if an election were held. Basically, we wanted to give them a chance by giving them the opportunity to keep their promises. We were prepared to forestall an election call for now and let them enjoy their holidays. In exchange, though, we proposed something that would even have helped them keep their promises. To me, helping them keep their promises is not that bad.

As we know, seniors have been hit hard by inflation. The Liberals created two classes of seniors, and those aged 65 to 74 got nothing at all during this time. Our proposal was simple: Funding pensions by cutting oil subsidies a bit. Last week, believe it or not, they said no. They are unable to take money earmarked for oil companies and spend it on seniors instead, but they are able to take money from the green fund and hand it to oil companies. They do not have money for seniors, but for oil companies raking in billions of dollars a year, it is an open bar.

• (1220)

When the Liberals complain about all sorts of things, I have zero sympathy for them. Ultimately, when they do not want to hand over documents or give the public what it needs, we will not stand alongside them. We will continue working to ensure that Quebecers get their money and that the documents will be made public.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question will follow immediately after a very simple statement that came from the RCMP in regard to this. I will quote from the letter signed by the commissioner of the RCMP, in which it states, “There is significant risk that the motion could be interpreted as a circumvention of normal investigative processes and Charter protections.”

The institution of the RCMP is calling into question what parliamentarians want to provide directly to the RCMP. If we have the RCMP concerned about the process, even though we have unfettered powers, and if members or the Conservatives want to put someone in jail, they can apparently, at the end of the day is there not a responsibility on all of us to at least listen to what it has to say?

• (1225)

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Speaker, I am a little surprised to hear my colleague ask that question. Given all the time he spends in the House, he has had the opportunity to ask multiple people here that question multiple times. Furthermore, I pre-emptively answered his question at the beginning of my speech. I do not know if he was listening.

In any case, the issue is not what the police want, what judges want or what anyone else wants. The issue for the government is what the House and Parliament have asked it to do.

We do not know if fraud, criminals or corruption are involved. What we do know is that the Auditor General's report is very worrisome. We also know that there seems to be something fishy going on. In that case, what should we do?

Privilege

We are asking for the documents and we are asking for transparency. It is that simple.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his participation in this debate because it is very important. In nine years of Liberal rule, we have witnessed scandal after scandal. The latest involves \$400 million handed out to Liberal insiders appointed by the Liberal Party. This defies belief. As far as I am concerned, this succession of scandals underscores the need to call an election.

Despite the demands made by the Bloc Québécois, does my colleague agree with me on the need for immediate elections?

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Speaker, when I speak to my constituents, and I speak to them fairly often since I maintain a very active presence in my riding, not that many express the desire for an election. Most are fed up with the Trudeau government. Most have no desire to see Poilievre take his place. They basically have to choose between the lesser of...

I apologize.

The Deputy Speaker: I remind the hon. member that he may not refer to fellow members by their names. He has just done so twice.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Speaker, most people are fed up with the Liberal government but most have no desire to see the Conservatives in power either. They have but one solution, and that is the Bloc Québécois.

We will continue to do our job. It turns out that the Bloc Québécois could hold the balance of power at present. I think we could get some things done if there is co-operation on the other side of the House.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning my colleague spoke about the fact that we are in a minority government. I would like to thank him for this reminder because I sense that the government and the official opposition have forgotten that this is precisely the mandate voters gave us during the last general election. Essentially, they told us they did not want either the government or the opposition gumming up the works or trying to manage things as though they alone were lord and master of parliamentary proceedings. Rather, the parties should get along the way they should in a minority government. That was the mandate given to the government. It was to get along and get things done. It was neither to call elections nor impede the business of Parliament.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more with my colleague's comment.

I would add that the Liberals came to power in 2015. At the time, they formed a majority government, so they acted like a majority government. I think that a majority government should still collaborate with the other parties, but that was not the case with this government. It was completely arrogant.

In 2019 the Liberals formed a minority government. They found this difficult. They called new elections in 2021 and were reelected, but again found themselves in a minority government. It is time they got the message that they are not alone in governing. They must share power with the other parties in the House.

Privilege

• (1230)

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I heard the beginning of the speech given by my colleague from Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères in which he put enormous pressure on me to deliver a quality speech. I will do my best not to disappoint him.

Honestly, there are several reasons why I am happy to speak on this subject today. First, it affords me the opportunity to comment on the question of transparency, accountability and the moral duties we must carry out when we agree to serve our constituents in the House of Commons.

Maybe I was naive, but when I decided to get involved in politics, I had principles and values, among them respect for institutions. I am convinced that we 33 Bloc Québécois members share this value and the desire to do our jobs while respecting institutions. Imagine that, a sovereigntist Bloc member is saying that we are here to do our job while respecting the rules of the Parliament of Canada.

One of these rules is that it is up to the House to decide certain things, for example, the documents it wants to have in its possession, the documents it wants to obtain in various situations. Regardless of the situation, the fact remains that it is up to the House to determine the relevancy and necessity of obtaining some document or another. This is not a decision that the House may take and the government can treat as it sees fit. It is incumbent upon the government to respect the will of the House.

The Liberals are arguing that the RCMP says that this would be injecting politics into a police investigation, and that if it wants documents it has the means of requesting them. There is truth in that, but what we are asking for and what we agree on is that an order by the House Speaker be respected. Regardless of the Liberal members' arguments on this motion of privilege, the fact remains that it boils down to a ruling by the Speaker following a request by the House of Commons and its members.

I do not understand why they insist on obstructing. I do not understand why they keep doing as they please and determining what is and is not relevant in the Speaker's rulings. Honestly, I fail to understand the strategy.

Maybe they have something big to hide. Maybe they are trying to protect something big. Who knows. I do not even care to get into the theories about the scandal. The Conservatives have led the way on that, but they are in no position to lecture anyone about such things. If it is something they are trying to hide, it must be one whale of a secret. They are risking the survival of their fragile government, and they are delaying proceedings that could help them gain a friend until the holiday season.

This will hardly come as a scoop but there are currently two Bloc Québécois bills being used as preconditions for the Bloc's support of the Liberal government. The clock is ticking on both bills, and time is running out. If passed and implemented by October 29, they could guarantee the Bloc's support of this government until at least the holiday season, because both bills would be good for seniors aged 65 to 74 in Quebec and across Canada. I am talking about Bill C-319, introduced by my colleague from Shefford, which has the

support of all seniors groups. In a Canada-wide survey, 79% of respondents supported this Bloc demand. I do not understand why the Liberals are stubbornly dragging their feet on these important proceedings.

The other piece of legislation, every bit as important and another of the Bloc's demands in exchange for supporting the government—until the holidays, anyway—is Bill C-282, which seeks to exclude supply management from any future trade negotiations. The bill is currently being blocked in the Senate by senators Boehm and Harder, whose arrogance defies comprehension.

• (1235)

One of the senators went so far as to insult my colleague, the member for Berthier—Maskinongé, when he appeared before the Senate committee two weeks ago. The senator called him “special”, but not in a very flattering way. This unelected senator criticized the hard work of a member who has worked for years with farmers and agricultural producers in the supply management system to craft a quality piece of legislation. It was insulting. Both senators are blocking the democratic process, and that is shameful. I make no bones about it, I find that shameful.

When we ask the Liberals questions in the House, they respond as though we were born yesterday and have just fallen off the turnip truck. They say they have no control over senators they appointed to the Senate, that these are independent senators. Sure. No one thinks that Liberal appointees to the Senate are purely independent.

Frankly, I do not get their strategy, especially since the last time I checked the polls, the Liberals were at 22% nationally and were projected to capture 53 seats. That means that if the numbers hold up, 107 Liberal members will be gone after the next election. If it were me, I would want to work with the people reaching out and extending a hand, but I will not try to get inside their heads. It is a shame that we find ourselves today with a question of privilege that prevents us from advancing important work for seniors and farmers, not just in Quebec but in Canada as a whole. I do not understand.

Today we are discussing an issue of transparency, respect, jurisdiction and accountability that is an obligation for any public office holder and, by extension, a government. These are concepts the Liberals have a lot of difficulty with.

This is a government that has not come to terms with its minority status, as my colleague from Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères mentioned earlier. It has no respect for parliamentary rules and traditions. There is no better illustration than the number of times it has invoked closure to restrict parliamentary privileges in the House since 2021, at the beginning of its alliance with its NDP friends. I did a quick search up to the beginning of June, and it is not even up to date. At the start of June, we were up to 48 closure motions since the NDP-Liberal marriage. These 48 closure motions allowed the Liberals to circumvent 72 bill stages.

I hear the Conservatives say it is wrong for the government to have gagged them 48 times. I would caution them against complaining too loudly, because between 2011 and 2015, the Harper government invoked closure 104 times. It imposed a gag order on the House 104 times to push through its ideas and bills at the expense of democracy.

As an aside, the most odious part of all this, the worst example, the worst denial of democracy, the worst shirking of parliamentary rules was the indefinite imposition of a hybrid Parliament. Normally, this is something that is done by consensus, with frank, non-partisan discussions among the parties. Traditionally, changes that are so important to the workings of Parliament are made through consensus.

However, the Liberals decided once again to bargain this away in return for some sort of support for some sort of project, because I am guessing that some members preferred watching parliamentary proceedings from their home computer in their comfy clothes, while throwing another load of laundry into the washing machine and making spaghetti sauce for dinner. I find that sad. We deserved a healthy, thoughtful debate on how to improve the way we do things here in the House of Commons.

In short, I find it absurd that we keep talking, talking, talking about transparency with a government that is on its last legs and that we will remember for issues such as WE Charity, for which it went as far as proroguing Parliament to prevent us from getting to the bottom of things. We do not even know how bad the scandal was; we can only imagine. We had so much trouble getting answers about the laboratory in Winnipeg. We still remember that. Arrive-CAN was not that long ago. The government gave over \$60 million to two dopes working out of their basement. It is crazy. That is financial mismanagement.

At the same time, the fiscal imbalance means that Quebec and the provinces are having an even harder time, year after year, fulfilling their obligations, financing their health care and education systems, and providing housing for newly arrived immigrants and asylum seekers.

• (1240)

The situation is untenable. There are more and more scandals, each of which costs taxpayers a fortune. Frankly, the situation is unjustifiable and inexcusable.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we need to talk to the Privacy Commissioner about the amendment to the amendment, because he and his office are the ones that gave all the unredacted documents to the committee and the law clerk.

Privilege

Does the member think that the government should submit all of the unredacted documents to the committee and the RCMP?

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, my position in this matter is very simple. All House of Commons requests should be honoured by the government.

The request in question here is that the government provide the documents and that the matter be referred to the committee. The amendment requires that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs call a series of witnesses. The request was made by the House of Commons and the Chair. As a result, the government must comply, because that is the will of the elected members.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I posed a question to the previous speaker from the Bloc in regard to the RCMP and how it had expressed a great deal of concern, but the RCMP is not alone. Canada's Auditor General is expressing the very same concern.

Yes, Parliament does have a supreme power, but it does not necessarily mean we should use it in a situation like this. Stephen Harper chose not to do it, and so have other prime ministers and other premiers. There is a need at times for redacted statements.

Does the member believe we should be going against the thoughts that have been expressed by the Auditor General of Canada and the RCMP, by providing unredacted documents?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, what matters now is that everything is referred to committee. I agree.

With respect to the other matter, of course, we can hear the Auditor General of Canada's and the RCMP's concerns. I totally agree. However, that does not mean that they take precedence over the House of Commons and Parliament.

We make the rules and the requests. It is not up to the government to decide whether it should obey or not.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague opened an interesting door in his speech. He spoke about the hybrid Parliament, the motion and the fact that things did not go the way they should have, that is, by consensus.

One of the criticisms against this Parliament is that there is less accountability. People often say that ministers and members can hide a little more easily behind a screen. They see the lack of accountability.

Privilege

My colleague spoke about WE Charity. When Parliament is prorogued, that has consequences, and, of course, it is another way of hiding. Instead of facing the music and doing what is right, in other words, responding to the House's requests, to produce the documents for example, or reaching agreements so that things can move forward—and I know that he also has matters he would like to put forward in the coming weeks—and instead of hiding behind hybrid parliaments and prorogation, the government should be able to face any difficulties and meet our citizens' expectations.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I can only agree 100% with what my colleague from Shefford just said. A duty of accountability and transparency comes with the job.

If they are not prepared to honour that duty, they should step aside. It is unacceptable that the government can shirk its responsibility and duty to render transparent and honest accounts to the public. With everything that has happened in the past five or six years and even longer, we can go back pretty far, I think that the parties that aspire to power here need to examine their conscience.

• (1245)

[English]

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was a great intervention by my colleague. I wonder what he is telling his constituents when he goes back home. Are people truly surprised to hear that the Liberal government is this corrupt? The reason why Parliament is backed up right now is because the government and the Prime Minister will not release the documents for which we have all asked. The Conservatives are trying to contribute to our democracy, and the Prime Minister has been very obstructionist. This is why we are doing all of this.

What is the hon. member hearing from his constituents?

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to disappoint my Conservative colleague, but our support for this motion is simply a matter of integrity and transparency. Frankly, when I am in my riding of Drummond, I never hear anything about this. Rather, I am asked the following two questions. Why do the Conservatives continue to obstruct Parliament? Why is the government so incompetent?

In short, they do not ask me about technicalities. They are far more concerned about seniors. They are concerned about farmers, about the cost of living, about immigration. These are all subjects we cannot talk about now because Parliament is mired in this never-ending question of privilege.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House and speak for the people of Timmins—James Bay.

We are here with yet another day of Parliament being blocked from doing its work. The people of Canada sent us here to get things done. We have serious issues before us, but we are watching the Conservative puppet show, in this black-and-white world in which they live, interfering and stopping the work of Parliament.

That is not to give any kind of free pass to what the issue is at hand; the issue is very serious. It is the refusal of the Prime Minister to respect the will of Parliament. What that comes down to is a scandal: A liberal scandal, imagine that. If we look at the long history of the country, all the way back to the rum-bottle days on the Rideau, probably not one or two years has gone by without a scandal of Liberals looking after their pals. This has been the story of Canada since the beginning.

As the opposition, we have an obligation to hold the government to account. The fact that the Prime Minister is refusing to turn over these documents is a serious issue. It is also a serious issue because it was my colleagues in the New Democratic Party who began to break open this green slush fund scandal.

These are important issues that have to be addressed, but what we have is a ruling from the Speaker, which is very clear. This issue has to be sent to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs so that parliamentarians can investigate and come back to the House with a decision. This is how Parliament works; this is the process. If that process comes back with a finding of contempt for the Prime Minister, then that is how we operate. What the Conservatives are doing is blocking the call of the Speaker and blocking the work of parliamentarians to get to the bottom of this scandal. It is a very straightforward thing.

The bigger scandal is the absolute failure of the Liberal government to follow through on key promises. For example, people trusted them on housing. We heard about housing again and again, and we asked where that housing was. It is a government that made so many promises and failed. The purpose of opposition is to hold it to account and ask the question why it has failed.

The green fund scandal is a particularly powerful metaphor. I remember when the Prime Minister went to COP26, with his Haida tattoo, and said, "Canada's back". He made legally binding commitments on the global stage to move Canada to become a leader in the fight against climate change. What have we seen since then? This green slush fund is the perfect example of money that was not sent out the door to do what was promised. Money was sent again and again to oil and gas. In fact, we see that three times as much money goes out under the government to help the oil and gas sector than on clean energy, as our planet burns.

Under the Prime Minister, oil production in Canada, particularly out of the tar sands, has jumped 25% over the Harper government. That is not climate leadership; this is serious negligence on the part of the Prime Minister. Not only is it 25% higher, but thanks to the \$34 billion gift to the TMX pipeline, it is going up much higher.

We hear the environment minister talk about emissions going down, but he is not telling the truth. All sectors of the economy have done their part, but emissions continue to rise in oil and gas. We are the only G7 country whose emissions are rising despite the legal commitments made by the Prime Minister. That is the scandal, not of taxpayer money or insider buddies and cronies who hang out with the Prime Minister's pals. It is a scandal about our children's future, because we are now in the heart of the climate crisis. People voted for the Prime Minister to do his job on that. He has failed, and the green slush fund is the perfect example of that.

• (1250)

When I hear my colleagues in the Conservative Party talk about transparency and accountability, and how this is the most corrupt government in history, I have a bit of history in this place and I have seen a lot of corruption over the years. The Liberals are not very good, but they are rank amateurs compared to the Harper days. They tell us to trust them on transparency and accountability.

I listen to the demands of Conservatives to defend the vision of Parliament and the right to obtain documents. It is like people who move into a new neighbourhood and a crocodile knocks on their door. The crocodile says it is their new neighbour and if ever they need it, it will babysit their children. If the people do not know the history of the crocodile, they would think that is so wonderful and they would be more than happy to trust the crocodile to look after their children. However, if they know the history, they would know what a dumb idea that is.

Let us talk a bit about the history. All the language about documents right now brings me back to 2009 when Stephen Harper defied Parliament over the Afghan detainees documents. That was not just a minor scandal. That was a scandal that cut to the very heart of the Canadian nation. It happened in a November 2009 appearance at a parliamentary committee when Richard Colvin testified about evidence of torture of Afghan detainees.

The information that was brought forward was horrific, “pulling out fingernails and toenails, burning with hot oil, beatings, sexual humiliation, and sodomy.” That was raised by our ambassador on what was happening under the watch of the Canadian Army in Afghanistan. We sent our best young and most idealistic people to Afghanistan because they believed they were going to build a new Afghanistan after the Taliban. Instead, we learned that they were being drawn into the corruption of the warlords.

Ambassador Colvin said:

As I learned more about our detainee practices, I came to the conclusion that they were contrary to Canada's values, contrary to Canada's interests, contrary to Canada's official policies, and also contrary to international law....they were un-Canadian, counterproductive, and probably illegal.

That is a scandal.

Parliamentarians asked to examine this, because it was vital for us to reassure the Canadian people that when we sent our soldiers overseas, they maintained the highest standard and to ensure that our role in Afghanistan was to build a better society and not be a front for corruption, torture and abuse. Stephen Harper had no interest in that. He did not mind that our name was being sullied on the international stage, so he refused to turn over the documents to Parliament.

Privilege

Who was being targeted? The leader of the Conservative Party slurs victims of horrific bombings in Lebanon and the people in Gaza and brags about his hope that people will be bombed in Iran. That is a man who does not have a security clearance or cannot get it making these horrific remarks given the torture and killings are happening. This was happening in Afghanistan and Stephen Harper was covering it up.

Ambassador Colvin, in his testimony, said that the people who were being tortured and sodomized were not the terrorists that the Conservatives denounced. He said that they had no connection to the insurgency and many were local people, farmers, truck drivers, tailors, peasants, random human beings in the wrong place at the wrong time, and, from an intelligence point of view, they had little or no value. We would have thought that if Stephen Harper believed in Canada standing strong on the international stage, he would have been worried about the torture of innocent people who were picked up by the military and the warlords and subjected to brutal torture.

Colvin went on to say, “Instead of winning hearts and minds, we caused Kandaharis to fear the foreigners. Canada's detainee practices, in my view, alienated us from the population and strengthened the insurgency.” The brutal Taliban is back, and it is back because countries like Canada went along with the torture and suppressed the evidence.

• (1255)

Parliament had an obligation. It tried to get access to the documents, but Stephen Harper was not going to let that happen. He would rather allow the torture and abuse of innocent people in Afghanistan under our flag than have Parliament do its job. Harper ignored our commitments under the Geneva Convention. He undermined Canada's efforts to bring trust to Afghanistan—

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have been extremely patient. I have been waiting to get to the actual study that we are debating today. This has been a history lesson. I do not mind the history lesson, but this has nothing to do with the debate.

The Deputy Speaker: Again, this is debating the debate. I would caution everyone to stick to the debate we are having today.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised the member is that upset. This is about the Afghan documents that—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa is once again rising.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, relevance is very relevant. I am looking for at least a reference to SDTC, \$400 million and a scandal, just some kind of relevance—

Privilege

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate the input. A lot of latitude has been given during this whole debate. I would expect the hon. member to come to it at some point in his speech.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, for verification, I am speaking about the Afghan documents that were not turned over by Stephen Harper. That is a precedent. Would you not agree that I am on topic by saying we are talking about a precedent of a prime minister turning over documents?

The Deputy Speaker: I would say the hon. member is on the same page, as he should be.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I am not surprised at the Conservatives. Again, it is the crocodile in the room. They are saying, “Don't look at our past. Don't look at what we did when we allowed torture and suppressed documents.”

Let us get to the documents that Stephen Harper refused to turn over. His refusal to turn over the documents resulted in him being found in contempt of Parliament. That is the kind of man who represented the Conservative Party. Speaker Milliken said the refusal to turn over the documents struck at the “very foundations” of the parliamentary system, not that Stephen Harper, a good friend of Orbán in Hungary, cared that he was striking at the very heart of the parliamentary system, that all of the Conservatives went along with attacking the very fundamentals of our parliamentary system, or that it violated the Constitution. Stephen Harper did not care about that.

Errol Mendes was speaking at one of the parliamentary hearings looking into the Afghan detainees when he said:

The executive is really placing itself above Parliament. For the first time that I know in Canadian history, the executive is saying we are superior to Parliament...This is nothing more than an open defiance of Parliament. Nothing more, nothing less.

Let us go back to the crocodile metaphor. Of all the crocodiles that Canada has had, Stephen Harper was the ultimate crocodile. Here was a man who was in open defiance, who said he was superior to Parliament, and all the Conservatives went along. We have never heard a single Conservative mention we have a direct case of a prime minister not turning over documents. It is because if they were in that situation, they would never turn over documents. Stephen Harper would not turn over the documents. What did Stephen Harper do? Well, he always hated the democratic process anyway, so he just shut Parliament down. Do members remember that? Our Conservatives do not have much memory, but I will remind them. Stephen Harper shut down our democracy rather than work out a process for obtaining these documents.

Here we are now, in 2024, and what are the Conservatives doing? They are shutting down our democracy. They are making it impossible for us to do our work. They are running these endless questions of privilege when it has been ruled by the Speaker to send the issue to committee to be studied, so we can get a ruling. Who knows? Maybe we will find the present Prime Minister in contempt of Parliament. However, the real contempt of Parliament is the Leader of the Opposition, who believes in a policy of chaos and vicious attacks, and who will do anything to obstruct the work of Parliament. That is the real issue here.

We have a Liberal scandal that needs to be addressed. The Conservatives do not care. They work on chaos theory. They talk to us about transparency, accountability and corruption; oh my God, from the Conservative Party? How far back do we need to go?

Again, I am always amazed. Brian Mulroney was caught accepting money in a brown paper bag in a hotel room. I mean, that is normally what bikers and drug dealers do, but do former prime ministers of this country accept brown paper bags of money in a hotel room? Well, he was a Conservative leader, and that was not transparency and accountability. He stuffed it in his pocket and was doing favours.

Tony Clement was on the Conservative front bench. Now, I like Tony. He is a nice guy, but he took \$50 million from the border infrastructure fund. Border security is meant to keep us safe, but he passed it out in this bogus little slush fund he set up in Muskoka. How many gazebos were built in Muskoka with money that should have kept the border safe?

We asked for the documents with straightforward questions: “Tony, what did you do with our \$50 million? Did you really buy a sunken boat? Did you really buy a fake lake?” What did the Harper Conservatives say? They kept it under cabinet confidence and suppressed this totally bogus slush fund. That is a lack of transparency and accountability.

It is the crocodile principle. We trusted them to come into our home because we thought they were going to look after us. Guess what. Just look at the history. They say “the most corrupt government in history”, and there is a lot: the WE scandal and SNC-Lavalin, I mean, with the Liberals, it is part of their DNA. But my God, Mike Duffy; are they kidding me?

● (1300)

Mike Duffy, Pamela Wallin and Patrick Brazeau were the three most unfit people ever chosen to sit in the Canadian Senate. They were so unfit that even Caligula's horse would have been a better choice for the Senate. At least Caligula's horse met the standard of being from the place he was supposed to be from, unlike Mike Duffy. Do members remember Mac Harb, another famous scam artist? He bought a cottage 101 kilometres from Ottawa that did not have lights or running water, and then he hit up taxpayers for his travel, even though he never went there because he had a condo in downtown Ottawa.

Privilege

I mention Mike Duffy because he was a bagman for Stephen Harper. He got appointed to the Senate until he was 75. He was the member for "come from away" in Prince Edward Island. The two most famous fake, fictional people in Prince Edward Island are Anne of Green Gables and Mike Duffy. What happened? He got upset. He had his own hairdresser being paid for by the taxpayers. Nigel Wright had to write a secret \$90,000 cheque. Do members remember that? This was Stephen Harper's right-hand man. Nigel Wright was proper, upstanding, a good Christian man, and he had to write a \$90,000 cheque. Only in Canada can it be a crime to offer a bribe, but not to accept a bribe, or is it the other way around? Stephen Harper's inner office staff were writing secret cheques. Again, talk about the crocodiles being invited into the house; this is not transparency and accountability.

Now let us get to the man who is the present leader of the Conservative Party. A June 2024 report of the National Security and Intelligence Committee, a redacted document, said foreign interference in the leadership allowed him to take out Erin O'Toole. I would like to see Conservatives come clean with the Canadian people and release the documents. They are not going to release those documents. This is about foreign interference that allowed the guy now living in Stornoway to be leader. Members do not need to take my word for it. Erin O'Toole testified alongside federal lawyers that he believed Chinese interference took him out. I know some members of the Conservative backbench were definitely involved. Maybe they talked to the foreign Chinese government. I do not know. Those documents should be coming forward.

Why is that important? I am not sure the current leader has ever actually had a job. I do not want to say that is not a problem. I personally find it kind of odd that he sort of claims he worked at a Dairy Queen. However, he does not have security clearance. He is the only leader in national history who either cannot or will not get a national security clearance. What the heck is with that? I mention it because the other day, when we were watching the horrific violence in the Middle East, the destabilizing of the situation, the people being bombed and killed, he was out there bragging that he thought it would be such a great thing for Netanyahu to bomb another country. The man is fundamentally unfit, and he is unfit because he does not even have security clearance. He does not even know what he is talking about.

We are trying to de-escalate a global nightmare in the Middle East where thousands of innocent people have been killed: Iranian people, Syrian people, Lebanese people, Israeli people and Palestinian people. At the same time, we have a guy living in a 19-room mansion, Stornoway, with his own personal chef, who cannot get security clearance, and he is talking about bombing another country. I want to know why Conservatives will not release the documents on his leadership. How did that guy get to the position he is in? How is it that he does not have security clearance?

That is a simple question. We should get that answer and we have not got that answer.

• (1305)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I truly believe the member has raised some valid points, especially with his most recent comments in regard to the leader-

ship of the Conservative Party. We know foreign interference has been a very hot topic. Canadians are truly concerned about it.

However, we have the only party leader in the House of Commons who absolutely refuses to get the security clearance necessary in order to see the documents. It begs the question: Is it that the leader of the Conservative Party wants to be naive about this issue? Or is it because if he actually applied, his application would be rejected on some grounds? Maybe the House of Commons or a standing committee should be investigating that, because Canadians have a right to know if the leader of the Conservative Party might not even qualify to get security clearance and what would prevent that from happening.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your excellent work, and if I have ever crossed any lines, I am so glad that you always keep me on the straight and narrow. I hope that does not come out of my time, though.

The fundamental issue is that when we are elected to serve in Parliament, beyond our parties and beyond our local issues, our fundamental obligation is the betterment of Canada. That is our obligation, all of us, so when there is a leader who does not care about national security and does not want to know or cannot know, that is a serious black mark question.

The leader of the Conservative Party needs to explain why he is so uninterested in that, particularly if he is shooting his mouth off about the violence happening in the Middle East, which has caused so much suffering. He does not even know what the facts are, and either he is refusing to get briefed so he can understand or he cannot. If he cannot get security clearance, that is a serious question.

• (1310)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, when the member ran to become the leader of the NDP, I do not recall any announcement or Tweet saying that he would not take up residence in Stornoway. I also never saw him do that with his previous leader, Thomas Mulcair, who was at one point looking to be prime minister.

Let us dispose of this: The only security clearance a prime minister needs is to become the leader of the party that has the most votes. That is something the member for Carleton, I believe, will do.

The last thing I am going to mention will pop the member's bubble. When Stephen Harper was prime minister and we had the Mike Duffy affair, he said to the RCMP that he was waiving all client-solicitor privileges in regard to access to people, documents and emails in his own office. He did that because he had nothing to hide from them.

Why does the member continually give the Prime Minister an out? He attacks Conservatives rather than asking what is so bad about the green slush fund that the PMO is stonewalling and not letting Parliament see the documents. Why does the member continue to support the Prime Minister, cover for him and point at other parties when the Prime Minister needs to be held accountable?

Privilege

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, where to start? Why is the member talking about the guy who lives in Stornoway in a 19-room mansion with his own private chef, when he should be talking about why the Conservatives are refusing to respect the Speaker's order so we can investigate this scandal? I would love to talk about what the guy gets at Stornoway all day, but that is not the issue here.

The fact that the member thinks a prime minister of a G7 country does not need a security clearance is kind of worrisome. It is no wonder I have such concerns about the Conservatives on the backbench. In what world do they get elected and think that to be a leader of a G7 country someone does not need to know what is going—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member does raise a very valid point. I think it is worth pursuing.

Canada plays a very important role in world affairs. We know that. There is a need to recognize that all sorts of security issues and confidential information come to the Prime Minister's desk, and the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada is saying he does not want a security clearance.

There has to be a reason for that, and I am wondering if the member would concur that a standing committee of the House should be investigating why we have foreign interference allegations and why the leader of the Conservative Party is rejecting any sense of transparency and accountability to Canadians on this very important issue.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I hope my hon. colleague will not mind that I go back to my friend from the Conservatives. It is very concerning that the Conservatives think that if they win an election, they do not need to know what is going on in the world. They think that all they need is to win enough votes and they do not need to know what is happening in Iran. They think they can make any kind of bogus statement they want. That is frightening.

I also want to mention Stephen Harper turning things over to the RCMP. There was nowhere left to go when it came out. I was there. I was the one who took down Mike Duffy and Nigel Wright. I was there when Stephen Harper, day after day, stonewalled, but the corruption was in his office. It was his chief of staff writing a cheque. This was not about friends and cronies. This was about the prime minister of this country, the guy who shut down the Afghan detainees and did not care about basic facts. When the RCMP was on him, he had to throw poor Mike Duffy under the bus.

