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Tuesday, October 22, 2024

Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 22, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 14th report of the Standing Committee on National Defence.

[*English*]

The report is entitled “Gaps to Fill: Housing and Other Needed Supports for Canadian Armed Forces Members and Their Families”.

[*Translation*]

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

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[*English*]

PETITIONS

JUSTICE

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of residents of Seabird Island First Nation. On June 23, 2022, Bill C-28 received royal assent; it allowed for extreme intoxication to be used as a defence for violent crimes, such as sexual assault, where a reasonable person would not have foreseen the risk of a violent loss of control. Residents are concerned about the impact this will have on first nations communities such as theirs, which are often in rural areas that are underserved by law enforcement. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to repeal the amendments made to the Criminal Code in Bill C-28 and uphold its commitment to protect first nations' safety, as well as the right to a justice system that honours victims by holding offenders responsible for violent crime.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I would like to present today is on behalf of British Columbians who are concerned about human trafficking in Canada. The U.S. State Department's 20th “Trafficking in Persons Report” indicates that Canada meets the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking. The report also highlights that the range, quality and timely delivery of trafficking-specific services varies across Canada, including persistent funding shortages.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to strengthen the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act to address these shortcomings and put an end to human trafficking in Canada.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise virtually in the House this morning to present a petition from constituents. Because I am presenting the petition electronically, it is petition 441-02719.

The petition relates to the construction by the Department of National Defence of a training facility at Hartlen Point, Nova Scotia. Petitioners are concerned that there will be significant damage to important habitat for migratory birds, a number of which are protected species. The area is described in the petition as one of the most important areas for bird observation, among Canada's top 10 bird observation sites.

The petitioners are calling on the government to pause all construction and further development of the land-based testing facility at Hartlen Point, Nova Scotia, unless and until an independent impact assessment can take place that specifically focuses on the impacts on wildlife, migratory bird populations and their traffic, and full and transparent community consultation and outreach. Public access to all documents related to developing Hartlen Point is also requested by the petitioners.

Routine Proceedings

PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to table a petition submitted by firefighters from White Rock IAFF Local 2407 and Surrey IAFF Local 1271.

This petition addresses an urgent issue that has an impact on the health and safety of firefighters across Canada. Sponsored by the MP for New Westminster—Burnaby, it calls for immediate action to ban per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as PFAS or forever chemicals, in firefighter gear and firefighting foam.

PFAS are man-made chemicals that are resistant to heat, water and oil, but their durability comes at a significant cost. Scientific evidence links these substances to severe health issues, including cancer, putting firefighters who already face hazardous conditions at risk. Research shows that PFAS can accumulate in the body, leading to serious health issues. Alarmingly, firefighters face a higher cancer risk than the general population. We must mitigate these risks by regulating what we can control in their working conditions.

Several countries have restricted PFAS use. Canada must follow suit. Our firefighters deserve gear that is free from toxic chemicals. Let us protect those who risk their lives for us. It is an honour to present this petition.

[*Translation*]

ONLINE HARM

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, online harm to children is a very important issue for our government. Today, I have the honour of presenting a petition signed by many people from the riding of Sherbrooke. Given the growing number of reports of Canadian children being exposed to online sextortion and other serious harm, the petitioners are calling on the House of Commons to continue working on Bill C-63 and to pass it as quickly as possible. I thank the people of Sherbrooke for their commitment to this important issue.

[*English*]

BRADFORD BYPASS

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents and other residents in the area surrounding the Bradford Bypass.

This is a 16-kilometre 400-series highway in southern Ontario that would traverse the East Holland River. Runoff from highways has been known to increase chloride pollution hot spots. A number of serious concerns relate to the construction of the Bradford Bypass.

This petition is directed to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and it requests that the Bradford Bypass be considered an undertaking or activity that is likely to result in harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat. Therefore, the petitioners request all information permitted under subsections 37(1) and 34.3(1) necessary to determine if construction of this highway should be permitted, and if so, that it be under conditions set out in formal Fisheries Act authorisation. They call on the ministers to designate the Bradford Bypass for an impact assessment

pursuant to the recently amended Impact Assessment Act, as well as to require a comprehensive, transparent species-at-risk permitting process to be followed.

• (1010)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to present a petition on behalf of constituents.

I rise for the 51st 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 struggling with rising crime in their area. Statistics Canada reports that, after nine years of the Liberal government, violent crime has risen by 50% and gang-related homicides have nearly doubled.

Within the last five years, the town's crime severity index has increased by over 50%.

The people of Swan River see the devastating effects that crime has on the community's safety and economic stability. The people of Swan River are calling for jail, not bail, for repeat violent offenders. The people of Swan River demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies, which directly threaten their livelihoods and their community.

I support the good people of Swan River.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, may I have unanimous consent to table a dissenting report for the 14th report of the Standing Committee on National Defence?

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am just so excited about presenting this dissenting report.

The reason we are doing it is that the report from the entire committee did not explain how the government was going to actually fix the housing shortage. The housing shortage applies to the recruits and the lower ranks, so “the barracks” is what we call them; in Petawawa, they are called “the shacks”.

Two buildings have to be condemned by the base commander because, besides the vermin, they have black mould and openings in the walls, with rusted pipes. I had a first-hand opportunity to tour one of these buildings. It is just not inhabitable. The government has said that it is going to fix the situation, but we have not seen any money in the budget, and that is why we wrote the dissenting report. It is so that we can dig deeper and make sure that we have not only livable conditions but also good conditions. In that way, we can attract more recruits and build our armed forces to what they should be in this day and age.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

• (1015)

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from October 21 consideration of the motion, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal-appointed chair, who is a friend of the Prime Minister, was found to have broken ethics laws; she confirmed that she used SDTC to give a \$217,000 grant to her own company. Five of the seven hand-picked Liberal directors voted to award their own companies more than \$20 million of taxpayer funds. Liberal officials were present at every meeting of the SDTC, but here is the surprising part: They did nothing to stop this corruption. Whistle-blowers have alleged gross mismanagement, conflicts of interest and a toxic work environment. The Auditor General released a report detailing the gross mismanagement of public funds.

On June 10, the House passed a motion requiring the government to turn over documents pertaining to Sustainable Development Technology Canada within 30 days, but can we guess what? The Liberals have not done that. On October 1, Mr. Speaker, you ruled that the Liberals violated the House's order and that they must hand over all documents for a criminal investigation into the latest scandal, yet they still refuse. What are they hiding?

The lack of transparency surrounding the allocation of these funds is mind-boggling. Why will the Liberals not hand over the documents? What are the Prime Minister and his friends on that side of the House hiding? It is imperative that we get to the bottom of this. Canadians demand and deserve to know.

Privilege

As shadow minister for seniors, I stand here today deeply appalled by the wasteful spending that continues to plague our nation. This is not just about numbers on a balance sheet; it is about real people, particularly our most vulnerable citizens: our seniors. They rely heavily on government support programs funded by taxpayers. Seniors should not be left to wonder whether the government is prioritizing its friends' fake projects over seniors' support systems.

In Canada, seniors face a variety of challenges that are often overlooked. Access to health care and long-term care remains a significant issue. Chronic diseases, such as arthritis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes and respiratory illnesses, affect seniors the most and have a severe impact on their quality of life. The rising costs of essentials, such as groceries and electricity, are particularly harsh for those living on fixed incomes. We can imagine having to choose between heating our home and buying food. However, perhaps the most heartbreaking issue is loneliness and social isolation. Many seniors spend their days in solitude, with the tick-tock of the clock on the wall their only company. Studies have shown that approximately 41% of Canadians aged 50 and older are at risk of social isolation; up to 58% have experienced loneliness. This is not just a statistic. Rather, it is a silent epidemic that has severe mental and physical impacts.

Given these pressing issues, it is nothing short of appalling that \$400 million has been siphoned off into projects that had no oversight or accountability. We can just imagine what \$400 million could do for seniors. It could have been a lifeline for so many. It could have provided the support and services they desperately need; instead, it has been used to make the friends of the Prime Minister rich, leaving our seniors to fend for themselves in an increasingly hostile economic environment.

• (1020)

Since the NDP-Liberal government came into power nine years ago, it has been involved in controversies and scandals: bad governance, a complete lack of transparency and accountability, and absolutely no moral compass. This is the legacy the Prime Minister will leave behind.

We all remember the Aga Khan vacation, when the Prime Minister accepted a family vacation to a private island of the Aga Khan, a wealthy religious leader who happened to have lobbied the government on several occasions. The Prime Minister was found guilty of ethics violations.

There was the cash-for-access fundraiser where the Prime Minister held private fundraisers for wealthy donors who could pay for access to the Prime Minister and his senior ministers. These events led to allegations that the donors were effectively buying access to decision-makers, which undermines transparency and fairness in government.

Privilege

There was also former governor general Julie Payette's resignation. The Prime Minister changed the vetting process for the Governor General appointment, which resulted in the Julie Payette scandal. An independent review uncovered a toxic work environment in her office, including allegations of harassment and bullying, and now Canadian taxpayers are on the hook for her lifelong pension of \$150,000 per year and up to \$206,000 to cover her expenses.

We all remember the embarrassment the Prime Minister caused while attending Queen Elizabeth's funeral. Not only did he feel the need to charge the taxpayers \$6,000 a night for his hotel room, but he also embarrassed Canadians when he was caught belting out *Bohemian Rhapsody* in the hotel lobby when the entire United Kingdom was in mourning. Although the Prime Minister has not been successful in many things, his singing included, he continues to successfully embarrass Canada on the world stage.

However, probably the most famous scandal was the SNC-Lavalin affair, in which the Prime Minister and senior officials pressured then attorney general Jody Wilson-Raybould to intervene in a criminal case against SNC-Lavalin. When she refused, she was kicked out of caucus. The Prime Minister was found guilty by the Ethics Commissioner.

The Prime Minister is so arrogant that he still denies he did anything wrong, which is probably why he felt he could get away with siphoning \$912 million to his friends at the WE Charity. The Prime Minister's family members have received hundreds of thousands of dollars in speaking fees from the WE Charity. This once again raised questions about a conflict of interest. The then finance minister Bill Morneau faced scrutiny for failing to recuse himself from the decision while his daughter worked for the charity. He ultimately resigned.

These are just a few of the scandals we have uncovered so far. I cannot list them all during this speech because I have only a limited amount of time. Under the government, we have witnessed the opposite of transparency and accountability. It is nothing short of arrogance for the Liberals to think that Canadians do not deserve to know where their hard-earned dollars are going. When members within the Liberal Party recommend transparency, they are silenced and expelled. The Prime Minister continues to subscribe to the theory of "Do as I say, not as I do."

The SNC-Lavalin scandal is proof of the lengths to which the Prime Minister and his caucus will go in order to be anything but transparent and accountable. Former ministers Jody Wilson-Raybould and Jane Philpott chose to speak out against the government they once served. They warned us about the dangers of government that lacks transparency and accountability. They highlighted that more secrecy in the decision-making process can lead to the misuse of funds and can ultimately undermine public trust.

● (1025)

Here we are yet again, discussing yet another scandal involving a lack of transparency and accountability. The fate of former ministers Jody Wilson-Raybould, Jane Philpott and Bill Morneau serve as a powerful reminder that integrity, transparency and accountability have no place within the Liberal government. In 2015, the government promised Canadians a new era of transparency and accountability. In fact, that is the platform on which the Liberals ran.

After nine years, there is yet more proof that the NDP-Liberals are not worth the cost or the corruption. The green slush fund scandal stands as a stark reminder of how far they have strayed from their commitments.

The Speaker has ruled that the NDP-Liberals have violated a House order to turn over evidence to the police for a criminal investigation. The blatant disregard for ethical standards and the rule of law has paralyzed Parliament, making it impossible for anyone to address issues like the doubling of house costs, Liberal food inflation, and crime and chaos. The NDP-Liberals must end the cover-up and hand over the evidence to the police. This is about \$400 million of wasted or stolen tax money while Canadians cannot afford to eat, to heat their home and to house themselves.

Imagine a bank where fraud and theft by an employee ran rampant. An employer would not only feel compelled to report the theft and fraud; they would also voluntarily turn over all of the evidence to the police. Money that could have been invested in vital programs, especially for our seniors, has been given to line the pockets of Liberal insiders while Canadians are struggling. This is not just a political issue; this is also a personal issue. The funds that should have provided relief and support have been diverted, leaving many to face the harsh realities of poverty and hunger.