• (1315)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I always find my colleague's interventions both informative and entertaining, but I want to ask a serious question.

My colleague spoke about the Leader of the Opposition, who said that it would be a gift if innocent people lost their lives and a nuclear facility was bombed. This is as we are seeing an escalation

of war in the Middle East and seeing tens of thousands of innocent people losing their lives.

Does my colleague have concerns about the Leader of the Opposition having no understanding of international humanitarian law and no understanding of how important it is to de-escalate and play a role in peacekeeping and peacebuilding in this country? Does he have any concerns that the Leader of the Opposition is unfit to be the prime minister of this country?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with horrific levels of violence against innocent people, and the Conservatives have done nothing to speak up for the innocent people who are dying in Lebanon right now when so many Lebanese Canadians are crying out for help. The Conservative leader is cheering on the bombing of a facility that he did not know existed. If he had had security clearance, he might have had an understanding of whether there was a nuclear facility. However, he does not have that knowledge and does not have the maturity, because this man is fundamentally unfit for office.

A man who calls for the bombing of a foreign country and says that killing innocent people is a gift to humanity is fundamentally unfit to lead anything in this country.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not have a question but more so a comment.

After being here for almost nine years now, one thing I have seen over those nine years is that there is nothing more alarming, more unstable, more dangerous and more unhinged than a member who has already announced that they are not running again using the parliamentary privileges and immunities of this place to say what they would likely not say outside of these walls. That is my comment.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, what was that? The leader, who lives in Stornoway, does not have security clearance. Does the member think that is something I would not say outside? He does not have security clearance. Is that the question? What is the question here?

The Conservatives and their sock puppets on the back bench are shutting down Parliament. Would I not say that outside? Of course I would say that. I do not know what the member is so concerned about. The man is unfit for public office. He is unfit if he is talking about—

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the debate continues on this issue. It is unfortunate because of all the things we could be debating.

We are debating this issue because of the political games the Conservatives want to play. What they are doing is putting the interests of the Conservative Party, and in particular the interests of the leader of the Conservative Party, ahead of Canadians' interests. That is the bottom line. It is the reason that day after day we have been having this particular debate. It is the reason that concurrence report after concurrence report is being introduced by the Conservative Party.

Privilege

Even though there is substantial legislation before the House, the Conservative Party has chosen not to act in the best interests of Canadians, but rather to act in the best interests of the Conservative Party. I find this most unfortunate, especially when we take a look at what we are debating, or the privilege itself.

We are not debating the privilege motion, because the Conservatives moved an amendment to the privilege motion. Then dozens and dozens of Conservative members of Parliament stood to talk about the amendment, about half of their caucus. I guess the other half did not want to talk about it or were maybe a little embarrassed to, so they decided that the next step was to move a subamendment, or an amendment to the amendment. This is now before the House.

The root of the problem, and I am not talking about the leader of the Conservative Party, even though many of my colleagues might argue he is the problem, is that, procedurally, on the floor of the House is a motion asking—

• (1320)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, a relatively low number of people are required for quorum, but I do not believe we have quorum right now.

The Deputy Speaker: We will take a quick count of the individuals in the chamber.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: We have quorum.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, just moments before the quorum call was—

The Deputy Speaker: There is another point of order, from the hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Speaker, I have a question about checking for quorum. For members to be counted for quorum, should they not be in their seats? Can they be seated wherever they like in the House?

The Deputy Speaker: That is an excellent question. I will discuss it with the table clerks.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I have a question that ties in with the question my colleague from Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères asked. When checking for quorum, should the count not be based on the number of people who are present in the House at the time the question is asked?

I find it a bit odd to see people rushing into the House of Commons when they hear a quorum call, when quorum refers to the people who are present at the time of debate. I find that a bit odd and I would like you to clarify this, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: I will clarify these two points in a few minutes. From what I understand, we want to know whether members in the lobby who enter the House when the question is being asked should be counted during the quorum call.

As for the seats, that is another issue. The other thing we count is the number of people whose camera is activated on Zoom. If the

camera is activated, we can count the member. If not, we cannot count them.

[*English*]

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I just want to confirm that none of this time that has been used will actually be taken away from my speaking time.

The Deputy Speaker: Your clock is stopped and is ready to be started again when you are ready.

I am counting enough people for quorum in here, so I will allow the hon. member to begin. Maybe at the changeover, I will come back to the chamber on whether the individuals have to be at their seats. I will accept that they are not in their seats at this moment, but I will come back in a minute.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, we can always anticipate when quorum might be called because it is almost like a ship, when it is on fire and the rats flee the ship. We look over at the Conservative benches—

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate the good try, but we really cannot say whether people are in the chamber.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I thought the Speaker might ask me to retract the word “rats”.

At the end of the day—

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for the reminder. I wonder if the hon. member would retract the word “rats”.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I retract the word “Conservatives” and the association to rats. Having said that—

The Deputy Speaker: As I asked the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay, I ask the hon. parliamentary secretary to just retract the word “rats”, without any explanation.

• (1325)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I retract the word “rats”.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary.

The hon. parliamentary secretary may continue.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, we are debating a motion saying that an issue at hand should go to the procedure and House affairs committee. That would provide a wonderful forum for all members of the House to address the content of the issue, in terms of why it is referred to the procedure and House affairs committee.

Privilege

However, because the Conservatives ran out of speakers on the amendment, they moved an amendment to the amendment so they could start all over again and speak to the subamendment. That is actually why I get to speak on the motion again. It is interesting: We have had dozens and dozens of Conservatives stand up to speak to the motion, but I believe I am only the second Liberal that has spoken to it.

I can tell members opposite that there is a great desire to stop playing the game. That is not only coming from Liberal members but also even other members. There might even be a few closet Conservatives who would like to see us move on. Not all Conservatives are speaking on it, which no doubt defies the House leadership's decision to continue to have speaker after speaker stand up.

Why the issue needs to go to PROC is very simple. It is not that complicated. Let me get to the core. There is a letter. SDTC has been an issue the government has been on top of ever since it became public. The issue is that, because of wrongdoings that have been discovered, standing committees want information, and understandably so.

As with other governments, whether provincial or previous federal governments, we often get redacted information. This is done to protect a spectrum of interests. There is nothing different in terms of what the government has actually done.

In wanting to make a game of this and trying to point the finger, the Conservatives have said they want not only to have those unredacted documents but also for the unredacted documents collected here in the House to be handed directly over to the RCMP. That raises the concerns of a good number of people.

We say that this is in fact a Charter issue, a process issue, and it is blurring the independence of our judicial system. However, we get all the legal beagles coming from the other side saying that we do not know what we are talking about. The Conservatives do not know what they are talking about; it is not just Liberals who are saying that.

I will give a direct quote from the RCMP. This is in relation to the tactic that the Conservative Party is using in order for us to be able to talk about concerns that Canadians have. This is the tactic that the Conservatives are using in order for us to pass legislation that is going to have an impact on all Canadians in every region of our country.

The Conservatives are so focused on themselves and not the concerns of Canadians that this is the type of game they are playing. I will read from the letter to show what the RCMP has to say. Let us remember that the Conservatives are actually asking for unredacted documents to be collected and sent directly to the RCMP. The commissioner responded to that request, saying, "There is significant risk that the Motion could be interpreted as a circumvention of normal investigative processes and Charter protections."

● (1330)

It is not the Liberal Party or the Government of Canada saying that. That is the independent office of our institution, the RCMP. Even though I have had many opportunities to question Conservatives on the issue of whether they are concerned about what the

RCMP are saying, not one of them has had the courage to actually address that directly. I have witnessed dozens and dozens of them standing up, but not one of them has done so, because they are not concerned about such issues as the charter, our Constitution or proper process. They are concerned about trying to turn this into a game in which they can score cheap political points.

To try to give the false impression that the Government of Canada, the Prime Minister or the minister responsible does not care about the issue is just wrong. That cannot be substantiated.

Let us go through the actual process, in terms of what has taken place. A number of years ago, Navdeep Bains appointed a chair to SDTC. That chair was actually an adviser; she gave advice to Stephen Harper, a Conservative. She gave advice to Brian Mulroney, a Progressive Conservative. I often hear the Conservatives talking about how wonderful the late Jim Flaherty was; he was a former Conservative finance minister. They might be surprised, or likely not, to learn that the SDTC chair actually gave advice to him.

Navdeep Bains appointed her to an arm's-length organization of which we appointed maybe 50% of the board; the rest of the members were appointed outside that. After the appointment, a couple of years went by and we found out that there were issues that were taking place that should not have been taking place. As a direct result, the government, through the minister responsible, had an internal review done. In fact, we have had two. We have had the Auditor General look at the issue. We have had hours and hours of debate in our standing committee. The Conservatives, because they want their cheap political points in this game, are now asking what the next step is. They want to get unredacted documents—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Heritage is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to give the translators some time to ease their ears. What we are hearing across the aisle is quite voluminous.

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate the thought for our translators, but I do not think that is really a call for a point of order.

While I have the seat, I might as well just answer this question quickly, and I will give the opportunity for that to happen.

[*Translation*]

I will answer the question asked by the hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères. The *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, specifies on page 403 that "Members need not be in their assigned seats in order to be counted" when a quorum is called. They can be behind the curtains. As long as the Speaker can see them, they can be counted as if they were in the House.

[*English*]

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has the floor. I did not take any time away at all.

Privilege

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, that attempt by the Conservative member to be humorous is somewhat sad, because at the end of the day, as more and more Canadians find out who the leader of the Conservative Party really is, I think they will become disenchanted and disappointed because of the unethical behaviour that we have witnessed on numerous occasions. The type of misinformation that is espoused raises legitimate concerns. Then, for the member across the way to try to make a joke of a very serious issue when we have the independence of the RCMP and call into question a tactic that is being used here, I find it sad, even though the member sits in his corner and laughs.

At the end of the day, we have a government that has been working on the issue to ensure that there is a high sense of accountability and there is, in fact, going to be accountability on the issue. However, what I find interesting is that the strategy now of the Conservative Party is to say “ignore what the RCMP concerns are and ignore the Auditor General” who affirms the RCMP, another independent institution. The Conservatives say “just ignore what they are saying”; and move full steam ahead.

It was interesting. The New Democratic speaker before me talked about the Afghan scandal with Stephen Harper. I remember that scandal. It is interesting that the leader of the Conservative Party of today was there during that scandal. A number of the Conservatives who are sitting across from me were there during that scandal when Stephen Harper refused to provide unredacted documents.

Speech after speech, we hear the Conservative Party members, not necessarily talking about the process or the procedure that should be followed, which is the motion, but rather talking about character assassination and listing off what they believe to be scandals. I have said this before and I have read about it. I have no problem at all comparing our actions as a government to the types of decisions that were being made under Stephen Harper. I wish that we would actually see some of the Conservatives who were there during the Harper regime stand up and provide their defence on the issue and why they have had some sort of come-to-Jesus moment in terms of a complete road-to-Damascus reversal of their positioning.

Now, the Conservatives feel that, as parliamentarians, we have a supreme right, and that is where I do agree. We have a supreme privilege that enables us to do things that other Canadians cannot do. Where I disagree is this: Just because we have that ability does not mean that we should be using that ability. I have heard Conservative members talk about how Centre Block had a jail in the basement and how we have had individuals walk away from the gold bar and just drive away, implying they should have been put in jail. What a slippery slope it is when we feel that we can just instruct the RCMP and ignore what it is telling us, and then another member says we should have the right to put someone directly into jail. The Conservatives like to think that they are there to protect the individuals of our society regarding rights and freedoms.

• (1335)

I will stay away from some of the other issues that many of my colleagues have raised. Conservatives even think about issues like the notwithstanding clause and how it is no problem to use it. Why? It is because Parliament can. What a terrible attitude to have.

SDTC is an arm's-length organization, meaning that there is no political interference and it makes the decisions. There is a responsibility for us to ensure that there is accountability, and we have been doing that. That is the reason, as I say, there have been internal investigations. That is the reason it went to the standing committee.

There are silly comments in the speeches coming from the other side and they try to justify them because they happen to be here on the floor of the House of Commons. There are assertions of people being Liberal-friendly and that there is all this corruption. That is what Conservatives say. If, at the end of the day, they want to talk about pure corruption, as they often do, let me touch on a few of them.

There were the Conservative anti-terrorism scandal, the Conservative Phoenix scandal, the Conservative G8 spending scandal and the Conservative ETS scandal. Interestingly enough, the ETS scandal was a \$400-million scandal that involved a minister. Members should google it and find out. Maybe then the Conservatives will look in a mirror and react to their own behaviour. There was the Conservative F-35 scandal, the Conservative Senate scandal and the Conservative election scandals, more than one. We will remember the robocalls and one of the Conservative MPs walking out in leg cuffs. They should not talk to us about scandals. They should look in a mirror.

This is an issue the government has been on top of. This is an issue that should be going to the PROC committee. At the end of the day, the government would be doing a disservice to the RCMP, the Auditor General and Canadians by just giving in to the Conservatives' bullying and what they feel they are entitled to. I would suggest that this needs to come to an end and be given over to PROC so we can start dealing with issues that Canadians are dealing with.

We have had the introduction of bills like the Citizenship Act, the military court legislation, the rail and marine safety legislation and the online harms bill. Legislation was introduced earlier this morning. There is a lot on the agenda. Canadians want us working for them, not working for the Conservative Party's interests. I am asking members opposite to put Canadians ahead of their own political party. There is still a full year to go. Let us maximize that and get things done for Canadians.

• (1340)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if something is stolen from him, does the hon. member call the police or does he call a committee? We are talking about over \$480 million and 186 conflicts of interest that the Auditor General has identified, and with that, \$400 million of taxpayers' funding is gone, given to Liberal cronies, Liberal colleagues and people within that organization. All we are saying is to allow the RCMP the opportunity to read the documents unredacted.

If somebody steals something from the member, does he call the police or does he call a committee?

Privilege

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, where should I start? I think the best way to start is with what is taking place today.

The Conservative Party is asking, through a motion, to collect the unredacted documents and give them to the RCMP.

This is what the RCMP had to say about that tactic: “There is significant risk that the motion could be interpreted as a circumvention of normal investigative processes and Charter protections.”

That is not me saying this, but the RCMP. This is the body that the Conservatives want to give the information to. My God, how much simpler could it be to understand that? I do not understand why they do not understand how simple this issue is. The reason they do not understand it is they choose not to because they would rather play political games. They do not care about Canadians; they only care about the advancement of the Conservative Party. Shame on them.

• (1345)

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, what I am hearing is a little like a five-year-old telling his mother that it is no big deal if he stole the piggy bank from the other guy, because three years ago the other guy threw sand at him in the park. Honestly, that is what it sounds like. It makes no sense.

I am going to remind my colleague of something. In 2010, former Prime Minister Harper fought a very similar battle to not release to the House documents on Afghan detainees that were classified as secret. He lost that battle. The Speaker at the time, Mr. Milliken, reminded everyone of the supremacy of the House of Commons over the government and asked it to produce all the documents. That is what the Speaker of the House has said this time.

Why are the Liberals stubbornly refusing to produce the documents when the House has demanded that they do so?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it would help a great deal if the members opposite would stand up and say, before they comment, that they disagree with the RCMP and Canada's Auditor General with respect to the Conservative tactic. They should at least be honest with Canadians and tell them that they disagree with the RCMP and the Auditor General, and that they do not care about the Charter of Rights and the Constitution. If you insist on the Conservative spin, what you are doing is walking on the rights and processes of individuals that have been well established. The RCMP and the Auditor General, which are both independent offices, have made that very clear. If the member would like, I can share the letter with her.

The Deputy Speaker: I just want to remind individuals to go through the Chair when having this debate.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Fleetwood—Port Kells.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the question is if there is wrongdoing, somebody needs to be punished. There are allegations, of course, but nothing has been proven.

I would say this to my hon. colleague. When the RCMP tells us that it does not need the material the Conservatives want produced and that it cannot use the material that would be provided if the Conservative motion were to succeed, what should we take from that on how best to proceed with the kind of investigation that people seem to be calling for?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is to allow our independent offices and agencies to do what they are supposed to do. We have an RCMP agency that is recognized around the world as second to, I would suggest, no other agency or law enforcement group. It knows its stuff. It knows what it is doing. I think Canadians have more confidence in the RCMP as an institution than they have in the Conservative Party, on this file at the very least. I am trying to be kind here.

I would suggest that we let individuals do the job they are supposed to be doing on this issue and allow more discussion in standing committees. That is why we have standing committees, to be able to go through the documents. That is where our Auditor General and the RCMP have made presentations. They provide all forms of opportunities to ensure accountability and transparency. I am a little concerned about the Bloc, but it is up to the Conservative Party, in particular, to stop playing political games at the cost of the interests of Canadians and start looking at ways in which we can support Canadians, not play games with them at a great expense.

• (1350)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of clarifications and then a simple question for the member opposite.

First of all, the Liberal government is pretending to care about people's charter rights, which would be new if it were believable. This is the government that has violated all of them, including freedom of expression and mobility rights. We can talk about the illegal emergency measures act, and we can go on and on. The member also alluded to the fact that there are no other Conservatives who want to speak to the motion, and that is why we have amendments and subamendments. I have not had a chance to speak to this privilege debate, and I would love to do so. Those are my clarifications.

The Auditor General says there are 186 conflicts of interest with the \$400 million that was given to people's companies. The whistleblower said there was criminality involved. If the Liberal government really believes there is nothing to see here, why will it not produce the papers?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the government has cooperated and produced the papers. They have been produced, just as Brian Mulroney and other levels of government have done in the past. The issue for the Conservatives is that they are saying there are redactions in the papers. That happens in government. Now the Conservatives have said that they will force those unredacted papers and go against what the RCMP and the Auditor General are saying. Why is that? It is because they want to play a political game of political cheap shots.

Privilege

I look forward to hearing the member's comments. I would encourage every member in the opposition, when they stand up, to start their remarks by indicating that they do not support the recommendations of or the concerns raised by the RCMP and the Auditor General. Based on that, we can recognize that they do not support the Charter of Rights or our Constitution because, if they did, they would be listening to what those independent offices have to say. If they are not going to listen to what those independent offices have to say, then they cannot try to tell me that they are supporting the Charter of Rights. I will not buy that.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a number of my constituents have contacted me regarding this issue, and it is important that we address this series of troubling events, which have not only shaken the foundation of our parliamentary democracy, but also revealed a disturbing pattern of corruption within the Liberal government, highlighting a consistent disregard for the principles of transparency and accountability, which are the bedrock of our democratic system.

In 2018, going back that far, the SNC-Lavalin scandal is not just a tale of corporate misconduct, but a glaring example of political interference at the highest levels of our government. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the Liberal government attempted to undermine the rule of law for political gain. The heart of this scandal lies in the actions of the Prime Minister and his office, which exerted undue pressure on then attorney general Jody Wilson-Raybould to intervene in the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin. This engineering giant faced serious charges of fraud and corruption, yet the Prime Minister sought to offer it a deferred prosecution agreement, effectively allowing it to escape full accountability. This move was not only unethical, but also a blatant attempt to protect Liberal interests at the expense of justice.

The fallout from this scandal was significant. It made Canada an ethical pariah in the eyes of its international peers. There are consequences, and it led to the resignation of key cabinet ministers. Jody Wilson-Raybould and Jane Philpott could no longer stand by a government that prioritized political expediency over integrity. The Ethics Commissioner's report was damning, concluding that the Prime Minister had indeed violated the Conflict of Interest Act by improperly pressuring the attorney general. This is not the leadership Canadians deserve. It is our duty, as His Majesty's loyal opposition, to hold the Liberal government accountable and ensure that such abuses of power are never repeated.

The WE Charity scandal was another example of the Liberal government's pattern of corruption. The Liberals awarded a \$912-million contract to WE Charity to administer a government program. It was later revealed that WE Charity had close ties to the Prime Minister and his family, as well as former finance minister Bill Morneau. The controversy led to multiple parliamentary committee investigations and significant political fallout, including Morneau's resignation. The scandal again damaged the public's trust in the Liberal government and led to calls for greater transparency and accountability in government contracting.

Next, we turn to the incident involving the Winnipeg lab. Here we witnessed a civil servant being called to the bar of the House for failing to produce documents. This extraordinary action highlighted the importance of parliamentary oversight and the need for civil

servants to comply with requests for information. The subsequent election, unnecessarily called, to thwart this initiative further demonstrated the lengths to which some will go to avoid accountability.

More recently, we have seen the case of GC Strategies, where the refusal to answer questions at committee led to the principal of the company being brought to the bar and questioned by Parliament, despite attempts by some members, notably from the Liberal Party, to give this individual a pass due to the stress he had said this caused him. I am sure all grifters were awaiting the outcome of that. This incident serves as a reminder that no individual organization is above the scrutiny of the House. The Auditor General revealed that the development of the ArriveCan app, initially estimated to cost around \$80,000, ultimately ballooned to approximately \$60 million. The exact final cost remains unclear due to poor record keeping, highlighting significant issues with financial management and transparency under these Liberals.

Now, we are confronted with the \$400-million scandal involving a conflict of interest uncovered by the Auditor General. This scandal revolves around a now defunct foundation responsible for distributing federal funds for green technology projects. The Auditor General's report identified 186 conflicts of interest in contracts tied to the fund with money allegedly funnelled to companies in which board members had vested interests. The Speaker ruled that the government had not fully complied with an order from the House to provide documents related to the foundation. As a result, the Speaker demanded the production of these documents before any other business of the House could be undertaken. This decisive action underscores the seriousness of the allegations and the need for immediate transparency.

● (1355)

The Auditor General of Canada has found that the Prime Minister turned Sustainable Development Technologies Canada into a slush fund for Liberal insiders. The Auditor General's findings are damning: \$334 million, 82% of the funding approved by the board over a five-year period, was allocated to projects in which board members held a conflict of interest. An additional \$59 million was given to projects outside the mandate of the foundation, breaking contribution agreements and conflict of interest laws. The Auditor General made it clear that the blame for this scandal falls on the industry minister who did not sufficiently monitor the contracts that were given to Liberal insiders. Where is the minister's accountability to the House?

Statements by Members

These events remind Canadians that Liberals cannot be trusted with the public purse. There was ad scam, SNC-Lavalin, Winnipeg labs, WE Charity and arrive scam, and now there is the SDTC green slush fund. Hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars were funnelled to the Liberals and their friends.

Obstructing, refusing to co-operate, interference and manipulation are the hallmarks of gangsters and Liberals. We are faced with a governing body that is holding onto the last shred of power, refusing to turn over the documents that the Speaker has instructed them to turn over. These events, collectively, paint a troubling picture of a system in need of reform.

As representatives of the people, it is our duty to uphold these principles and to take decisive action when they are threatened. This is Parliament's role, and the flimsy excuse that it could violate charter rights is nonsense. Were that the actual case, the House would lose relevance. The country is going broke while Liberal insiders are stuffing taxpayer funds into their pockets, and the government is doing all it can to ensure Canadians do not see that.

I ask my colleagues in all parties if they really want Canadians to view their role here as elected parliamentarians as irrelevant. If some puppet in the Department of Justice, at the request of the Prime Minister, made parliamentarians' job irrelevant, we should stand up and say so. There should be no more. This is something we have to address.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[*English*]

CANADA CARBON REBATE

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the course of the past year, I have had the privilege of representing the people of Winnipeg South Centre.

One of the things I appreciate most about this job is the opportunity presented to us to receive feedback from constituents. The feedback I have received from those I represent in Winnipeg South Centre is loud and clear on the topic of climate change. They want action.

I have good news. The Canada carbon rebate will land in the bank accounts of Manitobans once again on October 15. On Tuesday, a Manitoba family of four will receive \$300 because of that Canada carbon rebate. There is more. Despite Conservative opposition, we have doubled the top-up for families living in rural areas, retroactive to April, so it is a double-double rural top-up.

The best part is that because big polluters pay the most, the vast majority of Canadians receive more back through the Canada carbon rebate and those who pollute less save even more. This is fighting climate change and, for the first time in our history, Canada is on track to meet its climate goals.

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is World Mental Health Day, and it is my absolute pleasure to highlight the critical work of the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health, or CAMIMH, a coalition of 18 national mental health organizations representing Canadians with lived experience with mental illness and their care providers.

Each year, CAMIMH celebrates the champions of mental health, individuals who have made a powerful, positive impact on the mental health of Canadians. Earlier today, CAMIMH recognized this year's seven champions, including my good friend and colleague, my neighbour to the north, the member of Parliament for Edmonton Riverbend.

These seven extraordinary individuals have demonstrated unparalleled dedication to improving mental health and substance use care across Canada. Through their relentless efforts and innovative approaches, they have made a profound impact on the lives of countless Canadians.

I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating this year's champions and offering them our heartfelt gratitude for their enduring contribution to our great country.

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CANADA CARBON REBATE

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have good news. Guess what is happening next week in Nova Scotia? The Canada carbon rebate will be distributed to Nova Scotians and deposited into their bank accounts on October 15.

A family in Nova Scotia will receive \$206 through the Canada carbon rebate, but it does not stop there. For a family living in rural Cape Breton, like in my riding of Sydney—Victoria, its October rebate will include a double rural top-up for a total amount of \$288.

Thanks to our climate plan, we are now on track to meet our climate goals for the first time in Canadian history. We are reducing our emissions, growing our economy and tackling inflation, all while making life more affordable for Canadians.

* * *

[*Translation*]

OLYMPIC SCHOOL GAMES

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, from October 23 to 31, 45 athletes aged 15 to 17 from across Quebec and 22 coaches and staff will participate in the Olympic School Games sponsored by the International School Sport Federation in Bahrain. About 60 athletes and their parents are here on Parliament Hill.

Many of them got here after countless hours of training and many sacrifices, all with the goal of enjoying an experience so unique that I am quite jealous.

These athletes will be wearing the fleur-de-lis and representing Quebec internationally, dressed in the colours of a country in the making.

My two sons, Jules and Léon, are athletes. Thanks to the Fondation Équipe-Québec, the dream of representing Quebec on the international stage is now within their grasp.

I have a message for the delegation of young athletes from Quebec. They are trailblazers and torchbearers. When they compete, an entire nation will be cheering them on for achieving the dream of wearing Quebec's colours.

They already have their medal.

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CANADA CARBON REBATE

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my friends in Nova Scotia will receive their Canada carbon tax rebates in their bank accounts on October 15. A family in Nova Scotia will receive \$206 through the Canada carbon rebate.

We have also made the Canada carbon rebate fairer for rural residents by doubling the top-up for rural and small communities, retroactive to April.

The Conservative leader is preoccupied with giving his friends in big oil a free pass and eliminating rebates for Canadians. His refusal to fight climate change and his anti-climate slogans will end up costing Canadians a lot more.

Our government will continue to reduce carbon emissions while improving the lives of Canadians.

* * *

● (1405)

[English]

MONSIGNOR KEVIN MALONEY

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to honour the life of a remarkable community leader, Monsignor Kevin Maloney, who, after 52 years as an ordained priest, left us last month.

Father Kevin, as he was best known, dedicated his life to serving with compassion and kindness, touching the hearts of countless people in Cornwall and SDG. His contributions to the Catholic Church and to our entire community were immeasurable, and his recognition as the 2018 Cornwall Citizen of the Year was one of the many accolades he truly deserved.

Father Kevin was more than a leader; he was a beacon of hope and joy, known for his infectious laughter and kind spirit. Whether at church or at community suppers or charity events, he brought laughter and light to every room that he entered.

Father Kevin will be deeply missed. As we reflect on his life and the impact he made, I will say this: At the pearly gates up above, God had an easy answer in welcoming one of Cornwall's best angels to heaven. May my friend rest in peace. I thank him for a life of service.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

CANADA CARBON REBATE

Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the next Canada carbon rebate arrives in Ontarians' bank accounts on October 15. Ontario families of four will receive \$280 next week. This year, families in Ottawa—Vanier and other Ontario families are receiving a total of \$1,120.

The Conservatives want to let their wealthy friends off the hook and make the middle class pay the price. The Conservatives know that middle-class Canadians will pay the price when the Conservatives cut the carbon rebate, they will pay the price when the Conservatives cut affordable child care and they will pay for the cost of climate change when the Conservatives do nothing to fight it.

Facts are facts. The middle class cannot afford the Conservatives' cuts.

* * *

[English]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, inflation is down, interest rates are down and our emissions are going down too. Our economy is growing and the Canada carbon rebate is making life more affordable.

Today the PBO released a report that clears the air for Canadians and calls out the Conservative campaign of misinformation. Big polluters pay and more money goes back to Canadians.

On October 15, Canadians will receive their Canada carbon rebate and in my home province of Ontario, a family of four will receive a rebate of \$280 every three months, for a total of \$1,120 this year. However, the Conservatives would rather rip up the rebate and ignore climate change altogether, just to help out their rich oil and gas friends.

Unlike Conservatives who fan the flames of conspiracies, as wildfires, hurricanes and floods force Canadians from their homes, we are focused on the facts on this side, just like the facts in this report, like the facts that show that climate change is real, like the fact that most Canadians want governments to fight climate change.

Our policies not only protect the environment and nature, but also ensure that people on our planet are protected into the future.

The Speaker: We invite the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay to please not to take the floor unless recognized by the Chair.

The hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies.

*Statements by Members***INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY**

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

You have ruled, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP-Liberals have violated a House order to turn over evidence to the police for a criminal investigation into the latest Liberal \$400-million scandal, effectively obstructing justice.

The Auditor General's findings were that Liberal appointees at Sustainable Development Technology Canada gave nearly \$400 million to their own companies, with over 186 conflicts of interest, at a time when Canadians cannot afford to eat, heat or house themselves.

The radical environment minister is directly involved in the scandal, as he was the former lobbyist for a board member's company, where he brought in \$110 million for the company, a company in which the minister still owns shares.

The NDP-Liberals' refusal to respect your ruling, Mr. Speaker, has paralyzed all our work to address the doubling of housing costs, food inflation, crime and chaos. Will the NDP-Liberals end the cover-up, give proof to the police so we can get accountability for corruption and Parliament can get back to work for Canadians?

* * *

● (1410)

CANADA CARBON REBATE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is good news and bad news.

First, the good news is that four times every year a carbon rebate goes out. Therein lies the good news that on Tuesday, October 15 hundreds of dollars will be going to the households in Winnipeg North and in so many other constituencies.