The Liberals should take a walk down Rideau Street, next door to Parliament, where the faces of people with mental health struggles and homelessness are all too common. This is the Canada we live in today after nine years of Liberal corruption. The importance of transparency and accountability is about the trust and well-being of every Canadian. We must demand better for ourselves and future generations. Only common-sense Conservatives will end the corruption and get answers for Canadians.

I was elected by the people of King—Vaughan. It is my responsibility to represent them and all Canadians in the House and bring their voice to Ottawa. As MPs, we have a duty to do what is best for our citizens. If we are given the honour to stand in this place, we should be held to a higher ethical standard. Words like "transparency" and "accountability" should not be thrown around as slogans or catchphrases designed to simply win votes. They should be the mantra all MPs must uphold.

The Prime Minister and every member of the House who has continued to prop him up have forgotten whom they work for. They have deceived Canadians and should be ashamed of themselves. It is time to do the right thing. I encourage my colleagues on the other side of the House to take the opportunity to finally show some integrity, hand over the documents and let the chips fall where they may.

Privilege

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what a challenge doing the right thing is for members of the Conservative caucus.

Here is what the RCMP's Mike Duheme had to say with regard to the political game the Conservative Party is playing: "There is significant risk that the Motion could be interpreted as a circumvention of normal investigative processes and Charter protections." When I raised this issue yesterday, the Conservative game-players said the RCMP was instructed virtually by the PMO to write the letter.

What a shame that is. The Conservative Party is now trying to discredit the RCMP. That is how far right the Conservative Party is today: discrediting institutions and doing character assassination. Does the member support her colleagues' comments to discredit the RCMP, particularly the commissioner, on the issue?

• (1030)

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I have been elected to the House to represent the people of King—Vaughan and the people across Canada. There is a process in place to ensure that when we put forward taxpayer dollars to an organization that continues to defraud the Canadian public, the government should be ashamed, should be responsible, should be accountable and should be transparent. The government should ensure that all the documents are presented to the House so we can examine them and can find out where the money has gone. The people of Canada demand their \$400 million back.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I heard my colleague's speech. I will repeat what I said yesterday and what we have likely been saying over the past few days: We agree that the documents must be tabled. We are ready to move on to a vote and force the government to table the documents so that we can then work on something else until an election is called.

I know that my Conservative colleagues want an election. The motion we are currently considering calls for documents to be tabled. My Conservative colleagues know that the majority of members in the House support their motion. When will they be ready to vote? We would vote this afternoon. It seems to me that it would be a good idea.

[English]

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Speaker, there is a very simple answer. All we need to do is have the Liberals present the documents to the House, like the Speaker ordered, giving us all an opportunity to discover where the \$400 million has disappeared to, along with the \$912 million we lost through the WE scandal. That is—

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member is actually attributing comments that you had instructed us, as a government, to provide documents unfettered. That is not true. Maybe you could provide her with a clear indication of what the Speaker actually—

The Speaker: That is verging on debate.

The Speaker's ruling is available to all members, and I hope all members will avail themselves of it.

The hon. member for King—Vaughan has the floor.

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Speaker, we can see from the behaviour of the member across the way that the Liberals are definitely hiding some secrets. They are afraid to let the country know how they wasted taxpayers' money. Get the documents here; bring them to the House and let us review them.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very interested in the issue of what parties are hiding. It should be fundamental that we put the nation above the interests of the party, but we see that the Conservative leader refuses to get security clearance.

I want to ask the member about CSIS's October 2022 intelligence assessment that Sam Cooper, a journalist, reported on. He said, "Government of India agents appear to have interfered in the Conservatives' 2022 leadership race by purchasing memberships for one candidate while undermining another, and also boasted of funding 'a number of politicians at all levels of government'." We know who was the recipient of that largesse: the man who is living in Stornoway. I would like to ask whether the member is willing to stand up and name the politicians who have been paid off by the Government of India?

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Speaker, let us review some facts. Tom Mulcair, the previous leader of the NDP and the previous leader of the official opposition, stated that on this issue our leader is completely correct. Obtaining security clearance at this time would do nothing but hamstringing our leader's ability to act on information provided.

However, the Prime Minister can act. He can release the names but refuses to do so. What is he hiding? It is rich for the Prime Minister to grandstand, given that the record has shown that he and his government, with all the benefits of the government agencies, were repeatedly warned about foreign interference, including in the Liberal Party, and refused to act. If the NDP needs a statement for this question, maybe the NDP MPs should take a lesson from their previous leader and learn what the proper procedures are.

• (1035)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We are at a time where we have seen them use chatbot and AI. Would she tell us who wrote that? Was it someone from the party or is that—

The Speaker: The hon. member is an experienced member of the House. I suspect he knows that is not a point of order.

The hon. member from Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I agree with most of what my friend from King—Vaughan said. The facts of the SDTC case, the fact that a previously well run institution providing funding for emerging technologies went so far off the rails is deeply concerning, so I do not want my question to seem to be trivializing it.

Privilege

We have an Auditor General report and, at the request of the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, we have a full report from the Commissioner of Ethics, so we have a lot of information.

With all due respect to my friend from King—Vaughan, she said two things that I do not think are in any way evidence. I do not think they are true, but I would like to know if she thinks they are true.

The first is that Annette Verschuren, who was appointed chair of SDTC and committed a number of grievous errors with respect to the failure to observe conflict of interest rules, was a friend of the Prime Minister. I do not think we even know if she was a supporter for the Liberal Party. The second is that the hon. member for King—Vaughan has said that this institution continues to defraud, but it has been wrapped up and put into a different institution.

I would like to ask her if there is information in support of those two allegations.

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I know one thing. In speaking to my constituents from King—Vaughan, they are disgusted and disappointed in the current affairs of the Liberal government. It is like if we see one cockroach, there are hundreds behind the wall.

How many more hidden secrets is the government going to keep from Canadians in allowing them to know the truth on how their valuable, hard-earned taxpayer dollars are being squandered by the government?

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague worked in an industry where transparency and trust was important when dealing with other people's money. I think she would probably relate to the idea of why trust is very important when we are dealing with other people's money.

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I do have a lot of experience in banking. In banking, our clients expect us to be honest, transparent and accountable. If we are not, they will move their business. The ironic part about it is that not only are we transparent and accountable in that industry, we also have auditors that we have to report to, just like the government. It had the Attorney General. It knows that it has 186 violations with \$400 million of money that we cannot possibly ever know about unless it reveals those reports.

How can we, as politicians, stand in this place and explain to the Canadian public where this money was squandered by the Liberals?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, your ruling was that this issue go before a standing committee. It had nothing to do with the member's misrepresentation of what she says the Speaker's ruling was. The reason why we are here is because of unethical behaviour coming from Conservative members that want to filibuster a Canadian agenda versus a Conservative Party agenda.

When will the Conservatives start to put Canadians ahead of their own political agenda?

• (1040)

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Speaker, we know the Liberals have to deflect because we know that they are down 20 points in the polls. We know that they are going to try to blame everyone else but

themselves, because they know that in the next election they will be decimated.

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when members of Parliament go back to their ridings on the weekend or during their constituency weeks and when they go to community events, or to their local arena, or to the local community centre or legion, wherever they go, I am sure they get the same comments that I get, no matter what political party. Sometimes we are a little amazed at what people want to talk about. If we are at an arena, seldom do they want to talk about hockey. What do they want to talk about? They want to talk about corruption. They ask me who is going to jail.

I was at an arena on Saturday and an elderly couple asked me who would go to jail for all of this. They wanted to know what was happening. I think this is at the core of what really upsets the Canadian public, certainly it is in my area.

I think back to years ago, when I worked for a foundry, and how hard the workers worked, grinding castings, pressing castings, working hours in the hot summer days inside the furnace room, slagging furnaces. Workers were working in eight-hour shifts and then working four hours overtime afterward. I can remember sitting at the lunch table in the cafeteria. As they were looking at their paycheques, they were talking about their overtime and how much they had left. Sometime these individuals would go into work at 3 a.m. to work a four-hour overtime shift from 3 a.m. to 7 a.m. Then they would work their regular shifts from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. The same thing happened for afternoon shifts. When they looked at their paycheques, they had about 52% left over of what they should have made in overtime.

These people are working hard every day. They then read in the newspaper or on the Internet, or they see it on the TV at night, while watching the news with their family, about this waste, the hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars that, after nine years, have accumulated well into the billions. When they see this, they want to know what is going on. This is not what they want. Nor is it the Canada they were hoping to have. This is when the frustration boils over.

I think back to the 2015 election. In a few debates in which I participated, I said that the same people who ran the government in Ontario, Gerald Butts, Katie Telford, and we all know the names, who picked the pockets of the Ontario taxpayers for years, scandal-ridden abuses, were coming to Ottawa to pick the pockets of the Canadian taxpayer now. That is right out of a debate. I am not taking credit for my foresight, but those are the facts.

Why is the culture of that party, the Liberal Party, like this? I know that not all the members are like that, but why is there a culture behind the scenes and in senior leadership? Some of the big hitters cancelled gas plants. That was a billion-dollar debacle. People went to jail for that and ended up being the contributing factor as to why we are so tight on electricity in the province of Ontario.

Privilege

A lot of people have forgotten the 600 school closures in Ontario during the Wynne-McGuinty years. In my area, I remember going to the reviews, and people were very upset. As it turns out, if they did not close the schools, those schools would be almost full today because of the population growth. I would consider that a big waste. Kids who used to walk to school are now taking buses. There is nothing wrong with a bus, but if they could walk or ride their bikes to school, they would be a lot better off.

● (1045)

Let us talk about the doubling of the debt. In those years, the world's economy was pretty good, and the Liberals ran a deficit the entire time. There are higher taxes and fees, like the hiking of the aviation fuel tax, the beer and wine taxes, sin taxes. It sounds familiar. They did that first in Ontario and then they brought it to Ottawa. There are new taxes on small businesses—

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. What is the relevance of this to the amendment we are debating right now?

The Speaker: The hon. member for Huron—Bruce is within the guidelines that the Speaker would find acceptable for this debate.

The hon. member for Huron—Bruce.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, the member's and my offices are beside each other, so we can talk about this later, if there are any ongoing questions.

The taxes are hiking up the cost of a driver's licence, fishing licence, hunting licence, camping licence, liquor licence, event permit, court application, and the list goes on. The government is not able to manage its own internal interactions, affairs and cost overruns, including red tape. This all happened in Ontario. Now, in Ottawa, after nine years, it is fully embedded.

The government spent \$8 billion on e-health. If we ask anybody in Ontario where they would go to locate their e-health record, I do not think there are many citizens who would know where their e-health record is located. The government also spent \$2 billion on smart metres. A lot of people in our ridings would remember that. It was then \$304 million over budget on the Pan Am Games and there were \$400 million in Presto card cost overruns. It goes on and on.

I will move on to another topic and go back years ago to when an employee who worked in finance where I worked maybe had her hand in the cookie jar. That is pretty much what happened. After an internal investigation, the company discovered that she had misappropriated over \$400,000. That was 15 years ago, so it would probably be \$3 million in today's dollars, with inflation. The staff of the company did the investigation, I am sure with the assistance of auditors, and turned the documents over to the OPP. The OPP then used those documents to do its investigation. The individual was charged with fraud over \$5,000 and was sentenced to an 18-month conditional sentence. Restitution was made, and all the money was recovered.

If we look at that small example and ask ourselves what the difference here is, there really is no difference. The government across the way has the ability to produce these documents unredacted and turn them over to the RCMP to let it make a determination. However, it is awfully difficult to do it a page at a time and while having

to wait because of delays to receive the documents. It would be much easier and more appropriate to turn all of the documents over and have the RCMP make its evaluation.

The member for King—Vaughan made points in her speech about some of the scandals that have plagued the government for nine plus years now. The members of Parliament who ran in the 2015 election will remember that time. I am sure my Liberal colleagues across the way remember that time. They were very excited about the promises that were made and the hope that was offered in that 2015 election, after which a significant majority government was formed. I am sure those members of Parliament would never have believed in their wildest dreams that this is where we would be today. We have pages of scandals, issues and problems, and there is money that will never be found or repaid. It can all be laid at the hands of the Prime Minister, his chief of staff, the cabinet ministers who are here, and those who have left, and who are likely collecting seven-figure salaries now.

I think SNC-Lavalin would have to be one of the most egregious cases in the history of Canada with respect to abuse of power. What is most remarkable is this: There was a significant number of key players in that scandal who are still employed, still holding an elected office. It is hard to believe that there has been no house-cleaning.

● (1050)

I thought to myself, “What would Jody Wilson-Raybould have to say if she had been re-elected as an independent member of Parliament in the last election? What would she want to say in this speech?” It would likely be the most impactful speech about what it is like to be a minister with a thumb on the whole time, and to play fast and loose with the law to achieve the goals of the Prime Minister and the corporations.