Now, for the bad news: There was a time when the Conservatives actually supported putting a tax on carbon, but they flip-flopped on that, and the leader of the far right today says that he is going to get rid of the carbon rebate. That is most unfortunate, because Canadians should be encouraged to participate in a positive way in regard to our environment, and giving the carbon rebate is a good thing.

The Conservatives should flip-flop again and get behind the carbon rebates.

* * *

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are well aware that the NDP-Liberals are not worth the cost, crime or corruption. At issue is the Auditor General's findings that the Liberal appointees to the green slush fund gave nearly \$400 million tax dollars to their own companies, with over 186 conflicts of interest, at a time when Canadians cannot afford to eat, heat or house themselves.

You have ruled, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP-Liberals have violated a House order to turn over evidence for a criminal investigation

into this latest scandal, effectively obstructing justice. The government's refusal to respect your ruling has paralyzed Parliament, pushing aside all of our work to address the rising costs of housing, food inflation, and the issues of crime and chaos running rampant in our streets.

Time is up. It is time for NDP-Liberals to end the cover-up, end corruption and provide the documents so that Parliament can get working for Canadians.

* * *

CARBON TAX

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. Carbon taxes are up, and because of the Prime Minister's radical obsession with taxing Canadians into poverty, their costs are way up.

Thankfully, time is up on his carbon taxes. We just received further confirmation that the carbon tax does blow a huge hole in the wallets of Canadians. The government's own budget watchdog has said that in Saskatchewan the average family will be robbed of over \$2,000 every single year once the Prime Minister finishes increasing the carbon tax. That \$2,000 could be used for food, for heating or for other essentials. All of this is for what? The radical socialist environment minister publicly said his own department does not even track whether the carbon tax reduces emissions.

It is clear, more than ever, that it is time to axe the tax. Since the Prime Minister refuses to do what is right, Canadians are demanding a carbon tax election. They can take comfort in knowing that Conservatives will axe the tax once and for all.

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CANADA CARBON REBATE

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have good news. On Tuesday, October 15, the day after Thanksgiving, the residents in my constituency of Davenport will be giving thanks when they look at their bank accounts and see their quarterly Canada carbon rebate amount of \$280 for a family of four, or \$140 for individuals.

Canadians expect their federal government to take ambitious action on climate change, and thanks to the Canada carbon rebate and our climate plan, we are now on track to reach our climate goals for the first time in Canadian history.

We have reduced our emissions by 8%, and Canada's 2024 national inventory report shows that Canada is on track to meet our emission reduction goals for 2026 and also on track for our 2030 targets.

While the Conservatives are focused on empty slogans and want to rip up the carbon rebates, our government is focused on growing our economy, bringing inflation down and making life more affordable for Canadians.

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WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on World Mental Health Day to acknowledge a sobering reality. In any given year, one in five Canadians experiences mental health issues.

Federal public safety employees who operate in a high-stress, unpredictable environment often work at great risk to their own mental health. That is why I tabled Bill C-357, an act aimed at creating presumptive mental health injury coverage for all federal public safety employees. This bill is a response to the long-standing call from the Union of Safety and Justice Employees to ensure that all federal public safety personnel have access to workers' compensation for mental health-related injuries.

My bill seeks to rectify the current inequitable system that leaves federal government employees' benefits and entitlements dependent on the province in which they reside. Public safety employees work tirelessly to keep Canadians safe. It is our duty as MPs to help keep them safe as well by passing this bill.

On this World Mental Health Day, let us commit to ensuring mental health supports for all. We stand with our dedicated public safety employees.

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● (1415)

[Translation]

WORLD EGG DAY

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Friday, October 11 is World Egg Day.

Eggs are an extremely nutritious food produced by local farmers who are exceptional, both because of the quality of their production and the solidarity of their chosen marketing system, supply management. We have been waiting since June 2023 for the Senate to pass the bill to protect this collective marketing system. It is time for the Senate to do just that.

Eggs are a tasty food that can be eaten in many ways. Supply management is essential to the economic vitality of our regions and to keeping our family businesses alive. They go hand in hand. Can someone explain that to the few senators who do not care?

Statements by Members

There were over 200 supply-managed producers from all over Canada on the Hill today. They are asking for respect and for the passage of this bill. Can we show some respect for our farmers? The Senate needs to do the work, and why not tomorrow, on World Egg Day?

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[English]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

We have heard it a thousand times before from Canadians in all walks of life, at the doors and in our communities, but today the Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed what we have known all along: The carbon tax has been taking more money away from Canadians than what they get back through rebates.

Nova Scotians are going to be paying a whopping \$1,215 more after the NDP-Liberals quadruple the carbon tax. For Canadians, this makes all the difference in the world. Canadians, including Nova Scotians, are trying to put food on the table, gas in their car and a roof over their head, all at a time when they are worried about putting heating fuel in their home for winter. All 10 provinces are now opposed to the crushing carbon tax.

It is time for the Prime Minister to show some courage and call a carbon tax election. Will the Prime Minister call an election today?

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH FOR SAFETY AND JUSTICE WORKERS

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October 10 is World Mental Health Day, and today the Union of Safety and Justice Employees is here, shedding light on the need for more robust mental health support for those who work to keep our communities safe. From the RCMP to correctional services workers, the USJE represents over 19,000 safety and justice employees across Canada.

As with first responders, their exposure to traumatic events and graphic materials can have lasting impacts on them and their families. The pins we are wearing today are a symbol of the sacrifice and service these individuals make and the toll their work takes on their mental health.

I thank all the safety and justice workers across Canada for their service. We are committed to working together to ensure that there are adequate supports put in place so they can continue their good work and take care of their mental health.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the Liberal Prime Minister, Canada has experienced a shocking rise in anti-Semitism and an increase in hate crimes of 165%. His divisive politics, where he pits one group of Canadians against another, only makes matters worse. It also does not help that he takes years to list terrorist groups on the list of banned organizations, allowing them to fundraise and recruit here in Canada.

This one should be easy, though. The Houthis are attacking civilian ships and innocent civilians, and our allies have already banned them, so will the government do the right thing and list this group as a terrorist organization today?

• (1420)

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we unequivocally condemn the acts in Vancouver that were launched by Samidoun. Acts like burning the flag, chanting “death to Canada”, denying the events of October 7 and celebrating terrorism are unacceptable in this country. With respect to Samidoun, we heard the Minister of Public Safety reference this yesterday. We have asked for an expedited review, because decisions of this importance are always made on the advice of national security agencies.

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CARBON PRICING

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they continue to drag their feet.

There has been another blow to the Prime Minister's carbon tax scheme. A new report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer shows yet again that Canadians are worse off under the tax. Here is what the total bill will be when the NDP-Liberals finish quadrupling this tax: It will cost people in Ontario \$1,400; it will cost people \$1,500 in Newfoundland and a whopping \$2,000 in Saskatchewan. Canadians are already struggling with higher costs, higher grocery prices and higher mortgage rates. The last thing they need is another bill from a useless carbon tax.

If the government is so sure that Canadians support the tax, why not let the people decide in a carbon tax election?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me read from the first paragraph of the PBO's report: “Considering only the fiscal impact of the federal fuel charge, PBO estimates that the average household in each of the backstop provinces...in 2030-31 will see a net gain, receiving more from the Canada Carbon Rebate than the total amount they pay in the federal fuel charge...and related Goods and Services Tax.”

The Leader of the Opposition should apologize to Canadians for misleading them all these months.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister might want to read the rest of the report, be-

cause in the quote he cited, he focused on a very key word, “only” the direct costs. When we factor in all the economic costs, it costs the Canadian household \$1,400. Canadians are net losers under the carbon tax scheme, and the minister knows it.

If the minister is so sure that Canadians want the government to quadruple the tax, why not let the people decide in a carbon tax election?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me read from another paragraph from the report: “Moreover, in 2030-31, for all backstop provinces, we estimate that the average household in each income quintile will see a net gain—except for the average household in the highest income quintile”.

The Leader of the Opposition wants to take money away from the middle class and poorer Canadians to protect his rich CEO friends. That is what he is doing.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is trying very hard to get Canadians not to understand the details, but the details and the facts are that the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed what Canadians already know: They are being robbed by a carbon tax that is driving up the cost of groceries, gas and everyday essentials. In fact, a family in Prince Edward Island will pay almost \$1,200 a year when the NDP-Liberals quadruple the carbon tax.

Canadians do not support the carbon tax. We know that 10 provinces do not support the carbon tax. Will the Prime Minister listen to Canadians and call a carbon tax election?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talks about the agricultural sector. Let us talk about the climate impacts on the agricultural sector. Droughts in 2021 resulted in a 27% decline in Canada's grain production. Over the last decade, over 200 Canadian farmers have experienced cost increases and revenue loss from climate impacts.

The member and his party never talk about the impacts of climate change on farmers and on the price of food in Canada. They want to try to make us believe that climate change is not happening. It is happening, and on this side of the House, we are here for Canadians.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is either living in denial or is purposefully misleading Canadians, because the Parliamentary Budget Office's report is clear: It costs Canadians more to pay the carbon tax than what they get back in rebates. If the minister does not believe me, I would encourage him to read the parliamentary budget report. In the interest of time, let me help out: Page 18 states that Canadians are worse off paying the carbon tax, period. That is the fact.

Again, if the minister is so confident that Canadians support the carbon tax, why are they so afraid to call a carbon tax election?

• (1425)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member points to indirect costs, so let us talk about indirect costs: loss of revenue of \$150 million in 2023 due to flooding in farmlands across this country. Dairy farmers, the Egg Farmers of Canada, grain growers and the Canola Council all support our plan to fight climate change. It is time for the Conservative Party of Canada to come on board.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for years now, the Bloc Québécois has been calling for the Senate to be abolished. It is an outdated institution and there is nothing democratic about it. We said it was useless, but we were wrong. It is not useless; it is harmful.

To the Senate, the will of elected representatives does not matter. Senators can decide not to respect that will without any problem or consequence. Bill C-282 has the support of all the parties in the House. However, two unelected Liberal senators are subverting democracy by blocking the bill.

When will the Liberals call them to order?

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again I was so pleased to be at a rally supporting supply management with my colleagues today on the Hill. It is important to note that supply management was initiated by a Liberal government just over 50 years ago. Then, we supported supply management, and today, we support supply management. Being a dairy farmer in Prince Edward Island, I am fully aware of the value of supply management, and I urge the Senate to pass Bill C-282.

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, supply management is the farming model that ensures a secure future for our dairy, egg and poultry farmers. It is a model that we must protect. Everyone agrees on that except for senators Boehm and Harder, who think they are wiser and smarter than everyone here, than our farmers, than the millions of people that we represent in the House. They are part of the global intellectual elite.

Who in this government is going to bring these two Liberal geniuses back down to earth and get them to stop obstructing democracy?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, my colleague is well aware that we stand with dairy, poultry and egg farmers. We support the supply management system. We are defending it and will continue to do so. We made a promise and we are committed to not giving up any more market share.

Oral Questions

However, imagine what would have happened if it had been a Conservative government negotiating with President Trump. Where would our supply management system be then?

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[English]

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, get this: A new study, recently released, shows that 94% of Canadians are worried about the high cost of groceries. With Thanksgiving coming around the corner, they are worried that greedy CEOs are going to rip them off when they go grocery shopping. I get why the Conservatives voted against our plan to lower grocery prices; their chief strategist is a chief lobbyist for none other than Loblaw.

However, why did the Liberals vote against making sure we lower prices for Canadians? Why do they let greedy CEOs rip off Canadians?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thought the leader of the NDP would stand up and say “thank you” to the Liberal government. We have introduced the most comprehensive reform on competition in Canada's history. I want to congratulate him for his contribution. Now we will have less concentration and more choice, and we will stabilize prices in Canada.

More than that, the member should rejoice that now in Canada we have a grocery code of conduct that is going to help our farmers across Canada and that is going to help our small retailers. The NDP should thank us for fighting for Canadians every day.

• (1430)

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, did I just hear Galen Weston speaking?

[Translation]

According to the Bank of Canada, people are increasingly relying on their credit cards to pay for their rent and groceries. Jennifer Smith, a Toronto woman, told CBC, “It's a scary situation to be in, but I'd rather miss a couple of payments and damage my credit, than not have a house, or fed kids.” That is life under a Liberal government.

What will it take for the Liberals to wake up?

Oral Questions

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that the leader of the NDP should apologize. The only one who spoke out against Galen Weston in the House is the Liberal government, when we asked all the industry CEOs to come to Ottawa and explain themselves. The leader of the NDP should be happy because we not only improved the competition system in Canada, but we also included what he wanted because we know how hard things are for Canadians. That is why we are going to fight every day to help Canadians with the cost of groceries. We are going to help them and their families with the school food program for children across the country. That is what a responsible government does.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up, time is up and Canadians are fed up.

The new PBO report has the same result: Canadians pay more into the carbon tax scam than what they get back in phony rebates. An average Alberta family will pay nearly \$2,000 in carbon tax after this radical Liberal-NDP government quadruples the carbon tax. That is why 10 provinces oppose the carbon tax scam. They know it is like the Prime Minister and not worth the cost.

If the Liberals are so sure about this carbon tax scam, why not call a carbon tax election now so Canadians can decide to axe the tax for good?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think everyone in this House and Canadians watching should take everything the finance critic says about the economy with a big grain of salt. It was the finance critic who told us that if we paused federal taxes, people in his province could save \$1,000. This is without telling them that they would have to drive from the North Pole to the South Pole to benefit from those wonderful savings.

I think we should all be very careful with what the member says about the economy in this House.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will not take any lessons from the minister, who let Jasper burn because of his incompetence.

I will send him over a copy of the PBO's report with some diagrams and pictures so that maybe he can understand. He can flip to page 18, table 3, which clearly shows that a majority of Canadians pay more into this scam than what they get back in phony rebates.

Two million Canadians are going to food banks in a single month. One in four Canadians is skipping meals because of the Liberals' carbon tax scam. If they are so sure about this carbon tax scam, let us go to a carbon tax election now so Canadians can kick this costly carbon tax coalition to the curb for good.

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all suffer when we see folks in our communities who are struggling. There is more work to be done, which is exactly why, on this side of the House, we continue

to fight for Canadians, to fight for high-quality child care, to fight for the Canada child benefit and to fight for the environment and the carbon rebate. However, let us not kid ourselves. We know that the programs Canadians rely on would be in danger if the Conservatives had their way.

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed again that the carbon tax costs Canadians more than they get back in rebates. When the NDP-Liberals quadruple the carbon tax, families in Ontario will be paying more than \$1,400 a year in carbon taxes. This makes everything more expensive: gas, groceries and home heating.

The NDP-Liberal government and its carbon tax are not worth the cost. In fact, all 10 provinces are opposed to this costly coalition's carbon tax.

Will the Prime Minister give Canadians what they want and call a carbon tax election?

● (1435)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we read the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report from today, we will see that he further confirmed once again that eight out of 10 Canadian families get more in the carbon rebate than they pay in the price on pollution. It was also clear from today's report that the economic cost of pollution is not being factored in. That cost is \$34 billion per year, and it does not include the billions of dollars that disaster mitigation costs.

Every time there is a disaster in this country, it costs Canadian taxpayers. We are there to take climate action.

The Speaker: I invite the honourable member for Edmonton West to please keep his own counsel until he has the floor to speak before the House.

The hon. member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, Liberal logic is on display and the math does not add up. It seems the Liberals have a hard time with basic concepts like reality or how money works, so let me make this really simple. Table 3 on page 18 of the PBO report shows what the cost of the carbon tax is. I can send the minister a copy. The PBO says that Canadians are paying more in carbon tax and GST on top of the carbon tax than they get back in rebates.

Oral Questions

The reality is that people have less money to pay for food, fuel and home heating. Enough is enough. Will the Prime Minister call a carbon tax election?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, enough is enough, and 300 economists have said it. The rich pay more and middle-class Canadians pay less. Everyone gets the same rebate.

The rich pay more than they receive. Middle-class Canadians receive more than they pay. It is that simple.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is making a mockery of your authority and that of the House.

More than \$400 million of taxpayers' money was given to Liberal cronies, and the Prime Minister still refuses to hand over documentary evidence to the RCMP, obstructing justice. Canadians know full well that a person with nothing to hide willingly co-operates with law enforcement.

Who has the courage to stand up in the House and tell us why?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the member is saying is wrong.

The government has already handed over thousands of pages of documents in response to this motion. Your ruling was clear, Mr. Speaker. Because it was unprecedented, you said that it was an abuse of the House's power and that we must send this motion to committee for study.

Mr. Speaker, we respect police independence. We would like to know why the Conservatives do not.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if I understood correctly, the government House leader just said that both you and my party are abusing our authority. Right now, however, I think your ruling is quite clear, and that is what is currently blocking the work of Parliament.

The Prime Minister and his government are refusing to provide documents that would shed light on a scandal involving \$400 million of taxpayers' money, when Canada has so many other problems that need to be solved right now. People are struggling. They need our help. Parliament, however, is unable to do its job because this government refuses to obey your order and the order of members of this House.

Why?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member asks why. It is because we are not a banana republic. In Canada, politicians do not tell the RCMP what to do. Politicians have to listen to the RCMP. The RCMP has already spoken. It does not want those documents because of the risk it would run if it used them. In fact, its essential investigative work could be undermined if the banana republic

politicians in the Conservative Party insisted on forwarding these data and this information to the RCMP.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, farmers from all over were in Ottawa this morning. They came from Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, everywhere. They came to show their support for Bill C-282. Representatives from all parties were there, too: the Greens, the NDP, the Conservatives and the Liberals. Everyone was there to support the Bloc Québécois bill, which has become a bill everyone can get behind.

Everyone, that is, except Mr. Boehm and Mr. Harder, two unelected senators crusading against our farmers.

Who is going to bring them into line?

• (1440)

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we completely agree with our Bloc Québécois colleague. We support the supply management system.

We are asking senators to move swiftly.

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, some senators even came here this morning to apologize for the Senate's conduct, and rightly so.

Two senators, Mr. Harder and Mr. Boehm, who were appointed by the Prime Minister—not elected—are undermining the democratic process. These two senators are more easily swayed by the arguments of big lobbyists than by the will of the people's elected representatives. To do nothing is to allow democracy to be flouted.

What does the government intend to do to get Bill C-282 on supply management, which was passed by a majority vote, out of the Senate?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we support the supply management system and want to protect it. It is important to our regions, for one thing, and it is important to our economy. We urge senators to move swiftly and to respect and recognize the fact that a vast majority of the House wants this bill to move forward.

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Senator Boehm said he cannot study the supply management bill because, in case people had not noticed, there are a few wars going on. He and Mr. Harder, our two future Nobel Peace Prize winners, are going to start by ending war. Then, if they have any time left, they will use their superior intellect to take a closer look at the supply management bill. Now that is what I call arrogant.

Enough with the nonsense. Will the government call Mr. Harder and Mr. Boehm to order and push Bill C-282 forward immediately?

Oral Questions

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our Liberal government supports the supply management system and has committed to making no further concessions. We urge senators to move swiftly, but they are independent senators.

I think the Bloc Québécois understands the concept.

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[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed once again that the carbon tax is costing Canadian families more than they are getting back in rebates. Once the NDP-Liberals quadruple the carbon tax, as they intend to do, the average family in Ontario will pay an additional tax, up to \$1,400. To Liberal elites that might not sound like a lot of money. The Prime Minister could probably find \$1,400 in between his couch cushions. However, to the average Canadian family, that is quite a lot of money.

When are we going to get the carbon tax election that Canadians desperately deserve?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Let me read again, Mr. Speaker, from the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report: "The general consensus among economists is that explicit carbon pricing is the most cost-effective approach to reducing [greenhouse gas] emissions".

The Conservative Party of Canada has no plan to fight climate change. It has no plan to adapt to the massive impacts of climate change, which are costing Canadians tens of billions of dollars. It has no plan for the economy. It has nothing to say about this conversation.

Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, you like to talk about civility and decorum. In the interests of civility and decorum, I would like to invite the minister to look at table 3 on page 18 of the PBO report, which details the overall cost of the carbon tax. Maybe when the environment minister reviews the report and table 3 on page 18, he will agree with me and most other Canadians that we need a carbon tax election now.

Will the minister review the table and come back to us and say when we are going to get the election that Canadians deserve?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the interest of clarity, I think Canadians would like to understand what the Conservatives plan to cut.

The member talks about families in Ontario. The Conservatives refuse to talk about the Canada child benefit, which puts thousands of dollars in the pockets of Canadian families every single year. They refuse to talk about child care, which saves Canadian families thousands of dollars every year. When they talk about the price on pollution, they conveniently omit that Canadian families get more money back than they put in. The Conservatives want to put their hands in the pockets of Canadians and take that money away.

• (1445)

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada confirmed today what millions of Canadians already know: While the rich are getting richer, the most vulnerable are falling further and further behind. Today, Stats Canada reported that the gap between the top 40% earners and the bottom 40% earners grew by nearly 50%. It reported that income inequity has never been higher in our country.

The government has a choice: Will it continue its agenda of causing misery across our country or finally call a carbon tax election?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Speaker, I recently got to meet a young mom named Madeleine from my community, who shared with me how important the Canada child benefit has been to her young family in these early days.

The Conservatives have made their position very clear. They would cut the Canada child benefit and leave the 4.3 million moms across this country like Madeleine without the support they need. That is what Conservative cuts look like.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the NDP gets to work, results follow. Thanks to NDP pressure, Premier Legault reversed his heartless decision to take dental care away from Quebeckers.

Now let us take a look at the Liberals' track record. Remember the Prime Minister's promises? He promised more doctors, more nurses and a health care system that works for everyone. Nine years later, 500,000 Quebeckers do not have a family doctor. Promises have been broken, and Canadians are paying the price. When will the Liberals get down to work to provide everyone with a doctor?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank and congratulate my NDP colleague from Montreal, as well as all the other NDP members, for their support of the Canadian dental care plan.

Together, we have made a huge difference, not least for Quebeckers. Some 800,000 Quebec seniors now have a Canadian dental care plan card, and 250,000 have been able to access affordable dental care, in some cases for the first time in many years. It was an extraordinary collaboration, and it produced major results for Quebec, even though the Conservative leader continues to say that this plan does not exist.

[English]

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Oral Questions

The Speaker: The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby should please not take the floor unless recognized by the House.

The hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week Canada's lawyers argued in federal court that first nations leaders are showing a lack of "maturity" in their fight for clean drinking water. That language is unbelievable: a lack of maturity. It is deeply offensive, paternalistic and discriminatory. Let us be clear and say that the lack of clean drinking water on reserve did not just happen. It is the result of decades of neglect from Conservatives and Liberals toward first nations.

Will the Prime Minister apologize on behalf of his lawyers for that deeply offensive language? Will he call off his lawyers, stop fighting Shamattawa and Tataskweyak and deliver clean water now?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just met with the chief from Tataskweyak a few hours ago. We talked about the importance of Bill C-61 and the work that Tataskweyak and the other communities have done on the legislation to ensure that we never go back to a time when well over 145 communities were suffering through long-term boil water advisories.

That is the work the government will continue to do in partnership with first nations leaders. I hope the NDP will see that this is important legislation that needs to get through the House and give it their full support.

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SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, climate change is an issue that affects us all. Small businesses are not immune to the devastating effects of a changing climate. Small businesses in my riding of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, such as Windfall Ecology Centre, have been contributing to the fight against climate change through the services they provide, the price on pollution program and so much more.

Can the Minister of Small Business tell Canadians about the measures our government has put in place to help all small businesses as they deal with the impacts of a changing climate and the fight against it?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Small Business, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a former small business entrepreneur myself, I understand the importance of affordability. This is why our government is delivering \$2.5 billion to close to 600,000 small- and medium-sized enterprises by the end of the year through the Canada carbon rebate. As I mentioned already, we have negotiated agreements with both Visa and Mastercard to reduce their interchange fees by up to 27%. This is a real, tangible difference that is going to help small businesses across this country. We are going to continue to fight climate change while supporting small businesses.

Happy Small Business Month.

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● (1450)

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the \$400-million corruption scandal that is the green slush fund, you ruled that the Canadian people have the absolute right to demand the production of unredacted documents to be given to the police. However, the government refuses Parliament's absolute authority. Parliament is the people. The absolute authority of Parliament is like someone's mom checking their room after they said they cleaned it. We might be able to hide one or two things, and the government may think that it will get off the hook, but Parliament is here to inspect and clean the House.

This is a messy House. When will the government clean it?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, the government has handed over thousands of pages of documents. However, the big issue here that I think Canadians are concerned about is that they know politicians should not be directing police. What is at issue here is the fact that the House has decided that it should be the judge and jury and the police should investigate something.

We have no problem with police investigations. In fact, of course, any government would respond to them. I would expect that any government of any stripe would react the same way we are today.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the police have already opened an investigation. This is just Parliament asking for documents to be turned over. It is the ask and the absolute rule of Parliament, and the government is refusing.

We can just think of it like a business. The government forgets that, in a business, it is the employee and the Canadian public are the owners. In the real world, if employees refused to hand over documents or hand over anything in an investigation, those employees would be fired.

Is the government just waiting to be fired by the Canadian public, or will it hand over the documents?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the real world, the police have to request warrants. They have to go through due process to get information. It is not up to parliamentarians and politicians to direct police because they have a political vendetta. Canadians expect due process, and they expect that politicians are here to protect their rights, not to get rid of their rights.

Oral Questions

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is so much Liberal corruption that Liberals are covering up their cover-up of the \$400 million of corruption in the Liberal green slush fund. The Speaker ruled that the NDP-Liberals violated the House order to turn the green slush fund documents over to the RCMP's criminal investigation. Obstruction of justice is the Liberals' middle name. They refused to turn over documents in the SNC scandal, in the WE Charity scandal, in the Winnipeg lab scandal and in the foreign interference scandal.

They should just end the corruption cover-up and turn the documents over to the RCMP. How bad is it?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every Canadian watching right now wants parliamentarians to do their job. The job of the opposition is to hold the government to account. The job of the opposition is not to direct the police. Members do not need to take my word for it. How about we hear from the commissioner of the RCMP himself, who said, "There is significant risk that the Motion could be interpreted as a circumvention of normal investigative processes and Charter protections." He went on to say, "In a free and democratic society, this ensures that the government cannot direct or influence the actions of law enforcement". We agree with the RCMP. It is time these guys started listening to the cops.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals blacked out so much in the documents that the Prime Minister's Office ran out of toner for the copiers. Apparently it is okay to turn blacked out documents that hide Liberal corruption over to the RCMP; that is not a constitutional issue. However, it is a constitutional issue to remove the redactions and expose the Liberal corruption. I have news for the minister: The Constitution does not exist to protect Liberals from criminal investigation.

Will the Liberals just stop their cover-up and their cover-up ad-diction and hand the unedited documents over to the RCMP?

• (1455)

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have some grave concerns with what the member opposite said, beginning with the fact that I assume he has actually not seen those documents. I am not sure what he is talking about, because the documents have been handed over.

What is of greater concern, and it was the RCMP that said it, is that the way the Conservatives are acting would actually compromise any police investigation because the evidence would not be considered. What is of concern is that they are interfering in an investigation and they are interfering in police independence, and Canadians should be rightly concerned that Conservative politicians want to direct the police.

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[Translation]

SENIORS

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, sometimes it seems like the Liberals want people to hate them. About 79% of the population wants old age security to be increased for seniors 65 to 74. Seventy-nine percent support means it is as popular as ice cream on a sunny day.

All seniors are calling on the government to stop dividing them into two classes. Every age group is also asking for this, including young people. Even the House stopped bickering for two minutes to ask for this. The Liberals are all alone.

Why are they insisting on withholding income from one million Quebecers?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to hear my colleague talk about people 65 to 74 when we know that she and her political party, the Bloc Québécois, teamed up with the Conservatives to oppose lowering the age of retirement from 67 to 65.

The members of the Bloc Québécois are talking about age 65 now, but not so long ago, they wanted us to retire at age 67.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, frankly, we are wondering why the Liberals are seeking a fourth term when their plan for society is to withhold income from one million Quebec seniors. They are out of touch, and the public is starting to notice.

We will say it again: The Liberals have until October 29 to pass Bill C-319 and increase the pension for people aged 65 to 74. Time is flying by, especially since the Senate is in no hurry to get things done these days.

Are the Liberals really that eager to defend their disregard for seniors to voters?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we would attach a little more credibility to what the separatist party opposite is saying if it had not acted openly and aggressively to oppose hundreds and hundreds of dollars in dental care for every senior in need, not only in Quebec, but across Canada, including 14,000 seniors in the member's own riding. There needs to be a little consistency here.

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INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, you have ruled that the NDP and Liberals violated a House order by refusing to turn evidence over to police for a criminal investigation into the latest \$400-million Liberal scandal. This is paralyzing Parliament. The Liberals' refusal to turn over these documents is an insult to the honesty of everyday citizens.

Will the Liberals put an end to the secrecy and hand the evidence over to law enforcement so that Parliament can work transparently in the interest of all Canadians?

Oral Questions

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think all Canadians should be concerned today. They should actually be worried, because what we are witnessing today, and have witnessed over the past few days, is worrying.

The Conservative Party wants to run the police. Imagine the situation we are in. The Conservative Party, with the Conservative leader at the helm, wants to direct the work of the RCMP.

The RCMP has been clear. There is a significant risk that the motion will be interpreted as circumventing normal investigative processes and Charter protections. We will fight to preserve democracy.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while Canadians are struggling, well-connected Liberal cronies have never had it so good.

The Auditor General identified major failures in SDTC's financing of SMEs. The organization betrayed its noble mission by using its \$1-billion budget to line certain people's pockets.

Will the Liberals finally give Canadians the transparency they deserve?

• (1500)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the people watching at home and those in the gallery today can see what the Conservatives are up to. The Conservatives now want to run the police in Canada. Just think how far things have come.

I challenge my colleague: 87% of clean tech companies in Canada received funding from SDTC. The reality is that it is a foundation that has helped SMEs in this country.

I think that today is a solemn occasion. The day we let the Conservatives dictate how the police work, I think everyone in the House should be concerned.

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the House is paralyzed by yet another corruption scandal involving the current Liberal government. This must be in its DNA. We are talking \$400 million and 186 conflicts of interest at a time when Canadians are struggling to put food on the table, heat their homes and keep a roof over their heads. Liberal insiders, on the other hand, keep getting richer. The Liberals keep protecting themselves and their friends by hiding documents.