Another one that was shocking, and it was uncovered during COVID times, was the WE Charity scandal. People could not believe it. I know Bill Morneau took the hit for that one to protect the Prime Minister for another day. There is also the Trudeau Foundation. I do not think we will ever know all the truth about what is going on and what has gone on at the Trudeau Foundation. Hopefully, some day, we will.

On foreign interference, again, people at home are in disbelief.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, I hear the member for Timmins—James Bay chirping away, just like he always does. I do not know if members have ever driven down a country road and saw a dog running along the farm, barking at every car that goes by. That is really what he is like now, at the end of his political career. He is really just like that country dog—

The Speaker: The hon. member is an experienced member of the House and knows that it is important to not compare hon. colleagues to animals. I would ask the hon. member to withdraw that and continue along.

Privilege

I see the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, the issue of foreign interference is very serious, yet when we ask questions, we are being called dogs in the House. They were calling people cockroaches before.

Mr. Speaker, you need to establish a standard of behaviour. The Conservatives cannot just denigrate politicians who are serious about issues of foreign interference by calling them—

The Speaker: I have asked the hon. member to not compare members to animals and to withdraw those comments. I will give the hon. member a chance to do that.

It is worth making this point: I did notice the line about cockroaches and, in discussion with others, we found it to be very clear that it was not made in reference to other hon. members. It was made in reference to how, if we see one mistruth, we would see many mistruths. That was the comparison. It was not made in comparison to people or members of the House. Certainly, this is how the Chair has interpreted it, and I think that would be a reasonable interpretation.

I am going to ask the hon. member for Huron—Bruce to withdraw the comment and to continue with his speech.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, you are right. I was not comparing him to a beautiful Labrador or anything like that. What I was trying—

• (1055)

The Speaker: While I entertain a point of order, I would ask the hon. member to please consider simply withdrawing the comment.

The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, they are talking about taxpayer dollars.

This filibuster has cost \$15 million so far, and in the midst of it, we have to put up with the most degrading name-calling in the House, day in and day out. The Conservatives are denigrating other elected officials with their unacceptable behaviour. This is worse than a frat house with a bunch of frat boys in it. If they are going to cost taxpayers \$1 million a day, at least they could be a little bit more respectful to all the people across Canada, who they are slapping in the face, while stopping legislation from getting through.

The Speaker: I will return to the original point and just ask the hon. member for Huron—Bruce to simply withdraw the comment.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, I did withdraw the comment about three points of order ago.

The point is, with the member for Timmins—James Bay—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I am only asking for fairness. When you asked the member to withdraw, he decided to use it as a platform to continue personal, denigrating attacks.

The member either withdraws and apologizes or he sits down. If we are going to go into what a dog is, whether it is a good dog or a bad dog, and why someone is like a dog, we could do that all day.

Mr. Speaker, you need to establish fair rules for—

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay. I would like to refer him once again to the long-standing tradition of this place. Withdrawal is what was asked, and withdrawal and apology are equal. I usually only ask for an apology when the Chair feels that the member is not following through on the original request. I have asked the hon. member to withdraw. He has said that he is withdrawing—

Ms. Leah Gazan: I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I will finish this point before I recognize the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

I have asked the hon. member to withdraw. The withdrawal was not clear. There were some other points of order that were brought up. I have asked the hon. member to withdraw, and he has said that he is withdrawing the comment. That is where we are at.

The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I do not think that a withdrawal with qualification is a withdrawal. In fact, the member went into another tirade of denigrating an individual, which is not a withdrawal. I would ask, through you, Mr. Speaker, for the member to withdraw his comment without qualification.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

I will offer the hon. member for Huron—Bruce to withdraw the comment without qualification.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, if the member had been listening, in my fourth withdrawal, I withdrew those comments, so there is no point because the record will show that I made an unqualified withdrawal.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member. The Chair has now heard an unqualified withdrawal.

Ms. Leah Gazan: I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

An hon. member: That is a challenge to the Chair.

The Speaker: This is not a challenge to the Chair. Can we please allow the member to speak?

The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, the member has now accused me of not listening, and I was listening very carefully to him denigrating members of the House. Again, that is a withdrawal with a qualification.

I would like the member to just withdraw the comment without any qualification. This is another example of including a qualification, a behaviour that is totally unacceptable. Now he is saying that I am not listening, which is unacceptable. Unfortunately, I have had to listen to these Conservatives denigrate members of the House for three weeks at \$15 million. I would like him to withdraw without qualification.

Privilege

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for her thoughtful comments. The Chair considers the matter withdrawn and closed.

I am going to invite the hon. member for Huron—Bruce to continue with his speech.

• (1100)

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that.

The last point I want to make is about some of the hypocrisy we see with the Liberal government. It just goes on and on. In this House of Commons, I have listened many times to the Liberals saying we have to do something about fossil fuels, oil, gas, etc. I read an article this morning in *The Globe and Mail*. It was an update on the results of the Trans Mountain pipeline, which was an over-spending debacle of \$30 billion.

The point was, who is the king of oil in the House of Commons? It is the environment minister. Canada is now producing five million barrels a day and it is increasing every year under the Liberals. Why is that? Basically, the Liberals need the money to pay for everything else, so they are quite pleased to let the oil come out of the ground. I agree, it should come out of the ground and it should be shipped by pipeline. However, I find it ironic that the Liberals go on at length about fossil fuels, oil, etc., and the environment minister is the king of oil, for now.

The broader issue at play here is the government's integrity. The allegations of conflicts of interest within SDTC are particularly troubling because they suggest public funds may have been misused to benefit individuals with close ties to the government. This kind of behaviour undermines public trust in government institutions and erodes confidence in the government's ability to manage public resources in a fair and transparent way.

The audit found board members were voting on projects that directly benefited companies with which they had personal affiliations, which is a clear violation of conflict of interest laws. These laws are in place to ensure that public officials do not use their position for personal gain and that government decisions are made in the best interest of the public, not private individuals. When these laws are violated, it casts doubt on the integrity of the entire decision-making process. I am sure many people have heard of some of the carryings-on that went on, through the minutes of those meetings. It is pretty startling, really.