When will the government hand the documents over to the police and get the taxpayers' \$400 million back?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians are concerned about what we have been witnessing over the past few days. The fact is, what we are seeing in the House is the Conservatives' attempt to put themselves in charge of the police in this country. What the Conservatives are trying to do is unprecedented in the history of Canada.

Those of us on this side of the House are acting responsibly. We have already handed the documents over to the police. The Auditor General investigated. Independent reports have been produced.

Meanwhile, what the Conservatives are trying to do is sully democracy and prevent the House from working for the benefit of all Canadians.

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[English]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is taking real action to tackle the most pressing issues facing Canadians, and this includes climate change. Canadians know that climate change is making life more difficult and more expensive. We are a government that understands that the realities of rural Canadians differ from those of Canadians living in larger urban areas.

Could the Minister of Indigenous Services and FedNor please tell Canadians how our government is supporting rural and remote communities right across the country?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Indigenous Services and FedNor, I hear first-hand from rural communities hit hard by climate change. Just yesterday, we heard from chiefs from Northwest Territories talk about the most severe drought they have seen in their lifetimes. In fact, it is putting their livelihoods, their ability to gather food and their ability to get goods up and down that river at risk. They know, as so many Canadians know, that we must do more to protect the climate and each other.

Conservative MPs do not care about that, though. They do not even believe in climate change, and they do not really care about affordability either. They did all they could to block the rural top-up of an extra \$280 for people in the member's—

The Speaker: The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday at the public inquiry, the chief of staff to the then public safety minister was unwilling to explain why a CSIS warrant sat on the minister's desk for 54 days when, according to national security officials, such a warrant is typically signed off in between four and 10 days.

It has been reported that the subject of the warrant is a former Ontario Liberal cabinet minister. Does the minister really expect Canadians to believe that this 54-day delay had nothing to do with the partisan interests of the Liberal Party?

Oral Questions

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is ironic that the member opposite talks about political interests. It was the Conservative leader, when he was the minister of democratic institutions, who said that he was not going to take foreign interference seriously because it was not in his political interest to do so. On the other hand, on this side of the House, we have taken the issue of foreign interference seriously since day one, which includes ensuring that we are protecting our democratic institutions, including the current study to look into Russian-based influencers operating in Canada, which Conservatives want to block.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no other plausible explanation for the delay. It was about Liberals protecting Liberals.

The Attorney General is responsible for seeing that cabinet upholds the independent and non-partisan principles of our justice system. His cabinet colleague put the partisan interests of the Liberal Party ahead of the administration of justice. What does the Attorney General have to say about that?

• (1505)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to foreign interference, this is not a new phenomenon, but what is new to Canadians is a government that actually takes it seriously. That is precisely why we have implemented a number of measures to ensure that our democratic institutions are strengthened and to ensure that it is not at the whim of the Leader of the Opposition when he thinks there is some sort of political advantage to him.

We will take the issues of foreign interference, no matter where they are coming from, incredibly seriously, and we do not cherry-pick like the Conservatives do.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Iranian-backed Houthis shoot down civilian merchant ships. They fire missile after missile at innocent Israelis. They disrupt international trade. They traffic in violence and fear across the Middle East. These terrorists can freely operate, fundraise and recruit in Canada.

The Americans banned them in January. NDP-Liberals said they would think about it. It has been 10 months. We need to ban the terrorists and protect Canadians. What is there to think about?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again we see that Conservatives want to play games with incredibly serious issues. We on this side of the House will not. What we will do is ensure that the national security agencies in this country that make regular terrorist listing determinations have the resources they need to do just that. These national security organizations in Canada are constantly reviewing the terrorist listing, and the Minis-

ter of Public Safety has ensured that it is put forward for urgent review.

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is World Mental Health Day. This year's theme is "It is time to Prioritize Mental Health in the Workplace". It reminds us that we need to prioritize mental health in all workplaces and communities right across the country. Everyone deserves to have access to the mental health services they need.

Can the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions tell the House what our government is doing to extend access to mental health services across Canada?

Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for all of her advocacy on mental health. It is such an important issue to Canadians.

Today is World Mental Health Day, a day to raise awareness and commit to breaking the stigma around mental health. Mental health is health, and we are committed to expanding access to mental health services for all Canadians. We are taking action. While our government has solutions, the opposition only has slogans.

From our government's work to creating a youth mental health fund to the 988 suicide helpline, we are taking a compassionate approach to make sure no one is left behind.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here are today's headlines: "Israeli forces fire on UN peacekeepers in Lebanon"; hundreds of thousands of people are trapped in northern Gaza, ordered to flee with nowhere to go; "Israel seeking to close down Unrwa"; and "Canada's Conservative Leader: Israel Taking Out Iran's Nuclear Sites Would Be 'Gift by the Jewish State to Humanity'". This is crazy. This is enough.

Canada needs to do everything to de-escalate and to build peace. We need to sanction Netanyahu. We need to have an arms embargo, and we need to recognize Palestine.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since October 7, Canadians have been clear that they expect us to defend Israel's security and get the hostages released, ensure international rules are respected, do everything we can for civilians to be protected and make sure that this conflict does not spread into a regional or international crisis.

Too many innocent civilians, including children and women, have been killed in this war. The loss of innocent lives is something we have not heard Conservatives talk about in the House, and I appreciate the NDP bringing it forward. This should not be controversial.

* * *

• (1510)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, back in April, Six Nations of the Grand River had to close its community health centre because of worsening black mould, which was first detected over a year ago. While Indigenous Services Canada has a responsibility to ensure Six Nations has a safe and accessible medical facility that meets its needs, the minister recently communicated to the community that it needs to apply for funding and hope for the best.

Will the minister take responsibility, commit to a follow-up meeting with Six Nations' Chief Hill and expedite a new health centre?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will always commit to working with first nations leaders on their infrastructure priorities. As the member opposite knows, there is a \$380-billion gap in infrastructure left after generations of neglect of first nations communities. We have increased spending on first nations infrastructure priorities by 1,800%, and we are going to continue to do that work.

We are going to continue to be there as partners as communities build up the infrastructure they need for today and tomorrow.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise on behalf of the official opposition for an important part of the day that all of us look forward to on Thursday afternoon, and that is the Thursday question. I think many Canadians are watching this. It has been two weeks today since the Speaker's ruling that the Liberal government has been found in contempt of Parliament for refusing to turn over all documents pertaining to the \$400-million green slush fund. It has ground Parliament to a halt by refusing to adhere to the will of Parliament and to the Speaker's ruling.

We are watching with interest as the government projects the calendar for the next several sitting days, although we have a recess next week. Canadians want to know if, perhaps in the last couple of hours, the Liberals have come to their senses and have realized that

Business of the House

they should provide the RCMP with full, unredacted access to all documents as ordered by Parliament, so we can get back to business.

Have they finally agreed to get back to work and get the RCMP the information it deserves to have?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here we are again. We will remember, at this time last week, I stood in this place and listed the following business for the upcoming week: Bill C-71, on citizenship; Bill C-66, on military justice; Bill C-63, on online harms; and the ways and means motion related to capital gains. I am sorry to say that all we saw this week was more Conservative procedural games. I can only imagine that this is because they do not want to debate this important legislation as they are opposed to it for Canadians. Again, for a second week in a row, they have offered nothing constructive and have instead focused on bringing dysfunction to the chamber.

As I have said many time, the government is supportive of the Speaker's ruling and of the Conservative motion, actually, to refer the privilege matter to the Standing Committee on Procedures and House Affairs. Why can they not take yes for an answer?

The Conservatives are effectively spinning their own obstruction because they do not want this matter to be referred to committee. The funniest part about it is that they not only amended their own motion, but also, today, amended their own amendment. They are trying really hard to avoid this going to committee for further study. Perhaps that is because they will hear expert after expert talking about the egregious abuse of power being displayed by the official opposition, their interference in police work, their obstruction of police investigation and the fact that this shows complete disregard for democracy and the rights of Canadian citizens.

They clearly do not want to debate government legislation. All they want to do is serve themselves and their own partisan interests. We will continue to be here to work for Canadians.

Let me take this opportunity, as I know this weekend Canadian families will be together giving thanks for what they have, to wish all members in the House, as well as all Canadians, a very happy Thanksgiving.

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that the volume of earpieces will now be reset. Members using their earpiece at this time will have to readjust the volume.

*Privilege***ORDERS OF THE DAY**

● (1515)

*[English]***PRIVILEGE**

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed consideration of the motion, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have gone through a very extensive illustration of exactly how corruption has been part of the Liberal government as long as I have been in this Parliament, for five years. At the end of the term here it will be six years.

We have gone through the ad scam, and it was the Paul Martin government that fell for that, recognizing it fell over a \$4-million scandal. Now, \$4 million is a heck of a lot less than a \$400-million scandal. However, the government fell in 2004, almost 20 years ago, over a \$4-million scandal, where it was proven that the government had actually given money to companies or money had been funnelled back to the Liberal Party, so money was given to insiders.

At the end of the day, the Gomery commission proved that a lot of that money ended up back in the Liberal Party's hands. It was atrocious. Canadians punished the government for that, sent them packing and sent in a new government in 2006, for good reason. The government was long in the tooth and was effectively paying a lot of money to their friends. The Gomery commission obviously found enough information, on \$4 million worth of government graft or corruption, that it acted according to the way it should have.

I have spoken about this and I have spoken about the various other scandals that have happened in the Liberal government. We have talked about SNC-Lavalin. That was in 2018. That effectively tarnished Canada's reputation on the international stage because our largest engineering company was involved in corporate corruption around the world. That means that a lot of Canadian companies were not able to bid on international contracts. That is a huge cost to the country, if we think about how many Canadian companies could not participate in international bids from international organizations because of one bad apple that was in the pockets of the Liberal government.

At the end of the day, the Prime Minister more or less threw one of his ministers completely under the bus in order to get what he wanted, a deferred agreement with SNC-Lavalin and getting the Attorney General to acquiesce to that. This was deemed to be and ruled to be corrupt. It should never have happened.

We know what happened in the Winnipeg labs. The Liberal government ended up calling an election rather than facing the consequences, in front of this House, of an order to produce the documents from the leaks of the Winnipeg labs. Incidentally, that was in 2021, when a civil servant was at the bar in this House, effectively saying that he had some privilege and did not have to provide them. Your predecessor, Mr. Speaker, ordered him to provide the documents.

The government took your predecessor to court in order not to produce those documents. That had never been done before in Canadian history, where the government takes the Speaker, the representative of this Parliament to court, legally weaponizing against this Parliament.

Parliament is supreme. The government is not supreme. The government answers to Parliament. This is our role here as elected officials, to oversee the government, not to just do what the government says. Mr. Speaker, you have been very good at that, as far as making sure the government is held to account. I applaud the Speaker's order here, requiring them to produce these documents. The Winnipeg labs situation was one thing. Incidentally, I wanted to point out that in 2024, the government actually produced 600 pages of documents regarding the leaks at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg. Now, that was three years later than they were asked for by Parliament.

I want to really expose the lengths the government went to to avoid that. The government called an election in order to dissolve Parliament so it would not have to disclose what had happened, and what it was complicit in allowing to happen, at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg. It was scandalous that the government got away with this.

● (1520)

I have gone into the WE Charity in detail but, once again, it was senior members of the government working hand in hand with their friends, with money going back and forth and who is getting paid for what. There was lots of money going to Liberal pockets. It was scandalous and as corrupt as anything I have seen in the government. Luckily, we exposed that. It was one of my first years in Parliament. I recall bringing some of my skill set to the floor at that point in time, because I was looking at the financial statements, looking at one year versus the other years, and saying they were not right. We were actually looking at WE Charity, which was hiding some information. That is an in-out scam if there ever was one.

We have gone through the arrive scam in detail as well. The arrive scam was a lot of money going to two people working in the basements of their homes, money being shovelled out the door. Canadians know all about it. Again, we had one of them at the bar here in Parliament. We had somebody actually answering to parliamentarians about what was going on in their company and how they used a lot of influence with their Liberal friends and government friends in order to get a whole bunch of money shovelled into their bank accounts.

This is corruption. This is lack of oversight. I know that my colleagues on the other side of the House, the government side of the House, are saying that is just incompetence on the government's part, that it is nothing to do with them here and that we cannot tell them to be accountable. The government is supposed to be accountable. Every one of the ministers is supposed to be accountable for their departments.

Privilege

What was quite clear in the ruling the Auditor General gave when they looked at the green slush fund, which we are addressing here today, was that the Minister of Industry did not oversee the contracts with the conflicted Liberal insiders at all. I want everybody to address that here in the House of Commons.

The Minister of Industry did not oversee those contracts at all. I call him the minister of writing cheques, because that is all he does. He thinks he is there to bring in business to Canada and write billions of dollars' worth of cheques to all kinds of industries, many of which are long-shot gambles. This is Canadian taxpayers' money that he is throwing out without any accountability whatsoever.

We need not just accountability for the money, but also accountability for the contracts, accountability for the people involved, and accountability in making sure we are getting value for money even if the contract is a terrible contract. Does it measure up? The Minister of Industry is clearly not being accountable for that. He should be held to account in this House at the soonest possibility.

There are hundreds of millions of dollars funnelled to Liberals and Liberal friends through the green slush fund. All of a sudden, we were asking for those documents. The Auditor General had found some malfeasance there. The documents came back and they were completely redacted. As my friend, the member for South Shore—St. Margarets, said, the Prime Minister's Office could have run out of toner as there was so much black ink on the page.

I have spoken of various scandals here, worth hundreds of millions of dollars. We have spoken about a number of these issues. Let me ask this question: Is this criminal? We do not know yet. We are trying to get these unredacted documents into the hands of the police, so the police can determine if there are criminal charges to be laid here.

We are being held up by the government. Will it be three years like the Winnipeg microbiology lab? Is it going to hold us up for three years to try and shove it under the rug and say nothing happened here? Three years down the road it will say something happened, but not worry about it. It was so long ago, we do not need to worry about it anymore. That is not the way this Parliament works.

We are asking for these documents. We are asking for these documents to be unredacted and provided to us so we can oversee this process and make sure there is accountability built into it. I am going to ask this question as well: If this is criminal, is what is happening in this House right now a cover-up of criminality? I am asking the people on that side of the House, the people on the government benches. Is this a cover-up of criminality?

If so, once it is determined that this is criminal, how do the Liberals think their complicity in this is going to be looked at by the Canadian public, but also by the police? They tried to hide this evidence from Parliament, which legitimately and legally asked for it. The Liberals decided they were not going to provide it, in a first iteration since Confederation, where the government has repeatedly provided not enough information to this Parliament.

• (1525)

I admit that COVID changed a lot in our country. It was not supposed to change democracy or the way we handle democracy in the

House of Commons. We are supposed to practise democracy as if the House of Commons holds the government accountable for its actions, especially its actions in spending Canadian taxpayer money.

I have heard the deputy House leader talk about the charter. This is nonsense. The charter was not designed, there is no foresight at all to have the charter interrupt Parliament's role in holding the government to account. That is completely made up. It is a fabrication and should not be entertained here at all. If any official at the Department of Justice is putting that forward as an argument, that name should be put forward, because the person should be disbarred very quickly here and should not be practising law in Canada, let alone for His Majesty's government.

This, again, is a ruse put forward by the government in order to not be accountable to this Parliament. The government needs to be accountable to Parliament. Our job here, as His Majesty's loyal opposition, is to hold the government accountable and it is doing its best to obfuscate, confuse and try not to provide the information that is required for us to do our job here as His Majesty's loyal opposition.

Could the Speaker please enforce this as much as he can, as he has done to this point in time, continue to hold those people to account, as we do here today, and continue to enforce his rules as the representative of Parliament, ensuring the rules in the House are upheld and the government is held to account for its abuse of taxpayer funds?

Ms. Lisa Hefner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to my friend's speech. I wonder if he saw the letter from the RCMP. I saw it for the first time today. As someone who covered criminal court for many years as a journalist, I have a lot of sympathy for the RCMP, which is saying even that if it gets these documents, which it does not want, it would not be able to use them in a court of law because it does not follow the proper chain of evidence. At the very end of the letter, the RCMP commissioner says, "the RCMP is operationally independent and strictly adheres to the principle of police independence. In a free and democratic society, this ensures that the government cannot direct or influence the actions of law enforcement."

I wonder what the hon. member has to say in response to the RCMP.

Mr. Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, there are a couple things the member said in that question. She saw that document today, and it has been commented on for two weeks here. I wonder why she did not look at it sooner. However, we are not the government; we are Parliament. Those members are the government. The government is the front bench on that side of the House. That front bench is not supposed to direct the RCMP.

Privilege

Our role as Parliament is to hold the government to account. We are asking the government, and the Speaker has ruled on it, to provide those documents to the RCMP for it to determine exactly what has gone wrong here and if it is criminal. I do not know why the member on the other side does not see that chain of events, for the RCMP to see the evidence, to determine if there is a criminal act that occurred in there, and for it to investigate it at that point in time. The first step in that process is what we do here.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I remember a time in the country when there was something called the sponsorship scandal, which really rocked the political world. That was the event that made me a Conservative. It was a seminal event for a lot of young Conservatives. At the time, all opposition parties were united to ensure that we could fend off this massive corruption scandal coming from the Liberal Party of Canada, which eventually would bring down the government.

I want to ask my colleague whether he thinks that unity among the opposition parties will be able to hold well into the future and into the coming weeks so that we can ensure ourselves that we retain the right of Parliament, unobstructed, to obtain documents on behalf of Canadians so we can get to the truth and that we do not see the government use both the Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as a shield to defend its own corruption.

• (1530)

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I did make reference to the sponsorship scandal in my speech, but I had to cut a couple of pages of it out to fit my speech into the time allotted.

My colleague is exactly right. It coalesced Canadians on how their government was working. There were no checks and balances on money going out the door from the Liberal government at the time and money going in the back door through political contributions. It was absolutely obscene from 1996 to 2004.

The Gomery commission looked at how all that money was backdoored into the Liberal Party through money given to Liberal friends. It was an awful demonstration of how a democratic country should run itself, and that government was thrown out for \$4 million, which was the amount found by the Gomery commission, as opposed to \$400 million. I appreciate inflation, but inflation over 20 years is not 100 times the scandal that happened that year.

This is something we have to hold the government accountable for. We have to make sure the public sees that we are doing our job and that the government is providing some transparency and accountability for its actions.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, this debate has been going on for days now, and it feels like we are watching a football game that never ends. For days now, the Liberals and Conservatives have been tossing the ball back and forth, but they cannot make it to the end zone.

The SDTC scandal is proof that the government has lost control of public funds. Waste and interference are inherent in the federal system. Can the government be consistent and accountable, but, also, can we finally do our job as legislators? If the Conservatives

form the next government, what will they do to avoid this kind of mess?

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her great question.

If we form the government, we will work with all stakeholders to ensure that Canadians see accountability and transparency for all government spending. That is one thing. As they say, sunlight is the best disinfectant. That is why we would release this information.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am disappointed in the response the member gave to my colleague. I was in opposition for over 20 years, and saying that because they are in opposition, they have supreme power and can use it as a tool to beat over constitutional or charter rights is shameful.

The RCMP is very clear about the game the Conservative Party of Canada is playing. To quote from its letter, “There is significant risk that the Motion could be interpreted as a circumvention of normal investigative processes and Charter protections.” It is not the government or the Liberal Party saying this. It is the RCMP institution, the commissioner. To say it is not a charter issue or try to downplay that issue is disgraceful.

Why will the Conservative Party not stop playing games, realize this is serious, stop the filibuster and allow the issue to go to the procedure and House affairs committee so that we can start dealing with issues that Canadians are concerned about, not the political games that the Conservative Party of Canada wants to play at a great expense to Canadians?

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I will respond to my colleague, and I know that sometimes I irritate him when I do.

We are not holding up Parliament. The order was for the Liberals to provide the documents to Parliament unredacted and they refuse to do so. The Speaker said that we are not going to deal with any other business of the House until this is finally dealt with.

We are awaiting those documents and we ask them to please provide them. We would love to get back to doing the work of Parliament and getting some relief for Canadians, whom the government has stressed so badly in this process. I am looking forward to those documents and getting back to work for Canadians.

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, during question period, we heard the government respond that it could not provide the documents to the police, to the RCMP, because the RCMP had not issued a warrant. All we want, however, is to submit potential evidence. This is not about imposing a vision or imposing a mandate. This is about providing potential evidence, and the RCMP can do with it what it wants.

We are also talking about the separation of powers. As I just said, we have not given orders to the RCMP. We do not want to order the RCMP to do anything, because the separation of powers is essential in a democracy. I wonder how it is possible that government members cannot grasp the difference, unless this is nothing more than another attempt to create a smokescreen so they can avoid producing unredacted documents.

I would like my colleague to elaborate on these things.

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague that this is a smokescreen. The government is not giving us the truth in order to avoid the powers of Parliament.

I do not know why the Liberals want to circumvent the powers of Parliament because Parliament is very important for democracy in Canada. They have to hand over the documents to Parliament, who will hand them over to the RCMP. The role that the opposition plays in the House of Commons is very important. It is important to maintain that.

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a delight to see you in the chair. I was hoping you would be the chair occupant during my intervention on this issue because you and I share something in common. In my formative years, I went to school on the south shore of Montreal and grew up in Brossard. You are the member for that region and you will know my elementary school, Harold Napper. Many people went there, including one of your predecessors, whose wife was the director of the school.

Another thing we have in common is that we both survived the 1995 referendum, and you lived through the sponsorship scandal. That is where I want to begin, because those events, the 1995 referendum and the sponsorship scandal, made me a Conservative. They convinced me that the Liberal Party of Canada was corrupt and would be infinitely corrupt. I remember the table talk with my parents, my friends and people I knew. It became the common, accepted wisdom that the Liberal Party of Canada would always be corrupt and there was no way to save it.

I find myself now, in this chamber, privileged by the people in the riding of Calgary Shepard to be sent here to speak on their behalf, and it is happening all over again. However, this time, instead of the sponsorship scandal, it is now the SDTC scandal, and it is eight times larger than the sponsorship scandal. We are talking close to \$400 million that was corruptly awarded to friends of the Liberal Party. Taxpayers work incredibly hard to earn a living in this country to pay their taxes and they have seen them awarded corruptly.

Privilege

There are two parts to my intervention today. The first part is to talk about the Speaker's ruling on this matter, and the second part is the content of the documents that have led us to this moment and why the governing party is blocking the work of Parliament and not allowing us to proceed.

This could all end if the Liberals would just release all the unredacted documents to the parliamentary law clerk. It would end right there. We trust the law clerk. In this situation, I am fine with the RCMP looking at the documents; it has already put out a statement. If it finds nothing of value in the documents, the matter ends there. It is quite simple. There is no reason to hyperventilate and make up judicial opinions on the floor of the House of Commons or make up arguments about why the charter or the Constitution shields the Liberal Party of Canada from releasing the documents in its possession so we can see how bad the corruption is.

The Auditor General has already said there was corruption. The Auditor General has already ruled on this and so has the Speaker. The House ordered these documents to be produced June 10 with a vote of 174 to 148. No individual member of Parliament has the absolute right to obtain any document that he or she wants, but as a House, as a group of parliamentarians, a majority here represents a majority of the Canadian public and a majority of Canadian taxpayers. The Canadian taxpayer has been defrauded of close to \$400 million. The exact number in question is \$390 million.

The Speaker's ruling said, "In some instances, only partial disclosures were made, owing either to redactions or the withholding of documents." That means entire documents were not provided. It goes on to say, "In other instances, the House order was met with a complete refusal." The Government of Canada, all of the cabinet ministers and every single department do not have the right to refuse an order of this House. The Speaker goes on to say that whether it is wise or not to do so is beyond the point. The House has an absolute right to government documents.

The majority of members of Parliament approve spending. The government exists because Parliament approves spending, so we own these documents; these are ours. When we request them, when we call for them, when we demand them to be given to the law clerks, the government has to give them to us. We are not saying to give us all the documents across all of the Government of Canada. We are saying to give us the documents specific to SDTC, the green slush fund scandal. However, the Liberals have continued blocking the work of Parliament because they refused to give them. There were documents that were redacted, and there were documents that were completely withheld.

Privilege

• (1540)

In the early interventions that led to the Speaker's ruling, the member for Windsor West argued, as noted by the Speaker, that the "order for the production of documents should be respected". The New Democrats were absolutely right. He also noted that the Bloc member of Parliament for La Prairie "contended that the government may well have reasons not to meet its obligations, but that the privileges of the House are well established and the order was clear." It was very clear to all of us when we voted on it.

The time for debate was then. At the time, the government House leader should have made the arguments that are being made now by different Liberal Party members and parliamentary secretaries. However, they did not make those arguments. I went through the record and they were not the arguments they were making.

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, third edition, at page 985, confirms the procedural and constitutional understanding that is well understood by all of us:

No statute or practice diminishes the fullness of that power rooted in House privileges unless there is an explicit legal provision to that effect, or unless the House adopts a specific resolution limiting the power. The House has never set a limit on its power to order the production of papers....

The reason for that is simple: We own those papers on behalf of the people of Canada. That is who we are doing this work for. They have a right to have the documents sent to the law clerk and then given to the RCMP. Then the RCMP can do whatever it wants with them. The order of the House does not tell the RCMP what to do. It does not say how the documents should be used or distributed within the RCMP. That is entirely up to the RCMP.

Going back to the ruling, the Speaker said, "The procedural precedents and authorities are abundantly clear." He further stated, referring to Speaker Milliken's ruling from April 2010 at page 2043 of the Debates, "procedural authorities are categorical in repeatedly asserting the powers of the House in ordering the production of documents. No exceptions are made for any category of government documents".

I do not understand why the government keeps insisting that Speaker Milliken is wrong. Speaker Milliken, I think we can all agree, in the modern history of our Parliament, is probably the best Speaker we have ever had. If we go through his rulings, we see that he was a wise Speaker, indeed. He was a member of my political formation. He is a man I think many of us would lean on when it comes to procedures of the House. I cannot believe that the Liberal Party of Canada is rejecting the words he said in this House on the production of documents.

Going beyond the powers of the House of Commons, which is an argument the government House leader made, the Speaker respectfully said, "these concerns ought to have been raised prior to the motion's adoption." He goes on to state:

The House has clearly ordered the production of certain documents, and that order has clearly not been fully complied with. The Chair cannot come to any other conclusion but to find that a prima facie question of privilege has been established.

He basically said that the government is in contempt of an order of the House, in contempt of Parliament.

It is simple. This all ends when the Liberals give all the documents to the law clerk. We are not saying to give them to the official opposition leader or to me, but to the law clerk of the House of Commons, appointed by the government, who will see the documents unredacted and transfer them to the RCMP. There are no great complications here.

One of my favourite lines, heard in debate, is this: When someone breaks into a house, do we call the police or do we call a committee? I would call the police. They are the people I go to when I have a problem. No committee can fix the problem of someone breaking in. There is almost \$400 million from Canadian taxpayers at stake here, and Canadian taxpayers were bilked out of it.

It is not that this is a recent thing. It is not that it just came about and was discovered later on. It started in 2017. SDTC has existed since 2001 and spent almost 16 years with a clean bill of health from the Auditor General. Then certain Liberal cabinet ministers began appointing their friends and then appointed more friends, and those friends saw friends with companies that needed money and they fleeced taxpayers. Then everything came apart and we had a bizarre kabuki theatre, where the minister abolished the fund and rolled it into something else. The Liberals said that it was all good, that they were moving on, that there was nothing to see here and that it was such a terrible shame that all this money went missing, \$390 million. A billion dollars per year was spent and there were no problems whatsoever, but they could not help themselves and reached into the pockets of the taxpayers and gave money to their friends.

• (1545)

Let us look at exactly what happened with SDTC. The Auditor General found that hundreds of millions of dollars were not just misspent but also corruptly awarded, sometimes to companies of board members who were making the decisions at board meetings. There were 82% of the funding transactions approved by the board during a five-year sample by the Auditor General that were found to have conflicts of interest.

I cannot imagine an instructor, a professor or a teacher who is teaching corporate ethics who would look at that and say, "That's okay, we should just roll things under the rug and move on. Mistakes were made, but it's not so bad." The findings were from the Auditor General's five-year sample. She did not even have the opportunity to look at all the cases of all of the awarding of money.

Privilege

In her report, the Auditor General said that the same board approved \$59 million in projects that it was not authorized to. The Sustainable Development Technology Canada fund was meant to fund green-energy projects, but the \$59 million was approved to go to nothing related to the fund, so it was illegally given. I would hope that we would all agree that \$59 million is a huge sum of money. Taxpayers have a right to know where the money went and why the decisions were made.

There were people on the board who were awarding cash to each other's companies, which is an obvious conflict of interest. There were Government of Canada officials who sat through the board meetings, so how could the minister claim that he could not have known about it? How is it possible that there are no documents worthy of being given over to the parliamentary law clerk and to the RCMP to investigate and determine how exactly the decisions were made? They were completely in contravention of the conflict of interest laws of Canada, the public office holders rules and SDTC's own act.

I would think that when we appoint people to a board, they would read the act that governs their behaviour, but obviously that did not happen in this case. There were 405 transactions, and 226 transactions were the sample. In 186 of those 226, at least 82%, over \$300 million, was corruptly given out. The fund had \$832 million that was given out at the time.

There are individuals specifically involved who were on the board and who were involved with a venture capital firm called Cycle Capital. The member for South Shore—St. Margarets brought this up. Do members know who the lobbyist was for a few years for Cycle Capital? It was the Minister for Environment and Climate Change before he became the minister. He was a paid lobbyist and had to register, which is how we know that he lobbied for the company; it is all public information. When he was lobbying for Cycle Capital, that company got \$111 million. That was so fortunate for them. How lucky are they?

There are documents that would show which meetings were held, what documents were exchanged and what was talked about. I am sure that there would also be diary notes from public servants in the meetings on how decisions were being made or what was being said. There were 25 times in the year before the minister was elected that he lobbied, which is quite quite surprising. I wonder when he became the nominated candidate for the Liberal Party of Canada.

Others who participated were told at different points that some projects were rejected because they did not meet the funding requirements. They were told, in emails that we know of because they were released by the whistle-blower and by others at parliamentary committees, that they would be helped to find money from other government departments. Soon after that, the former board chair got \$12 million dollars from ACOA and the ISET program. Therefore, even in some situations where it is quite obvious that, for conflict of interest reasons, a program could not get money, the money was given out through another fund.

Nine directors, according to the Auditor General, accounted for the 186 conflicts. The nine directors were individuals appointed by

the government, by cabinet, to sit on the board and make decisions, and they did make decisions.

• (1550)

The sponsorship scandal was around \$40 million, as I remember it. I am sure that with an inflation adjustment it would be a bigger number now, but \$40 million is still a lot of money. It is still an incredible amount of money for the taxpayer. We are talking about close to \$400 million in this particular case, which is a much bigger sum.

The minister said in June that there would be new transparency rules. New transparency measures would be introduced. Now the Liberal government is giving out money again, but not a single bit of the information has been made available anywhere on the new website. SDTC used to put out a quarterly report on every single company. The new fund, or whatever it has been rolled into, does not do that anymore. It is silent; the information is hidden. There is no more information being given out.

We are supposed to believe that the issue was only the nine directors who were directly appointed by the government. In 2017, the government went out of its way. It replaced the board chair because he was inconvenient. The government appointed its own person into that particular role. That person participated in some of the conflict of interest decisions, sometimes to give even her own company some of the taxpayers' own dollars, when they should not have at all. This goes on and on.

As other members have mentioned in the House, this is not the first time that the Government of Canada, the Liberal cabinet, is refusing to disclose documents. The government actually took the then Speaker to court to stop the release of detailed documents from the Winnipeg National Microbiology Lab. We have even gone through two parliamentary committees to try to extract the documents. The government even called an election to avoid having to release them.

There was the SNC-Lavalin scandal, during which the Prime Minister claimed on live television during a press conference that there was nothing to see and that nothing was going on. There was the WE Charity scandal, and there were foreign interference campaigns. Again, in every single situation, at first the government refused to release the documents.

As I often do, I have a Yiddish proverb. I feel that the whole situation is like a bridge. I want to read the proverb into the record in its original Yiddish. I am going to practice.

[Member spoke in Yiddish]

*Privilege**[English]*

I will translate: If his, that is, the government's, word were a bridge, I would be afraid to cross it. If we are to believe the government's argument right now that for charter reasons, for constitutional reasons, it cannot release the full documents that the Speaker has ordered released, based on a majority vote in this place of all the MPs, and it is making a bridge out of it, I would not cross it. I would tell every single person in my riding of Calgary Shepard that they cannot trust the government's words. If it has built a bridge out of its words, we cannot trust it. It is old Yiddish wisdom, and it applies right here.

This all ends when the government releases all of the documents; it is really that simple. Then we can get back to the normal work of the House.

There is actually, I believe, another question of privilege coming up after this one, involving "the other Randy", who, I am told, has also done things in a corrupt way. We are also trying to figure out what is there.

In anticipation of a question I am very likely to get, I do want to remind the other side about two times the Prime Minister made comments about the RCMP's laying criminal charges. One is from a February 2018. The Prime Minister said in a town hall meeting that the police investigation of Vice-Admiral Mark Norman will "inevitably" lead to "court processes". In April 2017, he had told reporters at a press conference that Norman's case "will likely end up before the courts." That was about criminal court charges in that case.

The government ran through the mud a senior, decorated vice chief of the defence staff to suit its own goals, and now it claims to us that it cannot tell the RCMP what to do, when it has done it themselves. I do not believe the Liberals. Do not walk across that bridge. They must give us the documents.

● (1555)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the Conservative Party would stop playing games to try to get political points, and put Canadians and their interests ahead of their Conservative Party, maybe we might be able to see some progress in dealing with the silliness of what we are constantly hearing from member after member. The Conservatives continue to ignore the facts, which is why I am appealing to the member opposite.

It would be a wonderful presentation to make at PROC. However, I would suggest that it would be highly irresponsible for the member, as a Conservative, to say that he is not going to listen to the advice of the commissioner of the RCMP and the advice of the Auditor General of Canada. They are independent institutions. Why should Canadians believe the politically motivated games that we are seeing on the floor of the House of Commons in Ottawa, as opposed to listening to what the institutions of our RCMP and Auditor General are saying? Why does the member believe that he has more credibility than they do on this issue?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the member that he says that these organizations are so independent,

but it was the current government that invoked the Emergencies Act and that ordered police forces across Canada what to do and how to do it, removing the role of justices in issuing search warrants and warrants of any type. That is what the Emergencies Act did. The Liberals did that.

With respect to the Auditor General, very early in the Liberals' term, when the Auditor General asked for more money to do more audits, they refused to give the money. In fact I remember a letter coming from a certain Liberal MP telling them that they were wrong and that they should keep funding that office.

Those were decisions the Liberals made. They have no problem interfering in the work of officers of Parliament or the police forces when it suits their corporate interests.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, when I say WE Charity, ArriveCAN, SDTC, McKinsey and other consultants, they all have one thing in common, specifically the delegation of responsibility for implementing a financial support or educational program, consolidating and overseeing app developers, training staff and managers, collecting and analyzing data, improving practices, and so forth.

Perhaps my hon. colleague can give me some answers. Do the scandals stem from a refusal to manage and plan properly, or do all governments simply refuse to be accountable?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I would say it is the latter. The government simply refuses to listen to the House, even though a majority of members voted to have these documents handed over to the House and then forwarded to the RCMP. It is simple. Even the Speaker ruled that the government was in the wrong when it failed to provide all the documents.

We have seen this all before. It is nothing new for this government. The Liberal Party's sponsorship scandal was the first time I realized that corruption was normal for this government, at the time. Now, it is SDTC.

I agree with the member. In this case, however, I think the latter option is correct: It is this government's failure to be accountable by refusing to listen to the House and the people of Canada.

● (1600)

[English]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague's speech was a really important one, because I think it speaks to the incredible support of the House to demand important documents related to the financial accountability of this place. I think New Democrats are also deeply concerned with the issue of ensuring that there is consistency across government. When the Conservatives or the Liberals are in power, it seems that both parties care about financial accountability only when they are opposing or when they are trying to get additional political points.

Privilege

I have documents here that relate to Ms. Verschuren, the political appointee whom the member is speaking about. She has donated to the Conservatives since 2017. In fact as early as 2013, she donated thousands and thousands of dollars to the Conservative Party.

Will the member reject donations from Ms. Verschuren, the person who was chair and who was found in conflict of interest? Will the Conservative Party stop donations from the person they are accusing of being a Liberal insider and who, as a matter of fact, is donating thousands of dollars to their party?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I do not know Annette Verschuren. She has definitely never donated to me. I know every single one of my donors.

I would hope that the New Democrats stay on course with us. I think that this is the one part where the opposition parties agree: that we are not here to defend Liberal corruption. That is the one thing on which, through the decades, all opposition parties have agreed, that we are here to stand against the corruption of the Liberal Party of Canada, that we will unite together to ensure that taxpayers and Canadians get the documents and get the truth that they deserve, and that we protect them from the people who wish to pick their pockets every single day.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, for the last few days, I have been hearing the Liberals constantly asking to send the matter to PROC. I just want Canadians to know what would happen if the matter were referred to PROC, based on what we have seen in the previous scandals, and that is that the NDP and the Liberals would filibuster to continue to block the production of documents.

Can my hon. colleague comment on what he thinks about that?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I hope it never comes to having to do a filibuster at any committee, particularly at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. As I jokingly say with colleagues, “filibuster” is my favourite F-word in this place. I have been at PROC as a regular member and as a substitute member. I have testified before PROC as well. I hope it does not come to that, because in this particular case, all a filibuster would do at a committee would be to give more time to the Liberal Party to find a way out of its current predicament.

All we are asking for is the release of the documents, not to the Conservative Party, not to the official opposition, but to the law clerk. I think it is a very reasonable thing to ask, to release them to somebody who has no political affiliations, no past political preferences that have been expressed publicly. I have seen this done at committee before, where we have demanded documents be produced. We do it through the law clerk's office, when there are these worries from the government, from the cabinet, that they could be used directly for a partisan purpose.

Sometimes there are thousands or tens of thousands of documents, and it is perfectly reasonable. Then they can be passed on to the RCMP in this particular case, and the RCMP can determine what it wants to do. All a committee would do at this point, if the threat of delays called a filibuster came about, would be just to give itself more time. An election would end all the procedures and processes of the House; it would not be able to get to those documents to hand them to the RCMP, which I think is much more critical.

When it has the documents, the RCMP can do with them what it wishes.

• (1605)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as a member of the procedure and House affairs committee, I am very much looking forward to getting to the bottom of this. We have legislation before the House that has been stalled.

I would ask the hon. member if we could come to an agreement and have this sent to PROC. I am actually looking forward to studying it.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I am glad the member is here. We share an alma mater, Concordia University, though I think there was quite some time between our graduation years. It took me a long time to finish my bachelor's degree, I will jokingly say.

In this particular case, there is an easy way for it to end and get to committee. As I mentioned twice during my intervention, the member can go to any member of the government and just convince them to release all of the documents, not just the redacted pieces. Plus, as I quoted from the Speaker's ruling, some documents were completely withheld. I would ask the government to just table the documents with the law clerk, everybody gets to see them, they get passed on to the RCMP, this ends and we can continue on with the business of the people of Canada.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I spoke about this issue before. The member is accusing Ms. Verschuren, who is the person in conflict of interest, of awarding her own company millions of dollars. She also happened, at the same time, to be donating money to the Conservative Party.

How can the member square the circle of this accusation that she is a Liberal partisan when the truth is she is actually a Liberal and Conservative partisan? She was donating to the Conservative Party as early as 2013 and, just recently, in the last tax year.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, it is simple: I do not care who someone donates to. If they steal from Canadian taxpayers, they deserve to be in front of a court, and the judges can decide.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a wonderful opportunity and a true privilege to stand in the House of Commons and represent my amazing riding of Peterborough—Kawartha.

Privilege

Here we are, and what are we doing today in the House of Commons? I often think the folks at home watching must feel like they are just watching an episode of *The Young and the Restless*. In the three years since I have been elected, they could turn on ParlVU or CPAC, turn it off for a couple of months or a year even, turn it back on, and here we are, still talking about incompetence and corruption, a lack of accountability, a lack of transparency and division in our country that has never reached this level in my lifetime of 45 years.

What has happened here in the House of Commons is that Parliament has basically been brought to a halt, because the Liberals are refusing to turn over documents, and the Conservatives are demanding they do. What are these documents and what are we talking about? It is called the green slush fund. It is based on Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC.

This is a green slush fund, and it is supposed to be for companies to apply to. It is a billion-dollar fund to invest in green technologies or green businesses. What does that mean? A whistle-blower came before committee, and I think this is a really important piece of this discussion. Many bureaucrats and many people have to go to work, and maybe they are privy to some very important information there. At the end of the day, and our job is really no different, people have to put their head down on the pillow and be comfortable, by their moral compass, with what they are actually doing.

The bureaucrats working under this fund, and under the Prime Minister, could not do that any longer, so they came forward to committee. They are what are called whistle-blowers. They said serious corruption was happening. I am going to read some of the testimony that was put forward:

I think the Auditor General's investigation was more of a cursory review. I don't think the goal and mandate of the Auditor General's office is to actually look into criminality, so I'm not surprised by the fact that they haven't found anything criminal. They're not looking at intent. If their investigation was focused on intent, of course they would find the criminality...

I know that the federal government, like the minister, has continued saying that there was no criminal intent and nothing was found, but I think the committee would agree that they're not to be trusted on this situation. I would happily agree to whatever the findings are by the RCMP, but I would say that I wouldn't trust that there isn't any criminality unless the RCMP is given full authority to investigate...

Again, if you bring in the RCMP and they do their investigation and they find something or they don't, I think the public would be happy with that. I don't think we should leave it to the current federal government or the ruling party to make those decisions. Let the public see what's there.

Here is another quote: "Just as I was always confident that the Auditor General would confirm the financial mismanagement at SDTC, I remain equally confident that the RCMP will substantiate the criminal activities that occurred within the organization."

We are demanding that documents be handed over. The Speaker has ruled in favour of this. The opposition parties alongside us, everyone except the Liberals, have agreed with what we have asked for. These are documents that outline what corruption has happened. This is critical because it is the money of the people watching at home.

The government does not have its own money. It has taxpayers' money, and there should be a pretty strong understanding and agreement that whoever is in government is not abusing that mon-

ey, wasting that money or giving it to their friends and family for them to get rich and not actually do any work.

• (1610)

It is a very simple ask. I want to read a couple of things into the record here, but first there is something I would ask people at home to really think about. This is a lot of procedural conversation about parliamentary privilege and this and that, but the question they need to ask themselves is, why do these documents exist in the first place? Why do we have a government in power that would not just misuse money but also give taxpayer money to its friends and family? Why are we even having this discussion? That is the biggest question I would have.

If the Liberals were innocent, if they were truly here to represent people, elected to ensure transparency and accountability, they would hand unredacted documents over to ensure accountability and transparency. Why do these documents exist in the first place? What are the Liberals hiding? How did we get here? How did we get to a level of corruption where we have hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars that has not gone to improving our lives and, in fact, has made it significantly worse? That is the question that needs to be asked today.

The Auditor General of Canada found that the Prime Minister turned the Sustainable Development Technology Canada fund into a slush fund for Liberal insiders. In this report specifically, the Auditor General found that \$59 million was awarded to 10 ineligible projects that, on occasions, could not demonstrate an environmental benefit or development of green technology. That amount, \$59 million, sounds a lot like the arrive scam app number.

There was \$334 million sent to over 186 projects in which the board members had a conflict of interest. The Auditor General did not even do all 400 cases. Can people imagine how many more there are? Let us not imagine. Let us get the documents and let us see. The Auditor General made it clear that the blame for this scandal falls on the Prime Minister's Minister of Industry, who did not sufficiently monitor the contracts that were given to the Liberal insiders. This is obviously very serious.

I think it is important to go back to how we even got here. I want to read a quote into the record. I want people at home to guess who said this:

Political leadership is about raising the bar on openness and transparency...

As a Member of Parliament, as a Leadership Candidate, and now as Leader of my Party, I have taken every opportunity to raise the bar when it comes to openness and accountability...As Leader of my Party, I made raising the bar on transparency and openness my first major policy announcement, so that Canadians can better hold their leaders accountable.

For me, transparency isn't a slogan or a tactic; it's a way of doing business. I trust Canadians. I value their opinions. And now that I've heard them, I'm going to act.

That was from June 2013. Are there any guesses as to who said that? It was the Prime Minister. Oh, how the tides have turned.

Privilege

I want to read another one because they are just so good. Get some popcorn, folks, because we are here for a while. He said, “I think we’re going to have to embark on a completely different style of government”. We could interpret that a lot of ways. He said:

A government that both accepts its responsibilities to be open and transparent, but also a population that doesn't mind lifting the veil to see how sausages are made. That there is a dual responsibility, in changing towards more open and transparent functioning, that really will go to a deep shift in how government operates.

• (1615)

Are there any guesses as to who said that? It was the same guy, the Prime Minister, in April 2015. I have another quote from April 2015: “Once I look at the trend lines in democracy, the empowering of citizens and activists, I know that the government of the future is going to be very, very different than governments of the past”. It sure is different. Since I have been here, it has been another day and another scandal. I have never seen the country in the state it is now in.

People ask me why Conservatives have to be so hard on the Prime Minister. It is because the opposition's role is to ensure that the government is doing the best for the people of Canada. It is to bring balance to this place. The Prime Minister has shown that he is incapable of balance. He has shown that it is rules for thee, but not for me.

I want to go through the list of scandals. Again, people should grab some popcorn because there are a lot of them. There is the McKinsey scandal. The Auditor General of Canada report criticizes the Prime Minister and the government for awarding \$200 million in contracts to McKinsey without proper guidelines; 90% of contracts were awarded without clear justification, with many lacking defined purposes or outcomes. In some cases, the Canada Border Services Agency altered requirements to allow McKinsey to qualify; 70% of contracts were sole-sourced, with no explanation for bypassing competitive processes. McKinsey operated without necessary security clearances in 13 out of 17 contracts. The firm's past failures include involvement in the Canada Infrastructure Bank and contributing to the opioid crisis, which has killed 42,000 Canadians since 2015. The Liberals paid \$600 million in damages for this.

Then we have the trip to Jamaica; the Prime Minister's \$84,000 holiday vacation was a gift from family friends. Again, we have rules for thee, but not for me. Then he went to Montana for \$228,000, not including the salaries of the RCMP officers. I am not done yet. There was another trip to Jamaica in April. That one was \$162,000. Who can forget arrive scam? I know my friend from Brantford—Brant sure does not forget that one. We had to bring forward a government agency, GC Strategies. Does anybody know what “GC Strategies” stands for? It stands for “Government of Canada Strategies”. There was \$60 million that went to a company that does not even exist and that two guys were able to build in a weekend for under \$250,000 of taxpayer money. Does anyone want to know why the cost of living is out of control? We do not have a revenue problem in this country. We have a Prime Minister with a spending and corruption problem.

Let us not forget about the \$6,000-a-night hotel room, where the Prime Minister burst into song at the Queen's funeral. Who could ever forget the WE Charity? The Prime Minister announced that the WE Charity would manage the \$912-million Canada student ser-

vice grant, and the Ethics Commissioner initiated an investigation into that decision on July 3, 2020.

• (1620)

Probably my favourite scandal that stands today is SNC-Lavalin; it really speaks to the character of what we are dealing with and the sort of rot we have seen in this country. The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, Mario Dion, investigated allegations that the Prime Minister's Office pressured former attorney general Jody Wilson-Raybould regarding SNC-Lavalin. Raybould resigned from cabinet and principal secretary Gerald Butts denied the claims before resigning. Jane Philpott also resigned in protest.

In August 2019, the commissioner found that the Prime Minister and his officials had breached ethics rules by attempting to undermine the federal prosecutor's decisions. SNC-Lavalin has been charged with fraud and corruption in connection with payments of nearly \$48 million to public officials in Libya under Moammar Gadhafi's government and allegations that it defrauded a Libyan organization of an estimated \$130 million. Two Liberal ministers took the fall for that one; they were female, I might add. That is another one of these classic things. I cannot wait to see who is going to take the fall for these documents. They will be turned over because we are not going to stop. Let us have that on this conversation.

To put this into context, can we imagine if somebody from CRA phoned and said, “We think you have violated the tax law and we need you to hand over documents”, and we said no? What would happen? Would the official just leave and say it was no problem? Let us say someone handed over documents but had blacked out everything important that CRA wanted to know. Would CRA be okay with that? The general public has to follow every single rule that the government imposes on them while it taxes them into poverty, but the government and the Prime Minister say, “No, not us; we are not responsible for following any rules”.

This mentality bleeds down into the entire front rows and benches, and not just that but into society. We have a societal blister in this country of a lack of accountability, a lack of transparency. It bleeds into our public safety when criminals have no consequences and crime is rampant; it is all over the place. Then, there is the erosion of trust in institutions. When we erode trust, we create chaos because there is no relationship. It is the most detrimental thing we can do, and the people do not trust the government, nor should they. I am not even done reading half the scandals, and the Prime Minister has only been in power for nine years.

Privilege

The other important piece to talk about in this is the green slush fund and, in itself, what it truly is. As we found out today, the PBO has now said that the carbon tax is just this big scam. Conservatives have been saying this from day one. It is driving up the cost of everything. Canadians are paying more out than they are getting back, and the PBO confirmed this yet again. Truckers testified in committee that they are paying \$20,000 in carbon tax. What do they think is going to happen to the cost of food? Why has housing doubled under the current Prime Minister? That is what I would like to know. The green, environmentally friendly initiative that the Liberals stand on all the time is a facade. They tout themselves as the most environmentally conscious party, but this is pandering. That carbon tax is not an environmental plan; it is a tax plan.

We literally had the Minister of Mental Health stand up in the House and say that we wanted the planet to burn. Later, we found out that the Minister of Environment prevented 50 firefighters and 20 fire trucks from fighting the fire in Jasper while it burned. That is the gist of what we are talking about.

I want to end with this: The undercurrent of all of this is that the government wastes money. I used to worry about how we were going to make this money work. Well, I just found \$400 million. The Conservatives would make life more affordable for Canadians. We would restore hope, and we would make housing, food and groceries affordable again.

• (1625)

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in response to this production order, the commissioner of the RCMP wrote, in a letter to MPs, “In a free and democratic society, [police independence] ensures that the government cannot direct or influence the actions of law enforcement.” It is incredible that the RCMP commissioner had to write that letter and remind MPs of what is at stake here.

My family fled a Communist dictatorship 40 years ago, where politicians directed police to attack and go after the residents of that country.

The fundamental question in this debate, in the House, on this day, is as follows: Why do the Conservatives feel so comfortable undermining the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, it is curious; that member talks about violating the Charter of Rights and Freedoms when he wants to freeze Canadians' bank accounts. That would be a great question for him about invoking the strongest measure ever used in this House by that party. It was absolutely absurd.

There was not a truck on that road when the Prime Minister kept the Emergencies Act in place. This is absurd, and everyone knows it.

I want to read what somebody wrote to me. This is from Erin Enns, who wrote on my Facebook page. She is watching this debate. This is what she has to say to the Liberal government and to the member opposite: “As a Canadian tax payer what gives you...the right to spend our hard earned money on frivolous things and not feel like you should divulge where specifically it went?

Where do you get off feeling like you don't work for the Canadian people yet we pay your salary?”

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the same question that the Liberal member just asked my colleague.

Does she believe that this request for documents is problematic from the perspective of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

[*English*]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, I love that question because I absolutely do not think that.

This is public information. The government is a public organization. These are public documents. This is public taxpayer money. There is zero reason that the unredacted documents should not be handed over to the Canadian people in Parliament.

It makes no sense to even have that argument. I said that at the beginning of my speech.

• (1630)

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, this is the first time I have been able to debate the hon. member since the summer.

I want to thank her sincerely for her courage and her allyship to the 2SLGBTQI community, with which she stood in solidarity when there was a very terrible and violent act of burning a pride flag in her community. I know how much courage it takes to do that, and it really means a lot to me personally.

In addition to that comment, I want to refer to an issue that I mentioned to her colleague related to Conservative donations. Part of the argument that has been made over the last few days by the Conservatives is that Ms. Verschuren, who was the chair of SDTC and gave herself millions of dollars, is a Liberal insider. As much as I agree, throughout her entire time as the chair of SDTC, she donated the maximum amounts to the Conservative Party, in addition to the Liberal Party.

It would be more fair to suggest that she is a Liberal and Conservative insider. Would the member agree?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, I actually do not care whom people donate to. What I care about is that taxpayer money is not being used for corruption.

That is the job of this place, to ensure that is happening. That is why we were elected. If we want to restore transparency and accountability, then we have to shine a light on what is happening. If we do not, then we cannot fix it.

Absolutely, let us figure this out; let us get the documents and get Parliament working again.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member says she does not care.

That is interesting. The chairperson was an adviser to Stephen Harper, former prime minister Brian Mulroney and former minister of finance Jim Flaherty, all of them Conservatives. As we know, she was a great donor to the Conservative Party. However, Conservative after Conservative, dozens of them, stand up and call her a Liberal insider.

It is all about the spreading of misinformation; in the same way, the member opposite will not answer the question directly. The RCMP and the Auditor General of Canada have said that this is, in essence, a game the Conservative Party is playing and that it is dangerous because it is borderline dealing with issues that offend the Charter of Rights and due process. However, Conservatives just stand back and ignore it.

The Conservative opposition is irresponsible. Why will the Conservatives not do the honourable thing, and at least listen to what the RCMP and the Auditor General are saying about this political game they are playing?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, “do the honourable thing”: That is pretty funny coming from that side of the House. Listen, we are not telling the RCMP to do a thing. We are telling the Liberals to hand over these unredacted documents. I will remind the member opposite that the Charter of Rights is not in place to protect the government from the people, it is in place to protect the people from the government.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I just want to clarify the record. The Auditor General found that SDTC awarded \$59 million to 10 ineligible projects that at times could not prove an environmental benefit or development of green technology; \$334 million over 186 cases to projects in which board members held a conflict of interest; and \$58 million to projects without guaranteeing that the terms and conditions were met. As a review, I wonder what people on Facebook are saying, what constituents are saying, what Canadians are saying. How outraged are they about those findings?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague has been a true warrior in the fight of exposing this massive corruption. He is incredible. The member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa is an amazing member of Parliament. He exposed so much of this corruption day in, day out, and that is really what this is about.

I would strongly encourage members opposite to go knock on doors, because people are genuinely exhausted. They are genuinely frustrated and hurting. They have lost hope and trust, and they want to restore hope and affordability.

I want to end by saying what I was trying to say earlier. I used to worry how we would fix all of this and how we would find money to invest in this. The biggest thing that hurts when funds are misappropriated, and especially in corruption, is social programming. We have never seen people struggle more than they do right now. People who used to volunteer at food banks are now accessing them.

Today is World Mental Health Day, and I just want to take a moment to recognize everybody struggling. Hope is coming, and hope

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is the glue that allows us to go on when we think we cannot. Restoring affordability for Canadians is the best, most powerful thing we can do as a government to ensure that people can afford their homes and their groceries.

• (1635)

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I want to give my hon. colleague the opportunity to speak directly to Canadians, as she has been doing in her speech, who are considering voting for the Conservative Party versus the Liberal Party versus the New Democrats. Our country has been governed by just the Liberals and the Conservatives. The Conservatives have found themselves, throughout the course of history, in very similar circumstances to those of the Liberal government, whether it was Mike Duffy during the Harper era or what we saw with fake lakes and bags of money handed over to individuals, and then they were found to be in contempt of the public spending laws. What does she say to Canadians, and has the Conservative Party not learned more about financial accountability considering its past?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, the only way forward is to have sensible economic policies that have checks and balances in place. This green slush fund is a perfect example of money that is taken and thrown to the wind, but not only to the wind but to people who have no right to it. It is a violation of ethics. That is the first—

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Kitchener Centre, Infrastructure; the hon. member for Bow River, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for Durham, Mental Health and Addictions.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague asked a question for those watching out there today. Many have heard about this. What is this green slush fund and why are we here today?

The Liberal government is obstructing justice by refusing to turn over documents to the RCMP showing that Liberal-appointed managers used the green slush fund to pay nearly \$400 million to companies that they owned. There is so much scandal with this particular NDP-Liberal government that it is hard to keep track, and we just get desensitized to it, even in this place. There is so much of it, as my colleague mentioned. She did not even get through the full list of the scandals. We are here today because Canadians deserve transparency and a full investigation into this scandal. This is a big one. It is \$400 million as it stands, and further investigation needs to happen.

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I think we also need to highlight that while the NDP-Liberals have their carbon tax and are bleeding money from Canadians to pay into their carbon tax schemes, this is where the money is going. While people are literally turning down their thermostat or buying noodles for a dollar a package at the grocery store just to survive, these guys are filling their friends' pockets with literally hundreds of millions of dollars.

I will make one additional point here. In relation to northern B.C., I was in the House a few weeks ago and talked about how we have just lost two mills in the area. Why have we lost those two mills? The costs are so exorbitant just to get timber now that some of these companies have said that they cannot afford to do it anymore, a direct attribution to the carbon tax and its costs.

I am going to talk about the basics and then I am going to get into it. It is going to take some time, but I think the folks out there want a deeper dive and want to know a little bit more. What are the basics of the scandal? At least \$390 million has gone to Liberal insiders and this is what the Liberals are trying to hide, obviously. That is why they are opposing this production order for documents to be turned over to the RCMP. Obviously, it is better to cover it up, and we have seen the examples of where they do it all the time. That is why the Prime Minister's personal department, the PCO, defied the order of the House to produce these documents and ordered departments to redact all sensitive information.

This is a delay tactic. We want the documents. They gave us some black sheets of paper and that was supposed to pacify us in this place, but we had some pretty sharp members that caught it, and we are standing up to say that this will not cut it.

How bad is it? This is from my colleague from South Shore—St. Margarets, who has done yeoman's work on this: “a Governor in Council appointment, a person appointed by the government entrusted to oversee taxpayer money, is not to personally profit from their work on a committee, as a GIC appointment, and neither is their family”.

That is pretty obvious. We call it a conflict of interest in this place. We all know the rules. These folks did not just break the rules but they did it in abundance. Again, in terms of the rules that were set up before, when we were in government, the NDP-Liberals are pushing the boundaries of any limits that were set for any of us in this place.

“In a five-year period where there were 405 transactions approved by the [Sustainable Development Technology Canada] board, the Auditor General sampled 226, so only half of them, and found that 186 of those 226 transactions were conflicted.” One would be bad enough, but there were 186. “That is the 82% and that is, again, the \$330 million”, as my colleague had said.

Those numbers are massive, but they are still a little bit unclear. It gets vague when you get past the \$100-million mark. What does that actually mean?

Let us talk about Sustainable Development Technology Canada. It was established in 2001 by the Government of Canada through the Canada Foundation for Sustainable Development Technology Act to fund the development and demonstration of new technologies that promote sustainable development, and it did some good

work. Prior to these guys forming government and some of their ministers getting involved, it was actually doing okay.

SDTC is a federally funded non-profit that is supposed to approve and disburse over \$100 million in funds annually to clean-technology companies. Executives awarded projects in which they held conflicts of over \$330 million in funds.

● (1640)

In 2019, former Liberal industry minister Navdeep Bains began appointing conflicted executives to the board of SDTC. I will later get into what some of those members have done.

The Prime Minister-appointed board began voting companies in which executives held active conflict of interest SDTC funding. Members were being put on the board that they actually knew were in conflict. They were already getting money from this board, yet they were still appointed to it. It is unbelievable. Governance standards at the fund deteriorated rapidly under the leadership of the new chair, Annette Verschuren. The Auditor General and Ethics Commissioner initiated separate investigations after whistle-blowers came forward with allegations of financial mismanagement at the fund.

I think I want to get into some of these individuals and what the story is. We will talk about Annette Verschuren. She was the chair of Sustainable Development Technology Canada, so she was the head of it. This is from *The Globe and Mail*:

What's mind-boggling is that SDTC was already funding an NRStor project in 2019, when Ms. Verschuren was appointed as chair. The Liberal government chose her to oversee an agency that had a funding contract with the company she ran. [Red flag.] ...Last week, SDTC's former chief executive officer, Leah Lawrence, told a parliamentary committee that she warned an assistant deputy minister at Innovation Science and Economic Development, Andrew Noseworthy. “I expressed concern there was a potential for both conflict of interest and the perception of conflict of interest,” Ms. Lawrence said. “I expressed concern that Ms. Verschuren and SDTC could potentially be damaged by the appointment.”