It is important to note for Canadians that this kind of self-enriching goes directly against the Governor in Council appointment process, which states that a person appointed by the government, entrusted to oversee taxpayer money, will not personally profit from their work on a committee as a Governor in Council appointee, and neither will any of their family members. However, this is exactly what happened.

In a five-year period where 405 transactions were approved by the board, the Auditor General sampled 226, only half of them, and found 186 of those 226 transactions had some sort of a conflict. It is too much. It is egregious. If the Auditor General looked at all 400 transactions, statistically, they would probably find the rest of them were conflicted as well. It is a lot of money and Canadians have a right to know. Parliamentarians have a right to make sure justice is

carried out on behalf of all those hard-working people I mentioned at the beginning of my speech.

Canadians pay their taxes on each and every paycheque. They pay their CPP. They pay their OAS. They trust that the people they mark down on their ballots will do the right thing when they are in Ottawa and that these dollars will be respected. Far too many people in our country have worked so hard, paid so much in taxes and created so much economic activity only to have been disappointed time and time again over the nine years the Liberals have been in office.

• (1105)

To be honest, in the last few years, the NDP has been in on it, too, because it has been propping up the government. There needs to be something done. I am sure some of the members of Parliament on the other side feel the same way. Nobody comes to Ottawa to see what is happening with this scandal: people enriching themselves with millions and millions of dollars. A lot of the projects likely never went anywhere.

Then the people back in our ridings who have contracting, construction and landscaping firms, who are carpenters, electricians, plumbers and health care professionals, go to work each and every day and see this on the news. Hope and excitement in the country are not there as they used to be. People want to be hopeful, but when they see this time and time again, and the list is unbelievable now after nine and a half years, they are truly disappointed.

One director was particularly aggressive at this. Andrée-Lise Méthot was appointed in 2016 by the Prime Minister. She runs a venture capital firm called Cycle Capital. Her companies, before and during her time on the board, apparently received \$250 million in grants, and \$114 million went to green companies she had invested in.

I think it is safe to say, when we look at these programs, whether it is Cycle Capital or others, no company needs that much money from the federal government. Really, no company needs that much money. From a government standpoint, the dollars are there to deliver government services, not to enrich insiders who create little value.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, yesterday, one of the members talked about past behaviour and why it was relevant. I have one report with 70 confirmations of Conservatives' abuses of power, corruption and so forth. I would be happy to name all 70 of them. However, it missed one of the most obvious ones, which was the ETS scandal of Stephen Harper. Why is that important? It is important because the parliamentary secretary to Stephen Harper was the current Conservative leader. As we fast-forward to today, foreign interference is a very serious issue and he is the only leader who refuses to get the necessary security clearance.

Privilege

The Conservatives talk about hiding, but what is the leader of the Conservative Party hiding from? Is it because something in his past is going to disqualify him? Is that why he is not getting the security clearance? Canadians have a right to know exactly why.

Does the member not agree that the Conservative leader needs to come clean on foreign interference?

Mr. Ben Lobb: Madam Speaker, first of all, the Liberal government could just release all the documents and get on with it.

With regard to the Conservative leader, he has been clear that he wants the names released and we will see where it goes. He is very confident—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ben Lobb: Madam Speaker, I find it interesting that when these points are made, the member for Winnipeg North always heckles. I have seen him do this for years. When a member is making a point, he will not let them make the point.

The point is, the leader of the Conservative Party has said to release the names. The Prime Minister has dangled it, so he should just release the names.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, if the leader of the Conservative Party gets the clearance, he can see the names.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is a point of clarification.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like people to stop saying that names have to be released. As we all know, in the context of the foreign interference commission, we were told that anyone who discloses names could face criminal charges. If the Conservative Party leader wants to know the names, he should get his security clearance.

I would like my colleague to respond to that.

[*English*]

Mr. Ben Lobb: Madam Speaker, I think the member is still on the agriculture committee. Regarding my private member's bill, the Bloc members voted for it at second reading, at committee and at third reading. Then it came back from the Senate amended. Can members believe the Bloc is now taking its orders from the Senate? Now it will not support Bill C-234, which deals with on-farm carbon tax on natural gas and propane. All of a sudden, the Bloc members are listening to the orders from their senators, which is puzzling.

The problem with the member's question, though, is that the Prime Minister dangled it last week. He said, "Hey, I have the list, and there are people from this party and that party on it." He has opened Pandora's box. That is why the Conservative leader is saying, "Release it. Do the right thing."

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, we should always put the nation above our own partisan interests, but that is not the case with the Conservatives. They are shouting and heckling because of what they do not want on the record, and we are going to put it on the record. For every minute and hour the Conservatives obstruct the House, we will put on the record the political interference by foreign actors that allowed this—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order.

The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo has a point of order.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, speaking of putting something on the record, I wonder if the member will put on the record an apology for the tweet from last week. I would like unanimous—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is not a point of order.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, it is typical that they are shouting about tweets when we are talking about CSIS reports. A CSIS report says there were allegations that the Indian consulate informed one leadership candidate, Patrick Brown, that it was not going to allow him at its events. The Indian consulate officials pushed two Conservative MPs to switch their vote for the present member in Stornoway, so we know the Modi cronies supported the man who is now living in Stornoway.

These are issues being raised by CSIS. I want someone to stand up and name the names of the Conservatives who conspired to take down the former Conservative leader and put the man in Stornoway today.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Madam Speaker, the member for Timmins—James Bay will notice that while he was asking his question, I never heckled him once. I actually listened to his question, which is something he rarely does. What always amazes me about the member is how thin his skin is. He has so much to say, but when something gets redirected to him, all of a sudden he is offended so easily. He offends everybody.

The point is, the New Democrats have been propping up the current government for years now. I am sure some of the reason the member is retiring from politics is that it is unbearable to come home to his riding every weekend and have to go to an arena, a legion or a community centre and be asked, "Hey, man, why are you supporting these guys?" He has not got an answer for that, unfortunately.

Privilege

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to comments about Bill C-234. We have always supported this bill. When it came back from the Senate, we did the rational thing, not because we obey the Senate, but because we felt it might not come back to the House if it were sent back to the Senate again. We wanted to lock in the new grain drying provision.

The truth is that the Conservative Party is not letting us pass Bill C-234, which would give producers in the rest of Canada an exemption for grain drying. I talked about that in my first speech on this bill back in January. It does not even apply to Quebec. We did the honourable thing with respect to the agricultural exemption, but the member is refusing to acknowledge that. I find that offensive.