For her to be still there as a board member is unbelievable. From my colleague from South Shore—St. Margarets:

They established something called accelerators, and those accelerators were outside organizations that the board hired to vet proposals and make recommendations to the board. One of those was an organization called the Verschuren Centre at the University of Cape Breton, which is in the name of and was set up by the chair of the green slush fund.

There is MaRS Discovery District at U of T. Members probably know that. Can members guess who chairs MaRS? It is the chair of the green slush fund, Annette Verschuren.

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Companies would be screened through the board member-controlled organizations, and shockingly, their companies got recommended to the board for funding. That is just a pure coincidence. With 82% of the transactions that they approved, nine directors were conflicted. These directors do not represent 82% of the green technology industry in Canada....

That is a good thing to highlight. There are so many other entities and companies they could have picked, but they just happened to pick 82% that are part of this particular board. It is unbelievable.

It is strangely a pure coincidence with these hand-picked directors from the Prime Minister.

If that were not bad enough, this particular director [Andrée-Lise Méthot] in 2022 left and went to the Canada Infrastructure Bank board, and the first thing she did was to vote \$170 million of infrastructure bank money for a company owned by the chair of the green slush fund, Annette Verschuren.

It is absolutely unbelievable. This is one that is less money, but it is just so obvious that I have to say it.

Annette Verschuren also sought \$6 million for the Verschuren Centre at Cape Breton University because it was failing. SDTC said no when it went through the process, because there was a conflict.

However, in emails, it said it would help her find money from other government departments. Pretty soon after that, the Verschuren Centre got \$12 million from ACOA and the ISET program. Her other companies got \$50 million from Natural Resources Canada, and then of course there is the Infrastructure Bank one.

From a government document, these are some of the numbers that Annette Verschuren was approved in conflict: \$332,500, \$698,250, \$98,000, \$102,000, \$111,000, \$150,000 and it goes on. That is just one of these members of the board who was in conflict.

• (1645)

The next person is Stephen Kukucha. I will quote my colleague again, and he spoke of:

...another director, a fellow named Stephen Kukucha from British Columbia. Stephen Kukucha was a political staffer to former Liberal environment minister Anderson, and he was the organizer for the Liberal Party for the Prime Minister in British Columbia. As a reward, they put him on the green slush fund board. Surprisingly, we have another Liberal on the board in whose company he had a financial interest. In his time on the board, the companies he had a financial interest in received almost \$5 million from the very board he was serving on.

This is another conflict. I have some examples of the expenditures listed here for Stephen Kukucha. One is \$157,000. Another one is \$151,000, and one is \$1,033,771. This is all funding approved by the absolutely corrupt board.

We have more. The next member was Guy Ouimet. My colleague said:

...another board member handpicked by the Prime Minister, Guy Ouimet, who has admitted in committee that \$17 million of green slush fund money went to companies he has a financial interest in. He said that it is a small amount of money. It may be a small amount of money to him, but it is not to most Canadians, and that amount of money, he admitted, had gone up 1,000% in value since that investment was made in 2019. It [definitely] pays to be a Liberal insider.

He says \$17 million is a small amount of money. I do not know what world this guy comes from, but \$17 million, to most Canadians, probably 99% of Canadians, is a lot of money. He has an amount in an approved conflict list that actually says \$17 million. There is another amount that says \$157,000 and another one for \$151,000. It is just unbelievable. It just keeps going. It is endless.

We will move on. This is the last one I will mention. This is the one with direct ties to the current radical environment minister. This particular board member's name is Andrée-Lise Méthot. As my colleague said:

One director was particularly aggressive.... She was appointed in 2016 by the Prime Minister. Her name is Andrée-Lise Méthot. She runs a venture capital firm called Cycle Capital, in green technologies. Andrée-Lise Méthot's companies, before and during her time on the board, received \$250 million in grants from the SDTC.

That is a quarter of a billion dollars, folks, and that name of Cycle Capital will come up again. My colleague continues, "while she was on the board, \$114 million went to green companies that she had invested in." I already made reference to the connection between this person on the board and the current radical environment minister, the same environment minister who is causing mills to close in my riding, is limiting oil and gas development in my riding, and is limiting mining investment in the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut.

That same radical minister is having an effect. He wants Canadians to pay the carbon tax so he can get more money and give it to his friends. As my colleague said, "her in-house, paid lobbyist for 10 years before he was elected...was the current radical Minister of the Environment. While he was lobbying for Cycle Capital, the current radical Minister of the Environment got \$111 million." That is what he went to work for. He made money for this company. He brought that kind of money in before he was a minister.

This is the radical Minister of the Environment. In his time as lobbyist for Cycle Capital, for which he lobbied 25 times in the year before his entering the House, the PMO and the industry department gave over \$100 million in green slush money to Cycle Capital.

• (1650)

What is even more shocking is that the minister is a member of the House right now, but he still owns shares in that particular company. The question is that we are not sure what the value of those shares is. He has not declared that. That is, again, what some of these documents will disclose, and we will hopefully find out how much that is.

I will read on. My colleague said, "even though, as a cabinet minister of government, he participated in discussions that gave the green slush fund another \$750 million, of which over a quarter has gone to that company." This is the cabinet minister who has given the money to the same group to spend because he figured he could help out the Liberals' friends by dumping money into this thing, so he funded the fund with another three-quarters of a billion dollars.

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The minister has given money to a company he has direct ties to and has shares in. It is hard to argue that it is not going over there. We hope the documents will be forthcoming so we can actually see it. As my colleague from South Shore—St. Margarets said, “He still owns shares in it. He has not disclosed what they are worth.” He then makes reference to the minister having previous experience wearing an orange jumpsuit.

I think what bothered me the most when I saw some of these numbers is that we are the ones who go up to the northern communities, and I face this every time I go to Fort St. John and other northern communities in my riding. There, this is the issue that folks are dealing with. I will use an example. The carbon tax bill for a person in Fort Nelson living in a 1,500 square foot mobile home was over \$500. This was in the spring, by the way, and over half of that bill was pure carbon tax. This person, who probably cannot afford much, is trying to stay warm in the north in a mobile home, and the radical minister is saying that this person can afford to pay a bit more. It would be one thing if it were going to a good cause and was for a good reason, but now we see evidence that it is going to line the pockets of his Liberal friends. That is even more of a travesty in what is happening here.

We have used what maybe some would call a slogan, but people are genuinely struggling to feed themselves, stay warm and house themselves. Some people in these homeless encampments just cannot afford to live in an apartment anymore. They have nowhere else to go. They ran out of money or have lost their job in the natural resource sector for some reason, again because of the radical minister's policies.

What do we know in conclusion? The Auditor General of Canada found that the Prime Minister had turned Sustainable Development Technology Canada into a slush fund for Liberal insiders. As my colleague pointed out, “A recording of a senior civil servant slammed the ‘outright incompetence’ of the [Trudeau] government, which gave 390 million dollars' worth of contracts—

• (1655)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows we cannot use the names of members. I would like the hon. member to retract the use of the name.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, my colleague pointed out that “a recording of a senior civil servant slammed the ‘outright incompetence’ of the [NDP-Liberal] government, which gave 390 million dollars' worth of contracts inappropriately.” The Auditor General found the SDTC gave \$58 million to 10 ineligible projects that, on occasion, could not demonstrate an environmental benefit or development of green technology, and that \$334 million over 186 cases was given to projects in which board members held a conflict of interest. Another \$58 million was given to projects without ensuring contribution agreement terms were met.

The Auditor General made it clear that the blame for this scandal falls on the Prime Minister and the industry minister, and I would also argue the current environment minister, who did not sufficiently monitor the contracts that were given to Liberal insiders. While the radical environment minister punishes us, he lines the pockets of his NDP-Liberal friends. While the minister shuts down forestry with his radical 30 by 30 closures in B.C., Quebec and across the

country, his friends are pocketing millions. While he shuts down the responsible oil and gas developments that keep our northern communities going and keep us warm in the winter, he helps his friends pocket hundreds of millions of dollars.

I will finish by quoting my friend from South Shore—St. Margarets, who stated:

This is corruption like we have never seen in Canada. This is why we have asked for the documents, because the Liberals are hiding documents. This is why they are resisting and hiding the documents, because they know there is more corruption there with their hand-picked directors. If we were a private sector institution, we would be turning those documents over to the police to investigate. That is our job. No, it is not just the job of the police to go to the courts to seek that. It is our job to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to go to questions and comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, at times it is fairly pathetic to see how Conservatives will manipulate their speeches to take character assassination to the degree found in the member's speech.

The question I asked previously was about the chair of the organization we are talking about. She was a political adviser to Stephen Harper, Brian Mulroney and Jim Flaherty. She is a great donor to the Conservative Party of Canada. She has donated thousands and thousands of dollars, yet Conservative member after Conservative member continues to say she is Liberal-friendly.

The Conservative game is about character assassination and trying to make politics as ugly as possible so they can feed the far right. It is sad to see. The reality is that the government saw actions being taken that were inappropriate and took action to ensure that taxpayers and Canadians would get justice.

When will the Conservatives stop the disgusting game they are playing, allow us to get down to business and put Canadians ahead of their political interests?

• (1700)

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, I always get a kick out of the member accusing others of character assassination and then going on to do that exact thing himself. He is gaslighting Canadians.

The bottom line is that the Liberals need to produce the documents. If they were to produce the documents unredacted, then this would all go away.

Mr. Don Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am new in this place, but I was not born yesterday. Putting this into perspective, \$400 million is equivalent to 3,000 Teslas, 26,000 Maple Leafs tickets or 360 homes in Toronto. It is plain to see what is going on. There were bad things done with Canadians' money and they are being hidden.

The examples you gave me are akin to insider trading. That is the world I come from—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I never gave any examples to anyone. I would ask the member to please speak through the Chair.

Mr. Don Stewart: Madam Speaker, the examples the member gave are akin to insider trading. That is the world where I was trained, and that is a criminal offence. That is what is going on here, in my view.

I am dumbfounded at the lack of transparency, which would clear this whole thing up in about 35 seconds, if we are talking about efficiency. I am an engineer, and I love to see efficiency. If those on the other side of the House would produce the documents, we would be done.

Are we to believe the government is actually protecting Canadians' rights?

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, we all remember the campaign in 2015 of sunny ways. I even had sunglasses made with “sunny ways” written on the side. We all knew it was a clever slogan, but we also knew that sunny ways would not last very long with the government. It was supposed to shine a light on things so there would be an open and accountable government. That went away pretty quickly.

With some of the language Liberals were using, maybe they were secretly saying they would be doing things in a new way. If this is the new way they were promising Canadians, I do not think Canadians were expecting this. I think of the people struggling, like Zander from Fort Nelson, who is struggling with paying the carbon tax bill he sent me, which is over \$200, and he is just trying to stay warm in his mobile home. He is paying this money, and the radical environment minister wants him to pay more. It is going to quadruple. It is going to get higher, and it is all to fund his NDP-Liberal buddies and fill their pockets. It is an absolute shame.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we talk about struggle. There were 300,000 Canadians who lost their jobs under the Conservative government. There were 300,000 manufacturing jobs lost under the previous Conservative government. I remember that because factories and businesses were closed in my community. Those were terrible times.

This Liberal government has delivered a battery plant to Windsor with 2,500 good-paying, local Canadian jobs. Why has the Conservative opposition not supported this battery plant in Windsor, the 2,500 jobs in my community and Windsor workers? Why have Conservatives not supported those workers in my hometown?

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, there is a bit of a discrepancy in what the member just said. Back when we were in govern-

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ment, when I was part of the 2011-15 government, we had some pretty good economic things going on in this country. We had natural resources in my riding, natural gas was being developed, forestry was going and we had a softwood lumber agreement within the first 80 days.

Contrast that with the government, which had to spend taxpayer money, in the billions, to buy a battery plant. Instead of letting the market respond and build itself, the Liberals had to spend billions and billions of dollars of taxpayer money to build this thing. That is not the way this country started and it is not the way we are going to survive.

We are \$1.4 trillion in debt, and it is getting worse under the government. The Liberals are throwing money at everything and hoping something works, but it is not—

• (1705)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member talked about workers in his part of the country facing difficult times. It takes me back to a few years ago when my home community was going through difficult times as a result of the agreement that the Harper government approved, which allowed Vale, a multinational, to buy out Inco. It went on to slash all of the value-added jobs at the mine site in my hometown of Thompson. Unfortunately, all we had was platitudes from the Stephen Harper government and no real action to back up resource workers and ensure value-added capacity in my hometown.

I would like to hear the member's thoughts on why the Conservative government did not stand up for workers at that time. Is the concern for resource workers in northern provinces just reserved for the Liberals? Let us not forget our history, including the history of my hometown of Thompson.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, I can only speak to what happened in my riding when we were in government. When we formed a majority, when projects were on hold and money was not being spent, the gears of the economy started turning again. That was because of the leadership of Stephen Harper.

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We have not talked about forestry a lot today, but as I mentioned, within the first 80 days we had a softwood lumber agreement. After nine years, these guys, the NDP-Liberals, have not even gotten an agreement done. I caught the minister during previous negotiations and meetings she had with her U.S. counterparts, and I asked whether softwood was even on the agenda. It has not been on the agenda for the last six years. We got it done when we were in government in the first 80 days. It provided surety. We also had a lot of development in forestry across the country at that time.

I hope we get back there once again. I hope we see manufacturing come back to Canada and natural resources developed in Canada, and we bring back the prosperous country we once knew and loved.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, since we are on the topic of natural resources and the work the Conservatives did to damage the natural resource sector, I will note that I was in Alberta working in the natural resource sector in the northeast part of the province at the Cold Lake oil sands when I was laid off because the Conservatives had sold off Canadian Natural Resources Limited. Stephen Harper sold it to a state-owned enterprise known as Nexen, a Chinese natural resource company. Where was the member then when it came to Chinese state ownership of CNRL, which he and his party sold off? Where is he today?

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, maybe the member is misremembering, because the government never owned CNRL, so it could not have been sold by the Canadian government. Maybe that is the vision the New Democrats have, where governments own corporations. We have a different vision, where corporations and the workers who work—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is another day and another Liberal scandal. Canadians have watched Parliament grind to a halt because of the government's green slush fund scandal, and now that the Liberals have been caught, the Prime Minister is preventing Parliament from moving forward in order to cover up the truth. Members of the House fully understand that Parliament has ground to a halt because the Prime Minister is refusing to hand over documents relating to Sustainable Development Technology Canada.

Sustainable Development Technology Canada, also known as SDTC, was created by the government to fund new technologies that would reduce emissions. However, Canadians have discovered that SDTC has turned into nothing more than a Liberal slush fund rampant with corruption and conflicts of interest. Ever since the Liberals began appointing new executives to the board in 2019, executives were awarding money to companies that they held an active conflict of interest in.

The Liberals would have gotten away with this corruption had it not been for the brave whistle-blowers who came forward to sound the alarm on the financial mismanagement of the fund. Since then, both the Auditor General and the Ethics Commissioner launched separate investigations into the Liberal green slush fund. What did they find? The Auditor General's investigation revealed that \$390 million in funding was awarded to projects that should have been

totally ineligible or was awarded to projects in which the board members were conflicted. The Auditor General found SDTC awarded \$58 million to 10 ineligible projects that at times could not prove an environmental benefit or a development of green technology, \$334 million over 186 cases in which board members held a conflict of interest and \$58 million for projects without guaranteeing that terms and conditions were met. Liberal insiders were caught padding the pockets of companies that they were invested in, and they were doing this all with Canadian taxpayers' money.

Although the Auditor General exposed this corruption, there are many reasons to believe that this is far more than just financial mismanagement. Canadians are asking if this is criminal, and rightly so.

The same whistle-blower who exposed the Liberals' green slush fund is confident that an RCMP investigation would find criminality. The whistle-blower stated at committee, "Just as I was always confident that the Auditor General would confirm the financial mismanagement at SDTC, I remain equally confident that the RCMP will substantiate the criminal activities that occurred within the organization." When asked if the Auditor General's investigation was sufficient enough, the whistle-blower said:

I think the Auditor General's investigation was more of a cursory review. I don't think the goal and mandate of the Auditor General's office is to actually look into criminality, so I'm not surprised by the fact that they haven't found anything criminal. They're not looking at intent. If their investigation was focused on intent, of course they would find the criminality.

That is why the House of Commons ordered that the documents on the green slush fund be handed over to the RCMP. How will we ever get to the bottom of this corruption if the RCMP does not have all the information needed to fully investigate the criminality of the slush fund?

Although the Liberals voted against the document production order, the House of Commons adopted the motion. However, instead of respecting the will of Parliament, the Liberal government refused to release the documents ordered by the House of Commons and therefore breached the privileges of Parliament. This is a very serious offence. How can we represent Canadians if the Prime Minister fails to respect the House of Commons? How can we represent Canadians if the Prime Minister disregards the powers of Parliament? How can we represent Canadians if the Prime Minister turns a blind eye to democracy? The answer is simple: We cannot.

● (1710)

What we are seeing from the Prime Minister is a full-scale cover-up to hide the massive corruption. The Prime Minister does not care about accountability. He does not care about transparency. He does not care about justice. The only thing the Prime Minister cares about is protecting his government and the Liberal insiders who got rich from taxpayer dollars.

It is not just me who is saying this either. While testifying at the committee, the SDTC whistle-blower stated, “I think the current government is more interested in protecting themselves and protecting the situation from being a public nightmare. They would rather protect wrongdoers and financial mismanagement than have to deal with a situation like SDTC in the public sphere.” I could not agree more. It has become very clear over the last nine years that the Canadians who do best under the government are well-connected Liberal insiders.

The Liberal government has displayed a constant disregard for Parliament and the work of parliamentarians. This is not the first time the Liberals have failed to adhere to document production orders, especially regarding their failed environmental programs. For months, the environment committee ordered the environment minister to release proof that the carbon tax reduces emissions. In fact, the committee ordered the production of these documents on three separate occasions. We ordered this information on November 30, 2023, on March 21, 2020, and again on April 9, 2024.

Each time the committee ordered these documents, the environment minister disregarded the will of parliamentarians and refused to provide them. I wonder why. Maybe it was because the environment minister admitted that his government does not track the emissions directly reduced from the carbon tax. Maybe it was because emissions have gone up under the Prime Minister. Maybe it was because Canada's independent environment commissioner said that the Liberals would not meet their own emissions reduction targets. The point is that the environment minister's defiance of Parliament was an insult to Canadians. Unfortunately, the NDP and the Bloc refused to refer this matter to the House of Commons at the time.

With regard to the carbon tax, it is important to note that just this morning, the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer once again confirmed that the carbon tax will cost the average Canadian family more than they get back. According to the PBO's report, which was just released this morning, “taking into consideration both fiscal and economic impacts, PBO estimates that the average household in each of the backstop provinces will see a net cost”. It is no wonder the Liberals were hiding the carbon tax documents from the environment committee.

This was not the only time this year that the Liberals refused to hand over documents on their failed environmental programs. Although we are discussing a billion-dollar green slush fund today, I am confident that we will soon be discussing another one very soon in the House of Commons. That is because earlier this year, the environment commissioner released a damning report on the Liberal government's \$8-billion net-zero accelerator fund. The vast majority of Canadians have never heard of the net-zero accelerator fund, which I find very surprising given that it is costing taxpayers \$8 billion.

Usually when a government spends this much money, its members travel across the country, talk about what the money was used for and how it will help Canadians. However, that is not the case with the net-zero accelerator fund. Thanks to Canada's environment commissioner, we now know why the Liberals do not want to talk about it. In a damning report tabled in Parliament, Canada's environment commissioner revealed that the \$8-billion net-zero acceler-

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ator was nothing more than another Liberal slush fund. The audit found that over 70% of the funding agreements had no commitment to reduce any emissions. The whole point of this fund was to reduce emissions, but now we know that this was a complete lie. Does this sound familiar? It sure does. This is very similar to the corruption we are debating today on the Liberals' billion-dollar green slush fund.

● (1715)

Canada's Auditor General found that 10 projects funded through the green slush fund did not even produce green technology or contribute to emissions reductions. In fact, \$59 million of the green slush fund was spent on ineligible projects. This is the same type of corruption that was revealed by the environment commissioner on the Liberals' net-zero accelerator fund.

The commissioner testified at committee on this scandal. He stated that “the department did not always know to what extent GHG emissions had been reduced by those companies that took part in the initiative, or whether the funding provided would lead to reduced emissions.”

When I asked the commissioner how many emissions had been reduced by this \$8-billion emissions reduction program, he stated, “I can't say how many yet.”

It is unbelievable. When I asked the commissioner if the government was tracking the value for money from the net-zero accelerator, he replied, “Not in a public way.... We've made our own calculations of the value for money that we could, based on the data they have, but we have seen no public reporting on the value for money, no.”

Not only did the environment commissioner reveal that the Liberals were handing out money without any commitment to reduce emissions, but the commissioner also revealed that the emissions reduction target of net-zero accelerator was being protected under cabinet confidence.

According to a written response from the government's industry department, the government is “not in a position to disclose the [emissions reduction] targets, as they are protected under Cabinet confidence”. This is coming from the same department that was responsible for the green slush fund that we are debating today.

The Liberals are charging taxpayers \$8 billion for a government program that is supposed to reduce emissions without telling them the goal of the program. That means no one will ever know what the money is achieving, if anything.

Who got the money? In typical Liberal fashion, the government was keeping this list a secret from Canadians. The lucky recipients of \$8 billion in taxpayers' money could not be found anywhere.

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That is why Conservatives on the environment committee ordered the government to release this list of recipients. We found that billions of taxpayer dollars were given away to non-Canadian companies.

The Liberals refused to provide this list to Canadian taxpayers, so I will read the recipients of the money into the record: \$200 million to Algoma Steel, \$400 million to ArcelorMittal, \$49 million to Heidelberg Materials, \$514 million to Stellantis, \$96 million to General Motors, \$40 million to CAE, \$61 million to Pratt & Whitney, \$222 million to Rio Tinto, \$15 million to Volvo, \$350 million to INSAT, \$300 million to Air Products, \$27 million to E3 Lithium, \$15 million to AVL Fuel Cell Canada, \$204 million to E-One Moli, \$25 million to Svante, \$48 million to Moltex, \$500 million to NextStar Energy, \$700 million to PowerCo, \$551 million to Umicore Canada, \$27 million to Westinghouse, \$50 million to Lion Electric, \$37 million to Vale Canada Limited and \$148 million to POSCO.

I doubt the Canadian taxpayers will ever get a thank you from these megacorporations. Taxpayers should be furious. I am furious. I cannot imagine hearing this and knowing that \$8 billion went to foreign companies, very well-off companies, in the name of net zero, in the name of “we are going to reduce emissions and we all have to put our shoulder to this”.

What did we get out of this? Someone's pockets were lined, but it certainly was not the Canadian taxpayer.

- (1720)

Canadian taxpayers should be disgusted with the Liberal government as it continues to spend their money without any transparency or accountability. That is why the environment committee ordered that those net-zero accelerator contracts be released, so Canadians could see the details, but the government is once again refusing to respect a documentation order. It has been over 150 days since we ordered these documents on behalf of Canadians, yet the Liberal government refuses to show Canadian taxpayers what it is charging them \$8 billion for.

It gets worse. This is unbelievable. Earlier this week, at the government operations and estimates committee, the environment commissioner revealed the Liberals have created a fast-track lane for this \$8-billion taxpayer-funded program. According to the environment commissioner, megacorporations can fast-track their applications for billions of taxpayer dollars by simply writing a letter. Guess who that letter is supposed to be sent to: the Prime Minister.

According to page 8 of the environment commissioner's report on the net-zero accelerator fund, “A project of more than \$50 million also requires Treasury Board approval, concurrence letters from ministers of other concerned departments, and Cabinet approval”. It then states that net-zero accelerator projects “can be fast-tracked with a letter to the Prime Minister.”

The Liberals are giving special access to billions of tax dollars with a simple letter to the Prime Minister. We cannot make this stuff up. This is absolutely absurd. If Canadians thought the green slush fund was the damning scandal, wait until we uncover the truth about the Liberals' \$8-billion net-zero accelerator slush fund.

Parliament has the privilege to compel the production of papers. The privilege allows us to properly represent Canadians who elected us to serve them. However, as the Speaker ruled, the privilege was breached by the Liberal government and the Liberal Prime Minister. Let us not forget that. The Prime Minister is blocking everything. We can all dance around this and we can all say what we want to say, but the Prime Minister is ultimately in control of this, and he does not want to have anybody see these documents.

On June 10, the House of Commons passed a motion that ordered the production of documents relating to the government's green slush fund so they could be turned over to the RCMP. In response to this motion, the government either outright refused the House order or redacted the documents that were turned over, basically making them useless so no one could do a full investigation. It would ultimately end up at committee just like we are right now. That is why Conservatives raised the question of privilege.

The Speaker then ruled on this question of privilege. He stated, “The House has the undoubted right to order the production of any and all documents from any entity or individual it deems necessary to carry out its duties.” The Speaker then added, “The House has clearly ordered the production of certain documents, and that order has clearly not been fully complied with.”

It is no wonder that Canadians have lost confidence in the government. Time and time again, we see the Liberal government cover up its wrongdoings. It is a pattern of behaviour that has resulted in anger among Canadians. Every time the Liberal government is caught doing something wrong, it does everything it can to cover up its wrongdoings. This approach is dangerous to democracy because it suggests the government can get away with anything. It sets a precedent that rules do not apply to the government of the day.

After nine years, this is more proof that the Liberals are not worth the cost, crime or corruption. The Speaker has ruled that the Liberal government has violated Parliament's order to hand over evidence to the police for a criminal investigation into the Liberals' \$400-million green slush fund scandal. Instead of respecting the will of Parliament by handing over the documents, the Prime Minister has instead chosen to paralyze Parliament. As such, the Prime Minister has made it impossible for members of Parliament to address the issue that matters most to Canadians. We cannot address the doubling of—

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• (1725)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Fleetwood—Port Kells.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is proof that when all is said and done, there is more said than done. I think members on the other side are running out of, or getting a bit tired of, their own talking points on this one.

We have a situation where they are demanding that records supplied to Parliament be given to the RCMP for purposes of investigation. I do not think anybody would disagree with the notion that an investigation needs to happen, but the process they are talking about would produce something the RCMP has said it does not want and cannot use.

Can the hon. member speak to the fact that the dear leader over there thinks he is smarter than the RCMP and knows more than the RCMP does about doing an investigation properly?

• (1730)

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, the Speaker ruled that the Liberal government has violated Parliament's order to hand over evidence to the police for criminal investigation into the Liberals' \$400-million green slush fund scandal. Instead of respecting the will of Parliament in handing over those documents, the Prime Minister has instead chosen to paralyze Parliament. As such, the Prime Minister has made it impossible for members of Parliament to address the issues that matter most to Canadians.

We cannot address the doubling of housing costs. We cannot address the crime and chaos. We cannot address the inflation caused by the Liberal government—

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, we have made our position clear. We agree with the Conservatives on the question of privilege. That is not the issue.

I listened to my colleague's speech. It seems to me that giving loans or subsidies to big or small businesses is nothing new. However, my colleague listed off the names of businesses that were supported by the net-zero accelerator fund as though that were some kind of scandal.

Is my colleague trying to tell us that a potential, very hypothetical Conservative government would cut all forms of support for the transition of businesses, including oil companies?

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, we cannot address the doubling of housing costs. We cannot address the crime and chaos. We cannot address the inflation caused by the Liberal government. The Prime Minister must end the cover-up by handing over the evidence to the police so Parliament, all of us elected MPs, can get back to working for Canadians.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have asked this question several times now. It has been

raised several times, as maybe a slogan about this Liberal insider business, which I agree with, that Ms. Verschuren is a donor and member of the party. She has been a large contributor financially to the Liberal Party, but so has she been a large donor to the Conservative Party. She has made a donation to it almost every single year, including the years she was the chair of SDTC.

She is also an insider, would the member not agree?

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, I believe Annette Verschuren's donations were to Lisa Raitt and Jean Charest. She is from Cape Breton. She also donated at the same time to the Liberals in 2023, \$800 in 2020, \$800 in 2019; donated \$1,600 to two riding associations; and in 2009, was a max donor to Michael Ignatieff.

I hope that answers some of the member's questions.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, listening to the member opposite is very similar to listening to the collective speeches delivered by the Conservative Party. One does not let the facts and the full truth get in the way of a Conservative-Reform party speech. That is what we are witnessing.

There is very simple question that no Conservative member of Parliament has actually answered. Instead, they skate around it. It is a simple question. The RCMP and the Auditor General of Canada, two well-respected institutions, have made it very clear to the House of Commons that, in essence, the game the Conservative Party is playing today, demanding that unredacted information be collected and given directly to the RCMP, is in fact a blurring of judicial independence and could be a violation of the Charter of Rights. That is not something the government or the Liberal Party are saying, but something that two institutions that Canadians have a great deal of respect for have said.

Why are Conservatives ignoring those two institutions on this issue?

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, this reeks of elitism and out-of-touch Liberalism.

I cannot honestly believe this. I just went on in my speech about the billions of dollars at risk for hard-working Canadians taxpayers, and all this guy can come up with is asking about the RCMP. We are legislators. We are the Parliament of Canada. We on this side have asked the Liberals to produce some documents. It is very easy and 10 seconds would fix it. Why will the member not talk to his Prime Minister and say that he thinks it is time and the jig is up?

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• (1735)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his incredible work in uncovering a lot of the corruption and scandal we have seen. It is covered in a veil of the Liberals pretending to be environmentalists and pretending to care about the climate.

We have asked for these unredacted documents to uncover where \$400 million of taxpayer money went. What does my colleague think the Liberals are hiding?

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, it is what everybody else in Canada thinks the Liberals are hiding: corruption. The Auditor General found over 186 conflicts of interest. We are supposed to be professionals. We should be outraged about it. Are we? No, the Liberals have an excuse. They cannot show anybody any facts or figures. That is why we have become the laughingstock of the country.

The Liberals and the Prime Minister can fix all this, but the Prime Minister is in the way. I cannot emphasize that enough to all the parties here. It is the Prime Minister's fault. The Prime Minister has to come clean about it.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, we agree that more accountability and transparency are needed. We agree, but we have been talking about this for a week now. Could we move on to something else?

We have a housing crisis and a climate crisis going on right now. Farmers were out in front of Parliament today demanding justice because the unelected Senate is paralyzing the House of Commons. The Senate is actually laughing at us right now. The Bloc Québécois is talking about it. Seniors are not being treated fairly in this country. There are plenty of issues we could talk about.

Does my colleague agree that it is about time we moved on to something else?

[English]

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague's outrage. It is unbelievable. The Liberals and the Prime Minister are in their back pockets of every person he mentioned, and that is the travesty of all this. That is the bad thing about it. They are stealing from Canadians and should be held to account.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, speaking of cherry-picking, the member spoke specifically about all the Conservative donations made by Ms. Verschuren, the Liberal-Conservative insider of the SDTC fund, that do not directly affect the Conservative Party. He mentioned all the leadership donations she made to the Conservative Party, but he failed to admit that she made direct contributions, as recently as last year, including a max donation in 2022, to the Conservative Party when she was chair of SDTC. The Liberal-Conservative insider of SDTC, Ms. Verschuren, has robbed Canadians and given herself a bunch of money, and the Conservatives do not even have the courage to admit when they are wrong.

I will give the member another chance. Liberal-Conservative insider Ms. Verschuren, who was chair of SDTC, gave herself mil-

lions of dollars. Will the member admit that these donations and her insider affiliation with the Conservatives are wrong?

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, I have about 10 more examples, but I think the member is really jealous that there are no NDP donations in them.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, integrity, character and trust are what I ran on in my first election in 2014 and what I have run on in every subsequent election. Nothing means more to me than protecting my integrity and character and ensuring that my constituents in Foothills have their trust in me.

I have to question how my Liberal colleagues will go home for the Thanksgiving constituency week and look their constituents in the face and say they can still trust them and they have integrity and character, when they know there is a green slush fund of more than \$400 million that the Prime Minister is doing everything he possibly can to hide from Canadians. That is a big number. There is no question about that. However, in my opinion, the size of the corruption in a scandal does not matter as much as what it says about the person involved in it, who is the Prime Minister.

He campaigned in 2015 about wanting the most accountable and transparent government in Canadian history, and he has certainly fallen well short of that goal. The epitaph of the government, when it falls in a very short amount of time, will be "Promises made, promises broken", or perhaps "Here lies a government that took care of its friends despite the needs of its constituents". I am not exactly sure if that is a legacy I would want my constituents to see in me.

The role of Parliament and all parliamentarians is to hold the government to account and oversee government spending. By refusing to comply with the Speaker's decision to produce documents, the government is undermining the principle and integrity of this House and is setting a very dangerous precedent for what I think Canadians expect from all of us in the House of Commons. Parliament is the House of the people, the people in our constituencies across this country who trusted and elected us to represent them, be their voice and ensure that we are good stewards of every single one of their tax dollars. Canadians, perhaps more than ever, as they struggle with the cost of living crisis and try hard every day just to put food on the table and pay their mortgage, deserve to know that their tax dollars are being spent prudently and on programs that will impact their lives in a positive way.

I often give constituents or stakeholders tours of the House of Commons and Parliament. We have a running joke, as my constituents have elected me as a Conservative member, to watch their wallets and hold their purses tight, because if they pass by a Liberal, they may ask for a donation or pick into their pockets. We do that as something fun, in jest, to have a little laugh, but unfortunately, the joke has turned into reality, as the government is reaching into the pockets of every single Canadian to fill the pockets of Liberal insiders and their friends.

Honestly, the level of this scandal is, in no uncertain terms, disgusting. It is enough to make most Canadians, and certainly the Canadians in my riding, quite sick to their stomach. Canadians deserve better. They deserve an honest, accountable and hard-working government that does not abuse their hard-earned paycheques, that fights for the people, that respects voters, that follows through with the promises it has given to protect and govern this prosperous country and that leaves it in a better condition and shape than when it got there. However, what is happening here flies in the face of what I think most Canadians would expect a government to do and steward forward for them.

The RCMP commissioner said quite clearly that the directors of this green slush fund, who were hand-picked by the Prime Minister, were abusing Canadian tax dollars at an unprecedented level. I would love to say that this is unusual for the Liberal government, but unfortunately, this is just the latest on the list of scandals the Prime Minister has wreaked on Canadian taxpayers.

● (1740)

The level of this corruption has Canadians outraged and disgusted because the Liberals have taken advantage of their position of power to enrich their friends to the detriment of Canadians. I would like to say that this level of scandal is unprecedented, but I cannot, and that is unfortunate. Scandal and corruption have become a habit with the Prime Minister. This is not a one-off.

Two million Canadians are going to food banks every single year and food insecurity is up 111%. That means millions of Canadian families are unable to feed their children and struggle from meal to meal. A quarter of Canadians are skipping meals just to make ends meet. At a time of very extreme financial difficulty, the Liberal government seems to have no problem pilfering the pockets of Canadians and wasting tens of millions of tax dollars just to ensure that political friends and insiders are well taken care of.

Sustainable Development Technology Canada, which was supposed to be managing a green energy fund for the benefit of Canadians, has abused Canadian tax dollars. What is interesting is that this did not happen once; it did not happen twice; it did not even happen three times. This has happened 186 times in just this one program. If there are 186 conflicts of interest in one Liberal program, imagine what else is out there. I think the Liberals are scared to table these documents because the level of scandal that will be uncovered is something Canadians have never seen before.

Let us go back in time. When I talk to my constituents about this issue and in the emails and letters I am getting, they compare it to the sponsorship scandal, which brought down the Chrétien-Martin government. The one similarity is they were funnelling tax dollars to enrich their friends and political allies. The difference is that the SDTC scandal is five times bigger, given the amount of money we are talking about, than the sponsorship scandal. If that scandal brought down a government, I hope Canadians will demand the same thing with the SDTC scandal.

We need to emphasize that this is not Liberal money. This is Canadian taxpayers' money. This is money that taxpayers have worked hard to earn. When they pay their taxes to the government, they expect those taxes to go to building bridges and roads, paying for hospitals and schools, hiring doctors and teachers and building

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important infrastructure and social programs, not to Liberal insiders. We know it involves \$400 million, but it could be even higher. How many hospitals would that build? How many roads, ports and bridges would that maintain? How many meals would that serve? How many schoolteachers would that hire? How many people would that feed?

The former chair of SDTC, Annette Verschuren, who is the face of this disaster, was hand-picked by the Prime Minister despite warnings from a previous chair of her conflict. She tried to get \$6.8 million for the Verschuren Centre in Cape Breton through the slush fund. She also tried to use her influence on the green slush fund to get a further \$10 million for the centre from Industry Canada and ACOA. This is just one example of the many levels of corruption the Liberals are trying to hide from Canadians.

The Prime Minister's appointees were doling out taxpayer monies to companies that the board of directors of this fund owned. They did not think twice about abusing this program 186 times. However, despite warnings that the chair was in conflict, the Prime Minister, as always happens, got his way. Ethics and conflict be damned, he put this person in that role, and he is trying to hide the level of that scandal by withholding documents from the House.

● (1745)

As they always like to do, the Liberals are saying that there is nothing to see here. However, there is something to see here; there is a scandal of 400 million taxpayer dollars stolen from Canadians and given to Liberal insiders.

I was thinking about this a bit, and I know that some of my colleagues have been doing that as well. I find myself, now and again as we are discussing Liberal scandals and corruption, saying a lot of "Oh my gosh, I forgot about that one" and "Oh my God, there was that one." I kind of get the feeling that the Liberals bring up another scandal as often as possible so we have to forget about the ones that happened in the past.

I do have to give the Liberals a bit of credit; I do not know how they manage all of these different scandals, keep them in line and remember which one is which, whacking this mole and that mole. I have to give them credit because I do not know how they keep track of the bag men. They are removing tax dollars from one friend in one alley and from one company to another. That has to be a lot of logistics. If the Liberals only put that effort into actually governing the country, imagine where we would be, but that is not what they are doing.

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Maybe if I have time I will list off the incredible collection of greatest hits that the Prime Minister has had of the scandals under his watch. It is a very long list. However, I thought of something else. I mentioned earlier in my speech that the Prime Minister campaigned in 2015 on having the most transparent and open government in Canadian history. I will share some of the greatest hits of his quotes. He said, "I think we're going to have to embark on a completely different style of government. A government that...accepts its responsibilities to be open and transparent".

In 2013, our Prime Minister claimed:

We will be coming out shortly with a way to open up and be more transparent about all our expenses in a way that will restore Canadians' confidence and trust in holders of public office....

We will certainly offer a level of transparency that hasn't been seen before.

Maybe it is our fault as Canadians, but when he said that we will have a level of transparency and accountability like we have never seen before, I was thinking the other way; however, what has happened is that he has kind of gone the opposite direction, and he has slammed the door shut on accountability and transparency when it comes to accountability for Canadian tax dollars.

Let us go back a bit further in time. I find this one very ironic. When the member for Papineau was just a sitting member of the third party, his first private member's bill as an opposition MP was a transparency act. He offered bold promises to revitalize the access to information system. Where is that wide-eyed parliamentarian now? He came in with all this gusto, saying that he was going to shed sunlight on the House of Commons. I guess he was practising very early on the idea that promises are made to be broken. He started trying to fool Canadians in 2013, but Canadians are not fooled anymore.

Even in a recent podcast with his Liberal colleague, the Prime Minister admitted that he courted the fair-vote folks, who are usually NDP supporters, promising them that he would change the electoral system, have electoral reform and make sure proportional representation was part of the discussion. Then he admitted in the podcast that he had no intention of ever entertaining proportional representation. He had only said that to win over NDP voters, and then when he got elected, it was pushed to the side and long forgotten. It was a promise made and a promise broken.

In 2015, after he was elected, the Prime Minister said, "Canadians voted for change, and we are committed to delivering that change. We are committed to being an open, honest, transparent government....all ministers, including the Prime Minister, [will] be held to greater account." He is the same Prime Minister who is doing everything he can to skirt the rules on transparency and accountability just to hide his scandalous actions.

In 2016, the Prime Minister said, "Canadians can be reassured that we have always followed all the rules, and we always will, as well as upholding the principles and values under which Canadians have confidence in their government, principles like accountability, transparency and openness." Ya, right.

• (1750)

He said:

The reality is that this system requires a high degree of openness, transparency, and accountability in order to maintain Canadians' confidence in our democracy and system of government.

I can assure Canadians that our party always follows all the rules and that it also supports all the values and principles associated with those rules.

He said, "The fact is, the Liberal Party is always following all the rules and the values that Canadians expect in terms of openness, transparency, and accountability, and we will continue to uphold the trust of Canadians." Honestly, I do not know how he keeps saying this with a straight face.

He also said, "This is important to all Canadians, and we are following the rules because we know that people need to have confidence in their government, in their ministers, and in how political parties operate. That is why we are always transparent, accountable, and open about our fundraisers." I think my colleagues have talked about the fundraisers and how well that has gone for him. The "cash for access" with business owners and millionaires from communist China is yet another scandal that has been a part of the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister said, "We in the Liberal Party and this government, have always believed that sunshine is the best disinfectant." That is a classic. He went on to say, "That is why we have moved forward on openness and transparency in ways that, yes, perhaps open us to a few more attacks from the members opposite, but ultimately create the confidence that Canadians must have in their...institutions".

He does not seem to be so excited about being held accountable by the opposition today, which is a lot different from where he was in 2015.

He then went on to say, "We will continue to take very seriously the trust that Canadians placed in us by remaining open, transparent and accountable to the opposition and to Canadians." If he were so committed to working with the opposition, to ensuring that we had access to the information that our constituents are demanding, why has he had such a quick change of heart? Why is he trying to hide the documents that Canadians deserve to see?

The Prime Minister also said:

I believe in sunny ways. I believe in staying focused on Canadians, and that is exactly what we're doing. I believe that sunshine is the best disinfectant. Openness and transparency is what Canadians expect. That is always what we will always stand for.

I respect the member opposite tremendously for his responsibility to ask difficult questions, and to press the government on it. I am going to stay focused on doing the right things the right way, and ensuring our team is doing that....

I could go on. I have a long list of comments that he has made over the years.

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I cannot pass this one up: In 2019, he said, “Under my leadership, we have raised the bar on transparency.” I have no idea how low the bar was, or he thought it was, if this is as far as we have gotten and this is what he thinks. In fact it was not as hard as I thought it would be, but I had my staff look up how many times the Prime Minister has said the word “transparency” in the House. In Parliament, he has said the word “transparency”, and talked about how important it is, more than 400 times.

However, now secrecy and obfuscation are the hallmarks of the Liberal government. Like I said, the Prime Minister's statement should be “A promise made is a promise about to be broken.” All of this begs the question, “What are the Liberals hiding?” How bad is this?

I know that the questions from my colleagues say that we are infringing on the Charter of Rights if we try to ask for the information. I would love for the Liberal members to go back to their ridings this week and say to their constituents, to their face, “Hey, you don't deserve to know how bad this scandal is because we're just here protecting your charter rights.” Give me a break.

I will leave members with this, a great thought from the member for Carleton: When I get robbed, I don't form a committee to discuss it. When I get robbed, I call the police.

The police deserve to see the information. Canadians deserve to see the information, because the level of the scandal and the robbery of Canadian taxpayer dollars needs to be brought to light. The Conservatives will continue to fight until it is found out.

• (1755)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again we have to revisit what the debate is about. It is not about releasing the documents; it is about how it should be done in a way that protects charter rights. We have been advised by the Auditor General and the RCMP that releasing the documents to them is not the right way to proceed. There has been a ruling from the Speaker that said that the issue should go to PROC.

Could the member opposite please admit to Canadians that this is a filibuster by the Conservatives so nothing is getting done in the House? We have agreed to send the documents to PROC. We are not hiding the documents; we are simply ensuring that it is done in the correct way according to the processes we have in the House of Commons.

• (1800)

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, again, I would encourage the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill to go back to her riding during the Thanksgiving constituency break and explain to her constituents that they do not have the right to see these documents.

We are just trying to do this in the right way. If it is such a procedural issue, they should just table the documents. If there is nothing to be concerned about, if there is nothing within these documents that they are scared or frightened of Canadians seeing, they should put them on the table.

They should stop delaying and try to get this to committee. We know the truth. They do not want these documents to ever see the light of day.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned several past Liberal scandals, including the sponsorship scandal, a well-known corruption case. However, he conveniently neglected to say that it was also scandalous not only because some people lined their pockets, but also because it involved a massive propaganda campaign to try to sell Quebeckers on a country that was never theirs. That was also part of the sponsorship scandal.

I should point out that there were also scandals under Harper. There were cost overruns under the Conservatives, whether it was McKinsey, GC Strategies or others. Does this not mean that the problem is more in the system, in the regime, in governance, rather than the colour of the hat of whichever party forms the Canadian government?

[*English*]

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, yes, the sponsorship scandal was absolutely about propaganda. The Liberal Party was using its resources, taxpayer resources, to give itself an advantage at election time. That is why this helped bring down a government.

I was also very proud to be part of a Conservative government, under former prime minister Stephen Harper, that brought forward the accountability act. It established the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, a public office that the government seems to have no problem abusing and ignoring, in terms of the rulings that it has been given. In fact, we have a Prime Minister who has been found in contravention twice. No other prime minister in history has ever been found in conflict. It shows the record. I would put the record of the Conservative government up against the Liberal government any day of the week.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, Greens support the terms of the motion, in terms of sending it to committee. My understanding is that this would happen as soon as there is a vote on it. For this, all that has to happen is to no longer have speakers speaking to it. I think the member for Foothills and I agree about the importance of taxpayer money being used effectively.

I have done a bit of math on how money is being spent with respect to this debate. We have had about 49 Conservative speakers on the motion so far. If we add up their speaking time, it is just over 24 hours, at 1,470 minutes. If we look at what it cost for the House to operate over that time, the cost to taxpayers is just over \$1.7 million for the Conservative speakers, not to mention all the other speakers who have also risen on this.

We could just have a vote right now if Conservative members stopped speaking to the motion. If the hon. member shares the concern for taxpayer money, is he not concerned about the dollars being spent to continue this conversation?

Privilege

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I have to give my colleague a lot of credit on that, to come up with that argument. They would rather use the cost of this discussion as a way to hide Liberal corruption and scandals. I guess the Liberal coalition has now grown to include the Green Party.

I will go home to my constituents this week and say that I am fighting for their rights every day, to ensure accountability for their tax dollars. I am confident that they will support what we are doing as Conservatives rather than trying to push this to committee.

Let us be clear: The Prime Minister could end this right now if he tabled those documents in the House of Commons and gave them to the RCMP. It would not cost Canadian taxpayers another dime.

• (1805)

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my good colleague from Foothills for that great speech on this very serious issue. I know that, in Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, there are a lot of people struggling to pay their bills, to heat, to eat and just to live, quite frankly. We are talking about a huge sum of money here, as \$400 million has gone missing.

Could the hon. member explain to me how much better this money could have been spent in his riding, on good programs to help the people of Foothills?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague brings up an excellent point. The fact that \$400 million has been funnelled to Liberal insiders and friends and that this would happen at a time when Canadians are struggling through a cost of living crisis is troubling. I have a very rural riding, as my colleague does, and I have talked to the farmers and ranchers of my riding every week. They are paying \$150,000 a year just in carbon taxes trying to get harvest off right now. They are seeing, at a time when every single dollar is stretched as far as possible, a government that should be the steward of their tax dollars is now abusing 400 million dollars of their money, which would be much better spent on building railroads, ports or bridges to ensure that their products get to market and we would once again be a trusted trading partner around the world. That is certainly not the case right now.

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I also regularly speak to the member for Foothills' constituents because my sister lives in his riding. I know for my family one thing that is really important in Canada is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. What the Conservatives are asking for is the right to violate the charter. I know the Leader of the Opposition has talked about using the notwithstanding clause to get rid of any laws he does not like.

I would like to hear from the member how he views the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and whether he would uphold it.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, at least some members of my colleague's family are in the right place: They are in Foothills. I appreciate that.

To put this as a charter challenge for just asking to have documents made public, documents that are already public that Canadi-

ans deserve to see, I find to be such weak sauce from the Liberals. They are so desperately trying to keep these documents under wraps and to keep them redacted that they are trying to scare Canadians into thinking that if Conservatives take public documents and give them to the RCMP, we are somehow challenging and will bring the Charter of Rights down, crumbling among us. I think it is such a weak argument that I challenge the Liberals to go home to their ridings this week and make that same argument at home.

Mr. Don Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, \$400 million is a lot of money, and it is hard to comprehend how much that really is. It is 4,200 GMC Sierra trucks. It is 66,666,666 Girl Guide cookie boxes, that is, if you do not break the 0.6 repeating. For people in Toronto, it is 15% of the TTC budget.

If the government could not run this program, which had admirable goals, without basically giving the money away, how can we trust it with any programs we have in Canada?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague puts this in a way that Canadians understand. Sometimes we talk about these big numbers. It is difficult to comprehend, but when we break these numbers down to things that Canadians really understand, they are disgusted by the level of scandal that is in here. I am not sure how many Blue Jays tickets we could have bought for that this year. He is right; this is hurting Canadians in the pocketbook when they are struggling every day with the basic necessities. This really hits home, when their tax dollars are being abused at this level.

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks today, I would like to pay tribute to a special person in my riding, Sherrisa Celis, who recently lost her husband, Nick. During my by-election, both Sherrisa and Nick were dedicated volunteers, bringing a smile and a helping hand each and every day. I thank Sherrisa for everything she does. My heart is with her and her family. We will all remember Nick for his kindness, big heart, huge personality and extraordinary generosity. May he rest in peace.

I would also like to pay tribute to Michelle Mather, who serves on my board. In these difficult times, I want Michelle to know that we love her and her family. I thank her for everything she does.

I rise today to discuss the ruling of the Speaker with regard to the production of documents ordered by the House on the scandal involving Sustainable Development Technology Canada, also known as the Liberals' green slush fund. For those watching at home, I will give the facts.

The Auditor General found that the Prime Minister has turned SDTC into a slush fund for Liberal insiders, finding that SDTC gave \$58 million to 10 ineligible projects that could not show an environmental benefit or development of green technology. There was \$334 million, over 186 cases, that was given to projects in which board members held a conflict of interest, and \$58 million was given to projects without ensuring contribution terms were met. Can we imagine? The very people who were trusted with safeguarding taxpayer dollars were funnelling money into projects they themselves were connected to. This is corruption, pure and simple.

This is not a fluke or some isolated incident. This scandal is symptomatic of a Liberal culture that puts political survival and self-enrichment ahead of the interests of the Canadian people. They shovel the working man's pay into the pockets of elitists who provide no value to the country. They have created a culture of enrichment for their well-connected friends, lining their pockets on the backs of the working class. This is the kind of governance that erodes trust. The Prime Minister claims to be a champion of the environment while handing out public dollars to his friends. We have seen this before. It is the same culture that brought us SNC-Lavalin, the WE Charity scandal and countless others.

Now, the House has ordered the production of the documents around the scandal to the law clerk and the transfer of the documents to the RCMP for unredacted investigation. The only problem is that the government refuses to hand them over. What is the Liberals' excuse? They hide behind the Charter of Rights, stating that the order forcing them to produce these documents is a potential violation of Canadians' charter rights. I say to the folks at home that, after burning taxpayers' dollars, the NDP-Liberals are now attempting to bypass the House of Commons to hide the information that Canadians need in order to truly understand how much of their money the government has actually wasted. Here is a wake-up call to the NDP-Liberals: The charter is there to protect the people from the government, not corrupt politicians from prison.

It seems that the government has forgotten its primary duty—

• (1810)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Mr. Speaker, I believe there was a small comment that was incorrect in my hon. colleague's speech when he talked about an NDP-Liberal insider. I think he meant to say "Liberal-Conservative insider", since she is a donor to the Conservative Party.

The Deputy Speaker: That is a point of debate.

The hon. member for Calgary Heritage.

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate commercial breaks; I hope they are a bit more entertaining.

It seems that the government has forgotten its primary duty, which is to serve the people over itself as a servant, not a master. Today, we are witnessing a gross abuse of power by a tired, incompetent and corrupt government. The Prime Minister and his NDP-Liberals have turned SDTC into a playground for their cronies, using taxpayers' money to do it. They are more concerned with maintaining their grip on power than on the welfare of the citizens they

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claim to represent. Unfortunately, this is all a pattern Canadians have become way too familiar with. This is a government that chooses to count votes over taking a moral stand.

Today, as mobs march across our streets, inciting hate, inciting terror and chanting for the death of our country, Canadians see a weak Prime Minister, an incompetent foreign minister and a broken government. Our treasured Jewish communities, which are about to mark Yom Kippur, watched with shock as they saw the NDP-Liberal foreign minister tell Tom Mulcair that she is only concerned about the demographics of her own voters. For her own personal political gain, she fails to act when Canada is threatened. This is the same foreman—

• (1815)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I am questioning the relevance of what the member is saying to the matter we are debating.

The Deputy Speaker: I always call for relevance at this late hour.

The hon. member for Calgary Heritage.

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, moral corruption and financial corruption come from the same source. They are a corruption of the soul and a rot of the government.

The foreign minister fails to act when Canada is threatened, for personal political gain. This is the same minister who refused to condemn genocidal, anti-Semitic hate chants on our streets like "From Palestine to Lebanon, Israel will soon be gone" and "There is only one solution: intifada, revolution". Our common-sense Conservative leader asked her twice to condemn these chants and she refused. How does the foreign minister expect Canadians to trust her with their national security when her only concern lies with the vote count in the next election?

After nine long years, all Canadians have seen is incompetence and corruption from the NDP-Liberal government. Single moms at the grocery checkout are forced to put food they had gotten for their kids aside thanks to an unforgiving carbon tax. Seniors are watching as their pensions go up in smoke. Newcomers and young couples are seeing their dreams of home ownership being—

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, it seems like this speech is getting further from the motion. I do not know if—

Some hon. members: Debate.

The Deputy Speaker: A lot of leeway has been given to a lot of speeches in this House on different occasions. I will call for relevance again.

Privilege

The hon. member for Calgary Heritage can continue.

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, I am talking about everyday people who are trying to make ends meet, and the government has taken over \$400 million of Canadians' hard-earned money and wasted it on insider friends. I would like to make sure our NDP-Liberal government coalition colleagues spend time to understand the costs that everyday people are paying for this extraordinary corruption.

Seniors are watching now as their pensions go up in smoke. Newcomers and young couples are seeing their dreams of home ownership being ripped away—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I am wondering if there are any standing orders that prevent a member from reading virtually verbatim the Conservative-Reform Party speeches handed to them?

The Deputy Speaker: That is debate.

We have about 12 minutes left, so I would just say to let this go.

The hon. member for Calgary Heritage, stay on topic, please.

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, small businesses, farmers, doctors and home builders lose sleep as they watch the government introduce its latest job-killing tax hike. Canadians who are barely scraping by see the Prime Minister waste \$400 million of their—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, can the member give a clear indication as to whether it is his speech or a Conservative speech from the back?

The Deputy Speaker: That is running into debate once again.

The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake has a point of order.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the Liberals do not want to hear the well-crafted speech that my colleague from Calgary Heritage has written and is delivering. It is very frustrating to me that the Liberals want to shut him down at every single opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you let my colleague finish his speech.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like nothing more than to let the hon. member complete his speech.

A point of order is for something grave. It better be good and better be listed in the Standing Orders. I want a number and section when members stand up.

The hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach has a point of order.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate you asking us to offer something good, so I have good news: The New Democrats just passed pharmacare in the Senate. It is breaking news right now. I congratulate all—

• (1820)

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order, but I appreciate the update.

The hon. member for Calgary Heritage.

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity.

For the parliamentary secretary across the way, I thought he would be more grateful. A couple days ago I promoted him to deputy House leader, but evidently I got that promotion wrong. However, I assure him that these are indeed my words, and I stand by them with great confidence.

Canadians, who are barely scraping by, see this Prime Minister waste \$400 million of their hard-earned taxpayer money, and he wonders why nobody has confidence in him or his NDP-Liberals. I look around. These same Canadians see crime, chaos, drugs and disorder on our streets. They see a Minister of Justice who offers up bail, not jail, for violent repeat offenders, causing violent crime to skyrocket 50%. Hate crimes are up 251%. More than 100 churches have been burned and synagogues have been firebombed. We do not even hear a pin drop from this government on any of this. It is a national disgrace.

Canadians see drugs flooding our communities and a government that offers up drugs rather than treatment and recovery. They watch a spiralling, flailing, out-of-control health minister go to war over nicotine pouches, but when it comes to fighting the drug overdose crisis, the leading cause of death for B.C. kids, he refuses. In fact, this government fuels the crisis further with its taxpayer-funded drug dens, and 42,000 lives have tragically been lost from the drug crisis in our country since 2015.

We recently saw at the health committee a parent of one of the victims who bravely spoke out against the government's so-called safe supply experiment. When asked what her message to this Prime Minister was, she asked, "How can you have 'safe'...and 'drugs' in the same sentence?" It does not make sense. Those two contradict each other deeply. How can this government continue to consciously fund this program? This disastrous experiment needs to be stopped before more lives are lost needlessly.

Canadians also see an environment minister who has delivered nothing to clean up our environment. He has only brought in higher taxes on working people. His policies are as weak as the paper straws he is forcing us all to use.

Sadly, as I return to discussing the government's ethics, I look around and see NDP-Liberals in this chamber who do not even recognize the damage they have caused. They truly believe they know best. They have all the answers, even when Canadians have to suffer because of it. They think they can wave a magic wand and undo these last nine years, promising the world and yet letting down Canadians each and every time.

Today we see NDP-Liberals paralyzing Parliament over documents showing Liberal insiders stuffing their own pockets with taxpayer dollars. This week, we saw the government House leader call this investigation a “witch hunt”. How is it a witch hunt when 400 million taxpayer dollars are at stake? If this government has nothing to hide, why not hand over the documents?

The story changes by the week. Last week, Liberals told Canadians they had already handed the documents over to the RCMP and not to worry at all. This week, they say the Charter of Rights will go down in smoke if they dare show a shred of transparency. It is funny how that works.

The Ethics Commissioner appointed by this government has found the chair of the fund in violation of the law. The Auditor General, also appointed by this government, says there were 186 conflicts of interest involving Liberal appointees giving millions of dollars to their own companies.

The Prime Minister would rather put all of his government business on hold to hide whatever is in these documents. This is corruption unlike we have ever seen before in this country. As I speak on Liberal corruption, I have to reflect on the current state of their leadership.

In quiet moments, even Liberal MPs admit they are counting down the days. They are just wishing this Prime Minister would take his proverbial walk in the snow. They know his days are numbered, and they are quietly placing their bets on the next man in line, Mark “carbon tax” Carney. Our friend from Red Deer—Mountain View likes to quip that every circus needs its carny, but Canadians know better than to fall for this bait and switch. They have seen this movie before, one corrupt Liberal swapped out for another, with the same disastrous results.

This is not a circus; it is the government of this country.

When this Prime Minister appointed Carney as a Liberal adviser, he made sure the role was shielded from any pesky conflict of interest rules. There is no accountability and no oversight, just Liberals protecting their own. However, this cozy arrangement is now facing some well-deserved scrutiny, especially after Carney's investment fund, Brookfield, where he serves as chair, has come knocking on the government's door for \$10 billion in taxpayer dollars—

• (1825)

Mr. Mike Morrice: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, there are rules in this place, such as Standing Order 43. I get that there is a lot of latitude, but plastic straws, drugs and Mark Carney have nothing to do with the motion. What is the point of rules if we are not going to enforce them?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member just spoke to exactly what we are talking about. The member did veer off a little, but he is veering back.

As I have said, Speakers give members lots of latitude on the different items that are talked about in this chamber. I would suggest that we allow the member to complete his speech.

The hon. member for Calgary Heritage has the floor.

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal-Green coalition is strong today.

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The cozy arrangement is now facing some well-deserved scrutiny, especially after Carney's investment fund, Brookfield, on which he serves as chair, has come knocking on the government's door for \$10 billion in taxpayer dollars to get his hands on the pension savings of hard-working Canadian families and seniors. Members can let that sink in. The same guy who is scheming to take over the top Liberal job is looking to raid the pension fund of Canadians, and the Prime Minister seems all too willing to hand over the cash.

Canadians see through this corruption. They will not stand by as their hard-earned is funnelled into corporate coffers while elites play musical chairs with our democracy. It is almost as though the government would rather wait until the very last day possible for Canadians to vote them out rather than give them a choice. Liberals would rather stay in power so they can get their pensions than call a carbon tax election, where their corruption, tax increases and failed policies will all be voted on.