• (1115)

[*English*]

Mr. Ben Lobb: Madam Speaker, as much as I think highly of the member, he is not telling the whole story, because there is also the heating of livestock barns and other buildings for growing food. He did not mention that. What he would have mentioned if he was being completely forthright in the debate was that the Senate took that out. Why would the Bloc Québécois take orders from the Senate? The other point he made was that it does not even impact his province, so why does he not help us out in Ontario, all the way to Alberta? That would be great.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a letter written by the RCMP commissioner for the chair of the procedure and House affairs committee, and it says, “I wish to inform you that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) investigation into SDTC is ongoing.” As there is an ongoing investigation, my question for my colleague is simple: Why does he think the NDP and the Liberals will not help the RCMP and release these documents? How bad is it going to be?

Mr. Ben Lobb: Madam Speaker, the best way they can help the RCMP is to release all the documents. The RCMP is having to pull them one or two at a time and it is taking forever. The easiest thing for the Liberal government to do, if it really wants to get to the bottom of this, is give all the documents to the RCMP, do a complete dump, so the RCMP can look at everything and see where the trail leads.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, with serious allegations of foreign interference in the leadership race of the Conservative Party, today's leader of the Conservative Party is being questioned about the methods with which he achieved the leadership. Why would the leader of the Conservative Party not take the initiative and get the security clearance that every other leader in the House of Commons has in order to take a look at the allegations and the names? What is the leader of the Conservative Party so afraid of? Is he scared that something in his past is going to deny him the opportunity to get clearance?

Mr. Ben Lobb: Madam Speaker, I do not think the Leader of the Opposition is scared of anything, other than maybe when he upsets his wife.

I think he is scared for the future of this country if the Liberals stay. That is why he is asking for a carbon tax election. As we see when we are in our communities, seniors and people on a fixed in-

come are hurting, and every day the Liberal-NDP government is here is one more miserable day in the life of a senior on a fixed income pension.

Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my honour to rise in the House today to address the matter before us about the failure to produce documents pertaining to Sustainable Development Technology Canada. As a member of the public accounts committee, I am very familiar with this particular matter, how it all come to light and how the minister of ISED took corrective actions to address it as soon as it came to our attention.

To brief members, as soon as allegations were brought forward, an investigation was done immediately. Plans were made to fold Sustainable Development Technology Canada into the NRC, and it will abide by very stringent regulations going forward. The former board was dismissed, and we now have a new interim board of three members, only in place for one year to facilitate the transition to the NRC. That work is going very well.

There were 12 recommendations made to address the concerns that have been identified. I am happy to say that already 11 of them have been addressed. The 12th one is under way and should be completed by the end of December this year. That recommendation has to do with reviewing all the various awards of funds that were made to make sure those awards were valid, that nothing untoward was done and that the businesses that applied were entitled to those funds. That is a very important feature.

I want to emphasize that none of the businesses were found to be at fault. It was the director who had a conflict of interest, which is not a reflection on the businesses that applied in good faith. We want to return to funding these very important green, sustainable businesses because they are start-ups that depend on this money. They would not be able to function and carry on without it. That is a very important thing to bear in mind as we are discussing this. We must not lose sight of the key factor that this was a very important funding program that did a lot of exceptionally good work. I worry that sometimes we lose sight of that.

Just to get this on the record, since its creation in 2001, SDTC has invested more than \$1.71 billion in over 500 companies that have generated \$3.1 billion in annual revenue, created 24,500 jobs, commercialized 224 new technologies and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 25 megatonnes of CO₂ annually. SDTC's impact is equivalent to taking almost seven million cars off the road every year, and SDTC-funded companies have received global recognition and are consistently listed on the annual global clean-tech 100 list, where Canada punches well above its weight. Despite all the clouds that have been generated by the AG's report, which was very complete and very well done, we must not lose sight of why the fund was created and all the good work that it has done.

Privilege

Turning to the privilege motion, which has held up the work of several committees and the House, it is about releasing documents and the problems that are occurring. I want to let the House know that many of the documents requested, a great number, have already been provided. The problem is not about the government making the documents available. It is that we do not want to make them available to third parties like the police because that is an abuse of people's charter rights. We must protect people's charter rights at all costs.

On the record, the AG has stated that if the documents collected in the course of her investigation were released, made public or given to the police, going forward, people may be very reticent to speak to the AG and co-operate with her investigations because of what could happen down the line. They may not have confidence that the information would not be abused and inappropriately shared.

• (1120)

I want to share some concerns. Our committee received from the RCMP commissioner a letter saying that the RCMP does not want to receive the documents from the government because it would not be able to use them. The police are investigating. If the police, in their investigations, feel they need access to documents and information, they have the legal means to get them through the court process. The police can use warrants. If they obtain the documents through legal justice provisions, they can use them in court. Anything they obtain from us would not be usable because they are under the governance of the justice system, which is separate from the parliamentary system. It needs to be that way, and that is what we are fighting to protect.

I want to read some information into the record. Former law clerk Rob Walsh commented on the June 10 House order ordering the production of papers related to SDTC to be sent to the Speaker and then given to the RCMP. He stated, “[in my humble opinion], it is an abuse of its powers for the House to use its power to demand and get documents from the Government in order to transfer them to a third party (RCMP) that wouldn't otherwise receive them or to compel the Government to give documents to the third party.”

Mr. Walsh further stated that the government must give Parliament the documents it demands, but “not for the purposes of making them available to a third party such as the RCMP.” Mr. Walsh also stated that the House's privileged power to demand the production of documents from anyone is for the purposes of its own proceedings where the legal rights of the affected individuals would be protected by parliamentary privilege.

Another former senior parliamentary counsel to the House of Commons, Mr. Steven Chaplin, was interviewed over the summer and stated that the June 10 order was both “completely unprecedented” and a likely abuse of parliamentary powers. He said that the House of Commons was simply acting as a “mailbox” for the police force, which is not one of its duties. He also stated, “It is not a parliamentary or constitutional function of Parliament to help the police.”

In the same vein, former RCMP deputy commissioner Pierre-Yves Bourduas commented, “we all know that the rule of law is predicated upon a separation between what [Parliament is] doing

and the law enforcement agencies, in this case the RCMP.” Separation between Parliament and the police force is critical. He also stated that he believed the House had overstepped, and that this raises a number of constitutional issues.