It was just today, at a parliamentary committee looking into the stolen \$400 million and over 186 conflicts of interest, that a Liberal MP yelled expletives at Conservatives who were asking them to have the integrity to worry about taxpayer dollars. They yelled expletives and were breaking down after being asked to give Canadians answers. It seems the Liberals will do just about anything to cover up their scandals and mismanagement of taxpayer dollars.

I would like to read some of the SDTC whistle-blower testimony on this subject for Canadians to hear. The quotes are quite damning. They are as follows:

I know that the federal government, like the minister, has continued saying that there was no criminal intent and nothing was found, but I think the committee would agree that they're not to be trusted on this situation. I would happily agree to whatever the findings are by the RCMP, but I would say that I wouldn't trust that there isn't any criminality unless the RCMP is given full authority to investigate....

Again, if you bring in the RCMP and they do their investigation and they find something or they don't, I think the public would be happy with that. I don't think we should leave it to the current federal government or the ruling party to make those decisions. Let the public see what's there.

The whistle-blower also stated:

Just as I was always confident that the Auditor General would confirm the financial mismanagement at SDTC, I remain equally confident that the RCMP will substantiate the criminal activities that occurred within the organization.

Concurrence in Committee Reports

...The true failure of the situation stands at the feet of our current government, whose decision to protect wrongdoers and cover up their findings over the last 12 months is a serious indictment of how our democratic systems and institutions are being corrupted by political interference. It should never have taken two years for the issues to reach this point. What should have been a straightforward process turned into a bureaucratic nightmare that allowed SDTC to continue wasting millions of dollars and abusing countless employees over the last year.

The whistle-blower continued:

...I think the current government is more interested in protecting themselves and protecting the situation from being a public nightmare. They would rather protect wrongdoers and financial mismanagement than have to deal with a situation like SDTC in the public sphere.

After nine years of the government, who can believe it anymore. The results are in. Food price inflation is at a 40-year high. Two million Canadians are relying on food banks, and many families are cutting back on their Thanksgiving dinners because of Liberal policies that have driven up the cost of food. This \$400-million scandal is a slap in the face to all Canadians struggling to afford to feed themselves. I think of the people struggling to buy groceries for whom this money could go towards feeding. I think of the heart-break that families in my communities are feeling. I hear the stories of parents who have to choose between paying rent or putting food on the table. Liberals promised phony programs, delivered no results and made big announcements with little to show for it.

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Having reached the expiry of the time provided for today's debate, the House will resume consideration of the privilege motion at the next sitting of the House.

CONCURRENCE IN COMMITTEE REPORTS

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FINANCE

The House resumed from September 25 consideration of the motion.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise on behalf of the residents of Kelowna—Lake Country.

I was recently in a meeting with over 20 small business owners, who are frustrated with federal government policies affecting them. One mentioned how the federal government keeps adding to their challenges, and he said that they need regulations that are stable and that small business have enough challenges. Another small business owner said they have another business in the United States, and they are wondering if they should move more of their business there. Those are lost opportunities and lost jobs for Canadians and for the Canadian economy.

Recently, Statistics Canada reported that GDP per capita continues to fall in Canada. Things look even worse when Canada's economy is compared with that of the United States.

I also want to mention that I will be splitting my time.

America's GDP per capita has grown by 4.5% since 2022. Before it had the current Prime Minister, Canada was keeping up with the United States. In fact, nine years ago, The New York Times found that Canada's middle class was richer than America's. However, the Liberals really have destroyed Canada's economy with their job-killing taxes and wasteful spending.

We have seen a collapse in productivity, which means how far people's paycheques go. This relates not to how hard people work but to the productivity of the country and how much money people have in their pockets at the end of the month. The productivity gap with the United States now stands at a difference of about \$20,000 per person a year.

Things that have recently affected small business owners and Canadians are the Liberals' changes to the capital gains tax, and I want to talk about that for a little while. The Liberals were scrambling when facing opposition from doctors, small business owners and Canadians saving for their retirement. As a result of these investment-killing policies, capital has been driven out of Canada and Canadians are worse off.

I have been at the housing committee, and I have recently sat in at the finance committee and trade committee. There, I had the opportunity to hear from witnesses from all different types of businesses. They are all basically saying the same thing, which is that this capital gains tax is going to hurt investment, that businesses are already moving to the United States and that it will make homebuilding more difficult. We also know that this job-killing tax is on health care, homebuilding, small businesses and farming.

Those at technology companies have been talking about the fact that this will make it much more difficult for them to find investors. In addition, according to economist Jack Mintz, "the increase in the capital gains tax rate will reduce Canada's GDP by \$90 billion, real per capita GDP by 3 percent, its capital stock by \$127 billion, and employment by 414,000."

Taxing farmers drives up food costs. Taxing doctors means that it is harder to find a doctor. Taxing home builders means fewer homes being built, and taxing small businesses means fewer paycheques and that small business owners need to work longer.

The Council of Canadian Innovators recently commissioned a survey of entrepreneurs. It showed that 90% of respondents believed the Liberals' capital gains tax hike would have a negative effect on the innovation economy.

Concurrence in Committee Reports

I could talk for an hour on this issue, reading notes and messages from residents in my community of Kelowna—Lake Country about how the capital gains tax will affect them. I will read a few.

The first one is from a local resident, who wrote:

I have owned a commercial unit in Kelowna for several years.... I decided that purchasing a strata unit would be a good long term retirement plan, and until [the Prime Minister] introduced the increase in capital gains, it was.

● (1835)

My accountants...analyzed the penalties I would be paying if I sold the property past June 24th, 2024. The additional taxes were so substantial that now I cannot sell my unit until at least 2029....

So, instead of retiring at the age of 71, I can now plan on working for another few years....

Another resident wrote to me to say:

Well, we definitely will be affected. We own a small business and cottage—both of which we plan to sell as part of our retirement plan. Both will now have higher capital gains tax and will eat into our retirement funds. This means that we will have to work at our business longer to make up for the tax increase....

Hope that helps you build your case for tax reform and thank you for your efforts.

Another resident said:

As a single middle income mom who has raised 3 kids to adulthood, I am now in the position of needing to assist these adult kids with buying their first homes given the unaffordability....

It simply isn't fair to change the tax rules without thinking through all the ways that this will hurt those of us who have worked hard our whole lives, tried responsibly save for our retirements, and are trying to help our children with the ridiculous unaffordability they are being hit with.

Another resident, who talked about the CRA, said, “The CRA helpline has stopped taking calls due to the volume and when you can get in the queue it is a 3 hour wait to speak to a CRA representative.”

This is why the Conservatives have said that within 60 days of forming government, we will name a tax reform task force of entrepreneurs, inventors, farmers and workers to design a bring-it-home tax cut that will allow workers to bring home more of each dollar they earn; bring home production and paycheques by making Canada the best place to invest, hire and make things; and bring home fairness by reducing the share of taxes paid by the poor and middle class, while cutting tax-funded corporate welfare and cracking down on overseas tax havens. We will also cut the paperwork and bureaucracy in the tax system by at least 20%.

One other thing I want to mention, since we are talking about Canada's economy today and the budget, is the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. It has reports out noting that there are far fewer housing starts in 2023, 30,000 in fact, as a consequence of soaring interest rates. In 2023, the CMHC recorded that Canada had 240,000 housing starts, which was down 8% from the previous year.

We know that to bring back housing affordability and to build the homes Canada needs, approximately 550,000 homes would have to be built on an annual basis. We just completed a study at the housing committee on housing, and one after the other, developers and people who work in the construction industry testified that there was not a chance, based on current policies and the current situation

with costs, taxes, interest rates and bureaucracy, that anywhere near the number of homes we need in Canada will be built.

In my last minute, I want to mention the Parliamentary Budget Officer's updated carbon tax report, which was just released. It shows that most Canadian families are worse off as a result of the carbon tax. We know that life has never been more expensive over the last nine years. The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimates that the federal fuel charge will increase the budgetary deficit by \$1.5 billion in 2024-25, and ultimately by \$4 billion in 2030-31, as a result of the decrease in employment and investment income. Also, as previously discovered, internal numbers within the government show that the carbon tax will cost Canadians \$30.5 billion by 2030. This works out to over \$1,800 per family in extra annual costs.

We need a country where hard work pays off, with powerful paycheques and pensions that buy affordable food, gas and homes in safe neighbourhoods. That is what Conservatives want.

● (1840)

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight the idea that this capital gains increase is a job-killing tax. According to an economic report cited in BNN Bloomberg, “analysis suggests that favourable tax treatment of capital gains disproportionately benefits the wealthy and does not help the economy.”

In fact, sectors that own the most capital gains, notably “venture capital companies and investment banks, as well as the real estate sector, together made 52.6 per cent of all corporate capital gains reported...between 2018 and 2022. Meanwhile, these sectors shed nearly 5,000 jobs during that time period.”

I am just trying to reconcile the member's comments with these statistics.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Speaker, while I did mention a number of situations from constituents in my community of Kelowna—Lake Country, I really do encourage the member to go to the testimony from the many witnesses who have testified at the human resources committee, which deals with housing; at the finance committee; and also at the trade committee. All have heard testimony from many businesses and organizations talking very specifically about how the capital gains tax is going to hurt their business and their industry. I really encourage her to look at all of that testimony.

The Deputy Speaker: There being no further members rising, pursuant to order made earlier today, the question is deemed put and a recorded division is deemed requested.

Pursuant to Standing Order 66, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 23, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

Adjournment Proceedings

Before we go to the end, I want to thank the hon. member for Kitchener Centre. I figure we had 100 different points of order today that we were required to deal with. He was the only individual who actually quoted a standing order.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising tonight to continue to call on the government to get accountability and, specifically, a timeline on two-way, all-day GO train service between Kitchener and Toronto. It has been over a decade now that my community has heard promise after promise.

Here is what then Liberal premier Kathleen Wynne said to Craig Norris from CBC K-W back in May 2014: “We’re making the two-way, all-day GO a priority because I know people want to go back and forth. I can’t give you the specific dates but we want to get going on this right away”. Her party was elected the very next month, and we never got a date for completion from her.

Then, back in 2017, the federal government committed 40% of the project cost. At the time, it put in over \$752 million, three-quarters of a billion dollars. Now retired regional chair Ken Seiling, was thrilled, as he should have been. He said, “It is a strategic investment that recognizes the importance of the Toronto-Waterloo region innovation corridor to the Canadian economy”.

Then the next provincial election came along. Keeping in mind that Conservative Doug Ford now knew about the federal money that was already committed, here is what he said: “We’re going to have the pedal to the metal, and we’re going to move forward, we’re going to cut all the red tape and bureaucracy that gets in the way of these projects”. While Premier Ford got elected that year, that was six years ago. So much for pedal to the metal.

Where do we stand today? After more than a decade has passed since that first political commitment, and despite constant political ads from the provincial Conservatives bragging about progress in my community, we have a total of 10 trains a day that go from Kitchener to Toronto and nine trains a day from Toronto to Kitchener, and they run only on weekdays. Every now and then, if we are lucky, Metrolinx will announce special one-off weekend service on a holiday weekend like the one coming up.

Worst of all, we still do not even have a timeline for completion. It means that in my community, folks continue to get left on the platform waiting for overcrowded buses. They could be a commuter, for example. They could be someone looking to get to a medical specialist in Toronto or a family looking to get to a Jays’ game. One young person even shared with me this past summer that, as a queer person, she would love to take the GO to be able to date in Toronto. She wants two-way, all-day GO for queer love.

This is also about the climate. We need to give people more convenient, more affordable and lower-carbon ways of getting around,

recognizing that transportation is the largest emissions source in Ontario. Here is an example of what is possible: The Montreal REM rapid transit system opened last summer. It took just five years to go from “prep work” to “doors open” on a 67-kilometre line with service every three and a half minutes during peak hours.

While two-way, all-day GO would, of course, be delivered by the provincial government, folks in my community are tired of having different levels of government blame one another. If the federal government put in 40% of the money, as it did, it should at least be demanding accountability on the funds. I have written to the minister. There have been almost two years of letters now. I raised it with the Prime Minister a few weeks ago. I am raising it again. When will the government call for accountability and specifically for a timeline from the province on two-way, all-day GO train service between Kitchener and Toronto?

● (1845)

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, it is nice to be here in adjournment debate with you and some colleagues. I would like to thank my friend and colleague for the question and the opportunity to talk about the Government of Canada’s continued commitment to helping build sustainable, inclusive and climate-resistant communities. I understand that public transit is a foundational element to a thriving community, and I join my colleague in advocating for two-way, all-day GO train services for Milton because I also sympathize.

Milton is in a very similar situation to Kitchener. We have been asking the provincial government to prioritize two-way, all-day GO train service for Milton because Canadians depend on the trains. They do not want to sit on the highway in traffic in order to get to work. The other problem in Milton is that we basically have eight trains that go out in the morning, starting early, the last one leaving around 9 a.m. Then those trains come back in the evening for a commuter-type experience. However, if a person wants to take a train on the weekend, or if they work shift work or work a shift that starts at noon or ends at midnight, they are out of luck. Therefore, it is important that we have a two-way, all-day GO train service, as well as reliable all-day GO train service. Right now, Miltonians drive down to the Oakville or Bronte GO stations to get that service. That defeats the purpose.

Taking the train is not only a great way to reduce our carbon emissions, but it is also a great way to multi-task. When I take the train, I send an email or two and listen to music. I suppose I listen to music while I drive as well. We all depend on that. That is why, since 2015, we have made substantial investments totalling more than \$30 billion, more than any previous government, for over 2,000 public transit projects across Canada. That includes Canada's first-ever public transit fund, which I am happy to say Milton will be enjoying. We are a growing community with over 140,000 constituents now, as well as one of the youngest demographics, and they rely on that more and more. Therefore, it is important that we continue to invest.

It is also why we launched the largest-ever single public transit investment in Canadian history, the aforementioned Canada public transit fund. Starting in 2026-27, this fund will make an average of \$3 billion a year available to help cities and communities deliver better public transit systems for Canadians. The fund will help communities of all sizes maintain existing transit systems and help plan for new transit infrastructure.

However, as my colleague correctly pointed out, the GO train service throughout the GTA is a provincial matter. I will continue to advocate with my member of provincial Parliament, and I know my colleague has a great relationship with his member of provincial Parliament because they happen to be party aligned. That is quite unique for the Green Party. The reason we will continue to do this together is that it will encourage the increased use of public transit, an increased housing supply and affordability. It will allow for people who do not necessarily want to own a car or drive a car frequently to live in a neighbourhood they can afford. It will improve public and active transportation options for everyone, especially indigenous peoples and equity-deserving groups.

The Canada public transit fund is made up of three different funding streams with the provinces, territories and municipalities. They can all select from various funding options that will best suit their public transit needs. Perhaps if there is an opportunity for rebuttal, I will be able to explain what those three areas are.

• (1850)

Mr. Mike Morrice: Mr. Speaker, it is really fitting that the parliamentary secretary also represents an area along the same line for which I have been calling for a two-way, all-day GO train service. Folks in his community would benefit just as much from it as folks in mine would.

I want to reiterate what I am calling for. In this case, the federal government did the right thing back in 2017: It put the funding forward. The federal government is an investor that has put in 40% of the project costs. It is reasonable that the investor would demand some accountability from the provincial government that is meant to deliver on the project. Accountability starts with a timeline for completion. Folks in his community and in mine deserve to have that accountability with respect to federal funds.

Will the member join us in calling on the provincial government to provide a timeline for the completion of the project?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Mr. Speaker, it is more than that, actually. I have been working with my member of provincial Parlia-

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ment on a plan for two-way, all-day GO trains. This is an important priority for both the member for Kitchener Centre and for me.

The federal government has committed the funding. Then, at various times, the provincial government commits funding, but only when it seems to be politically expedient. I do not mind pointing out to my colleague how that works.

We recently had a by-election in Milton. Doug Ford wanted a Conservative elected, so he had the transport minister write a letter to the federal government saying that the government was ready to invest some money into a both-directions, all-day GO train service for Milton; it is just a matter of the federal government coming into play. This is kind of ironic because we committed that funding in 2021. We told Doug Ford to come to the table to build a both-directions, all-day GO train service for Milton. Unfortunately, it did not fit his political goals at the time.

However, I am very excited to talk to my friend about more train service for our two communities.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to continuing the debate with my colleague across the aisle about carbon tax.

One of the things that will probably occur tonight is we will probably both draw from a particular document that was released by the Parliamentary Budget Officer today. I heard the member refer to it earlier today. We will probably both refer to it as we verify our side of the debate.

In 2030-31, taking into consideration both fiscal and economic impacts, PBO estimates that the average household in each of the backstop provinces will see a net cost, paying more in the federal fuel charge and related Goods and Services Tax, as well as receiving lower incomes (due to the fuel charge), compared to the Canada Carbon Rebate they receive and lower net taxes they pay (due to lower incomes).

That would suggest to me that there are people in this country who will get less back than they receive in rebates.

Another one from the report:

...the economic impact of the federal fuel charge is combined with the fiscal impact, the net cost increases for the average household across all income quintiles, reflecting the overall negative economic impact of the fuel charge.

In 2030-31, taking into consideration both fiscal and economic impacts, we estimate that the average household in each of the backstop provinces will see a net cost, paying more in the federal fuel charge and GST, as well as receiving lower incomes.

Another one:

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However, as PBO has noted, Canada's own emissions are not large enough to materially impact climate change and therefore their reduction would not materially affect the Canadian economy.

There was a chart on the average cost for an Albertan showing they would pay \$697, so almost \$700 more, in tax than they receive. That is data from the report.

There are a couple more out there. There was the Agriculture Carbon Alliance. It sampled 50 farms and showed a total \$330,000, in just one month, paid in carbon tax. Now if we have 190,000 farms in Canada, that gets to be a big number.

What makes it different in my riding is irrigation. As I said before, when I met with one farmer with an irrigated farm, he paid approximately \$100,000 in carbon tax a year. I saw the bills he had, and went through them with him.

I have hundreds of irrigated farms in my riding. If we multiply that number, we get the amount that is paid in carbon tax from irrigation farms. There is no rebate on what they use to power this. There are no exemptions. The amount that irrigation farm farmers in my area, who produce high-quality crops, pay is huge. What they ask me is, "Why does EV production get a \$50-billion subsidy, when we have to pay a huge carbon tax?"

The farmers in my area see the carbon tax as a huge cost to them, much higher than average farmers, who are paying a lot. They see the subsidy to EV batteries at \$50 billion, rather than them paying the carbon tax. It is really tough for them to take.

• (1855)

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, as my friend and colleague pointed out, the PBO released today an update on his analysis for the impact of the federal fuel charge on Canadian households, because unfortunately there had been a mistake made. The PBO report confirmed just recently that when we look at the direct costs of pollution pricing and the amounts actually paid by households, in terms of the fuel charge versus the amounts actually received back through the Canada carbon rebate payment, we can see that the large majority of Canadian families are much better off.

The PBO report also estimated the economic costs of implementing the carbon pricing regime, but it has not set these against the large and growing costs of climate inaction nor the economic opportunities of moving toward a greener, carbon-free future. It also does not necessarily take into consideration the enormous social and economic costs of climate change itself, which is a destructive force.

Canadians are forced from their homes every summer during wildfire events. In fact, a really alarming statistic I heard was that over 40% of the worldwide population displaced from their homes from wildfire was Canadian. That is crazy. Canada has only 0.5% of the global population, but 40% of the world's people who are displaced from their homes because of wildfire live in this country.

That is because we are also extremely vulnerable to climate change in Canada. We have a forest that is drying quickly due to warmer summers and shorter winters, and less snowfall and less

snowpack. There are also less frequent and harder to manage precipitation events in western Canada, where a lot of rain will fall all at once but then not again for a couple of months.

We know that carbon pricing has not and will not cost families in the long run. What will cost us is doing absolutely nothing about climate change. Sadly, the Conservatives refuse to acknowledge that climate change is a threat. Some of them even refuse to accept the notion that it is human-caused and that we have a role to play, but what they cannot refuse to do is nothing. Canadians will not accept that at the ballot box. Climate change has been an issue when Canadians have gone to the ballot box, and I think that the Conservatives are really underestimating how much people care about fighting climate change.

Canadian families stand to gain financially in the long run from fighting climate change with a carbon price. Other countries have demonstrated that. Actually, since it is Nobel Prize season, it is worth pointing out that William Nordhaus, not a Canadian but a fan of the Canadian carbon pricing system, won a Nobel Prize in economics for his work on carbon pricing and lowering our emissions with that market-based tool.

Contrary to the numbers that the Conservatives continue to peddle, the commission concluded that carbon pricing would in fact boost Canadian incomes, on average, by \$3,300 more in 2030 than if an alternative approach were taken or if absolutely nothing were done. Nothing is not an option.

The global clean-energy transition is here. I will say that it actually matters in agriculture as well. My colleague and I have been on this topic a couple of times, with respect to propane-based irrigation. Canadians want affordable food and they also want low-carbon food. Our agriculture system has a carbon footprint, and it is actually one of the higher carbon footprints in the world with respect to agriculture. There are some unavoidable aspects of that. A propane-based irrigation system is not as efficient and certainly not as carbon-friendly as other forms of irrigation that are available.

A price on pollution provides a pricing mechanism to steer the agriculture sector toward greener production methods, because other technologies do exist, which is different from other sectors where things might not be available. It is important for us to demand better from various sectors, transportation, agriculture, oil and gas, and energy, that they lower their carbon footprint.

• (1900)

Mr. Martin Shields: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that, but sorry, propane is not something we use in irrigation. I am not sure where the member is getting that information. Irrigation does not use propane. He needs to come out and see the electricity and natural gas it uses. It is not propane.

I thank the member for the rest of what he said. Adapting is what we need to do, but here is the real problem, which is taxing other levels of government. My neighbouring MP and I looked at the school systems and their buses, and at the municipalities. We looked at the health systems. There are tens of millions of dollars leaving our two ridings for carbon tax. That would be more doctors, more nurses, more teachers, and more people having programs and schools for their kids.

Taxing other levels of government is a huge problem. We have been able to figure out that tens of millions of dollars have left our ridings in carbon tax. That is problematic, and we need a carbon tax election.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Mr. Speaker, carbon pricing has been on the agenda in the last two elections. In fact, my colleague got elected on the promise of a carbon tax with the former leader of the Conservative Party, Erin O'Toole.

The Conservatives turned their backs on climate action. They decided they were not going to be a climate-forward party. We hardly ever hear of climate action or climate change from members of the Conservative Party these days. If they are not employing propane-based irrigation in my colleague's riding, then they are using a form of irrigation that does use fossil fuels. Whether that is relying on the energy grid, which is, unfortunately, high-carbon in Alberta, or using natural gas, as my colleague pointed out during his rebuttal speech, both of those have high carbon footprints. That needs to be addressed.

Electricity in Manitoba and Ontario has a lower carbon footprint, so our carbon charge with respect to our electricity bills is much lower than in Saskatchewan and Alberta. We need to move toward a no-coal, low-carbon energy grid. Unfortunately, as my colleague pointed out, Alberta's is high.

If the member wants to talk about education and health care, he needs to talk to Premier Smith, who has hardly mentioned those two issues as long as she has been premier.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to raise concerns about radical criminal justice policies being introduced and considered by the Liberal government.

Right now, before the Minister of Justice is a report commissioned as part of the so-called Black justice strategy, and that report contains several radical policy proposals, including the decriminalization of a 30-day supply of hard drugs like meth, cocaine and heroine. The Minister of Justice has not rejected this proposal, as one might hope. In fact, the Minister of Justice celebrated it as "history-making" and "an important milestone". It is unbelievable that the minister would celebrate policies that threaten to flood more drugs into our communities, when one looks at our country's over-

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dose statistics. Over 42,000 Canadians, including children, have died from drug overdoses under the Liberal Prime Minister's watch.

The policy proposals in front of the Minister of Justice also include proposals to defund police departments by limiting their access to federal grant money and to reduce Canada's prison population through mass decarceration of 30% over the next 10 years. I am pleading that the Liberal government and its justice minister reject these ideas as the harmful ideas they are and not celebrate them as achievements.

We have seen a massive increase in addictions and overdoses since the Liberals began to fund hard drugs with taxpayer dollars. We have seen an increase in crime since the Liberals made bail more accessible to repeat violent offenders. Police officers in our communities, including my home community of Durham, are doing their part. They are working hard to enforce the law, but they are being let down by the laws and policies of the current federal government. Police want to do their jobs, but when they arrest somebody multiple times for multiple crimes, and a repeat offender is allowed back on the streets in short order, it undermines policing across our country. How could the minister celebrate a proposal to cut police budgets?

There is an ideological problem in the federal government right now. It is an ideology that has moved away from seeing the justice system as a system that ought to keep people safe and punish crime. Instead, there is an ideology running rampant all over this place that wants to weaken our justice system, because it regards our system as oppressive or racist.

Some people call this ideology "woke" or "far left". Whatever label we choose or do not choose, I hope we can recognize the system needs to work for the good of the Canadian people. Tearing it down to permit more crime and more chaos will not help any of us. No matter what colour we are or where our parents come from, we need a strong system that is accountable, fair and true to its core mission of public safety and justice.

With that core mission in mind, I return to my plea to the Liberal government and its justice minister to please reject these radical criminal justice policies and please reject these radical policy proposals. Canadians do not want more drugs flooding into our communities. We do not want violent repeat offenders to have easier access to bail. We want our police to be resourced and empowered to enforce the law.

I ask the minister to reject these radical policies and to side with law-abiding Canadians.

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• (1905)

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, today is World Mental Health Day, which is an opportunity to shine a light on crucial yet often overlooked aspects of our lives, one being mental health at work. This year's theme reminds us that our workplaces must be safe with respect to our collective and individual mental and psychological well-being.

Our work environments are ever-evolving and more dynamic than ever before. As leaders, employers and managers, we must all prioritize mental health just as we do physical health. Mental well-being is not a luxury; it is essential for productivity, creativity and overall workplace harmony. When employees feel supported, valued and understood, they thrive.

Our government has collaborated with various Canadian mental health agencies to create policies and invest in programs that prevent mental health risks, promote well-being and build supportive workplaces where mental health is prioritized. So, on this World Mental Health Day, I would like to thank mental health workers of all kinds right across Canada.

I was asked to come to the adjournment debate tonight to talk about mental health and addictions policy. However, those sorts of guardrails get a little stretched occasionally, but if the member of Parliament for Durham would like to talk to the Minister of Justice or the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, then he needs to indicate that. I came tonight to talk about mental health policy and measures that we have undertaken to address the overdose crisis.

It is also important to recognize that, when in government, Canadians of all walks of life, whether they are left, or as my colleague might label them “woke”, centrists or more far on the right end of the spectrum, even if they are sometimes considered extreme, if they are academics, if they are workplace experts or if they just have ideas, governments need to be open to good ideas, regardless of who those ideas are coming from. We should invite good ideas. This place should be a contest of ideas in fact, and we should not be afraid to criticize those ideas and should not be close-minded about hearing them either.

It seems as though in this place it is similar to a debate that happened a couple of years ago when an organization suggested that the federal government consider taxing the equity of personal primary residences. It is a notion that our government soundly rejected and did not want to do. Canadians do not want their primary residence home equity to be taxed. However, since somebody brought it up at a meeting, the Conservatives ran with it and sent out a whole bunch of mail that said, “Look, these Liberals are trying to tax home equity”, which was not true. However, suggestions that my colleague has made with respect to policy recommendations made by a third party are also not true. I am also certain that was a large document with multiple recommendations and suggestions. As a government, we will remain open-minded to the good suggestions from academics, civil service organizations, groups of people and experts, because that is important to do as a government.

I will turn back to the issue of all of the efforts we have undertaken to address the overdose crisis, which include efforts right across the continuum of care to prevent drug use, to reduce harm, and to support people in accessing treatment and recovery services that they need and deserve. We will remain committed to maintaining public safety through all of those enforcement efforts.

There are four aspects of drug policy and overdose crisis response that are all very important. It is like a table, and without any one of those four legs, that table falls down. They are prevention, harm reduction, treatment and enforcement. If any group, party or academic suggests that an effective drug policy can operate without all four of those aspects, then they are wrong.

The Government of Canada has invested almost \$200 billion over the last 10 years to support provinces and territories to deliver health services in addition to the \$1 billion that we have directly invested to address this drug crisis, and we will continue to be there.

• (1910)

Mr. Jamil Jivani: Mr. Speaker, let us return to some logic here for a moment.

We have, in the last nine years, lost 42,000 Canadians, including children, to drug overdoses. Some policy report comes across the Minister of Justice's desk saying to decriminalize hard drugs, a 30-day supply of hard drugs. Now, the logical response to that would be, “no”, rejection, and “we are not going to be doing that”. This is what I am asking the Liberal government to say.

However, what did the Liberals say when that policy proposal came to their desk? It was celebrated. The Minister of Justice said openly in a press release that it was “an important milestone” and “history-making”. That is not a logical response to a very serious problem.

What we need is specific vision and direction on how we are going to help struggling Canadians move forward, not to entertain more radical criminal justice policies.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Mr. Speaker, we all have a role to play in stopping the spread of misinformation, and the Conservatives, over the last couple of years, have made a tabloid of a lot of things they read in the ecosystem. Perhaps news is not as reliable as it used to be, or perhaps some of the Conservatives are getting their news from less trustworthy sources.

The truth is that, on May 17, 2024, we refused a request from Toronto Public Health to decriminalize the personal possession of controlled substances for people in Toronto, including youth. Health Canada reviews all exemption requests carefully and thoroughly on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration and account all relevant options, including evidence of potential benefits, and risks and harms to the health and safety of Canadians. It was determined that the model proposed would not adequately protect public health and maintain public safety.

That was not five months ago. The member of Parliament for Durham is suggesting that something way more extreme than that is being considered, and it is not. That is misinformation.

The Deputy Speaker: I wish all members a happy Thanksgiving.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following bill: Bill C-64, An Act respecting pharmacare.

ROYAL ASSENT

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Royal Assent

Rideau Hall

Ottawa

October 10, 2024

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Mary May Simon, Governor General of Canada, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bills listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 10th day of October, 2024, at 6:26 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

Secretary to the Governor General,

Ken MacKillop

The schedule indicates the bills assented to were Bill S-205, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to another Act (interim release and domestic violence recognition orders)—Chapter 22; Bill C-291, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts (child sexual abuse and exploitation material)—Chapter 23; and Bill C-64, An Act respecting pharmacare—Chapter 24.

● (1915)

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:16 p.m.)

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