Mr. Bourduas also said, “there needs to be this separation, this segregation, between Parliament and the gathering of documents and what the RCMP can do because it could jeopardize any future prosecution if the perception, not the reality, the perception, that the RCMP tried to circumvent proper procedures, criminal procedures, could jeopardize any future cases before the court.” He reiterated later, “it's crucial for the RCMP...not only to maintain the separation, but also to maintain the perception of the separation for the general public and for the greater good of our justice system.”

Mr. Bourduas went on to say, “the RCMP would try to avoid [creating charter concerns] at all costs, and this happened before where the RCMP was accused of trying to circumvent legal process, obtaining search warrants by gathering documents that were not legally obtained”. This would severely impact its ability to conduct an investigation that could produce legal consequences if it got to that stage.

A Conservative member, who I believe represents Brantford—Brant, knows that the RCMP does not need help with getting documents. Just recently, he said that what happens if we cannot get a document is we go to court and ask for search warrants or production orders. That is how it is done. The RCMP has its own means to do it, and if it obtains the documents in that fashion, it can use them to prosecute the case. Using its processes for purposes that were never intended and that are not connected to a parliamentary proceeding is the concern.

• (1125)

The RCMP commissioner himself has stated his consternation about the documents sent his way and there is significant risk that the motion could be interpreted as a circumvention of normal investigative processes and charter protections. Canadians value their charter rights; they are enshrined in our Constitution. We need to assure Canadians that parliamentarians will not use parliamentary privilege to ever abuse those charter rights.

We need to support the AG so that she can conduct her work in an objective fashion, and people who co-operate with her know that they are protected as well, and that any information they divulge will not be used against them and forwarded to the police in a future investigation. That is very critical. We have the documents; we did produce them and more are still coming in from the various agencies requested, but we cannot pass them on to third parties, particularly our national police force. That would be an abuse of the rights of Canadians, and that is not how the information was given originally. It was divulged with the knowledge that people's charter rights would be protected and the information would not be used against them down the line.

• (1130)

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

Privilege

I listened intently to my colleague's speech, because I really enjoy speeches on the law, and she said a few things that were rather puzzling. One was that people may not want to do business with the government because the information could then be passed on to the police. Well, that is what happens when people do wrong. When someone commits a crime, information should be passed on to the police. If somebody will not do it, Parliament should. That is absolutely ludicrous.

Second, she talks about the abuse of rights. My question is a very straightforward one, and I have an idea of the answer, but I am curious if she does: What rights are being abused here? She talked about the charter rights being abused. Simply, what right is being abused?

Ms. Valerie Bradford: Madam Speaker, I believe that when many people co-operate, they are not the guilty party: They are being asked to provide the information they know. I think it is parliamentary privilege being abused here. We are being asked to abuse our parliamentary privilege and use it in a way that was never intended. It is not intended that we provide documents to third parties, in this case the RCMP, when it is quite capable of deciding what it wants to investigate, who it wants to investigate and how it goes about obtaining the evidence it needs. That—

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member just said that parliamentary privilege is being abused, and yet we are debating a motion that comes out of a privilege ruling the Speaker made. The member is essentially saying that the Speaker's ruling was an abuse. The member is basically saying that the ruling—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is debate and is definitely not going to be resolved through this.

The hon. member was answering answering a question that was asked of her, and I will let her finish.

The hon. member for Kitchener South—Hespeler.

Ms. Valerie Bradford: Madam Speaker, I am not quite sure of the question. Could the member repeat the question?

Mr. Frank Caputo: The charter right being abused.

Ms. Valerie Bradford: Madam Speaker, the charter right would be that people have the protection that evidence that they give in confidence to, for example the AG, is not going to be forwarded to the police. When people speak to the AG, they expect that that will be treated in a judicial matter and not forwarded to a law enforcement agency.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, this whole issue leads me to reflect on the very foundations of our democracy and on responsible government, the principle of the people delegating power to their elected officials, who can demand documents. This is how we keep society free from corruption and how the government keeps the public's trust.

We have here a striking example of a situation where that is not happening. How can the public trust its government if the government disregards an order it received from the House?

[*English*]

Ms. Valerie Bradford: Madam Speaker, the problem is not providing the information to Parliament; the problem is when the opposition is demanding that we then forward that information to the police, to a third party, any third party, but particularly when we involve law enforcement. They do not need us to provide that information. They have gone on the record and said that they do not want to obtain the information in this fashion, because they cannot use it.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, nobody loves a good Liberal scandal like I do. In fact, I made my name on Liberal scandals, because there are so many of them, going all the way back to the rum bottle politics on the Rideau. We could count Liberal scandals. This, to me, is something different. There is a finding of the government refusing to turn over documents. This is now to be sent to committee, which is the process that should take place. There may be a very important finding but what we are dealing with here is the complete obstruction of Parliament by Conservatives who do not want the work of the nation to take place. This is, I find, concerning.

It reminds me of 2009, when Stephen Harper refused to turn over the Afghan detainee documents. That was much more serious, because it spoke to the very heart of our nation. There were allegations of horrific torture that brought down the reputation of Canadian soldiers who were on the front lines in Kandahar. When Harper refused to turn over documents and listen to the will of Parliament, he was actually found in contempt of Parliament; he was the only prime minister found in contempt of Parliament.

What did he do? He shut down Parliament. He shut down our democracy. This is the Conservative record on documents and their refusal to respect democracy. I would suggest that this be sent to committee. Maybe the Prime Minister will be found in contempt by committee. It is the committee's job to ascertain whether the Prime Minister has lived up to his obligation to be transparent. This is the work of Parliament, and I am very concerned that we are now three weeks into obstruction when we have serious issues in our communities that need to be addressed.

• (1135)

Ms. Valerie Bradford: Madam Speaker, I completely agree. This is about process. Our government definitely wants this matter to be referred to the appropriate committee for further investigation. That is how it should be dealt with. He is quite right in mentioning that for two weeks, going on three weeks now, the work of the House has ground to a standstill. We are talking about this privilege motion instead of bringing forward new legislation that could actually help Canadians. That is what we are here to do. That is what we are elected to do, to come down here and make life better for Canadians.

Privilege

There have been multiple committees that have been seized with the SDTC report already, and they have held numerous meetings. It is not just the House of Commons here in the chamber that has been stymied for progress. It is the work of the committees as well. In public accounts, our jurisdiction is to review AG reports. She does hundreds of reports a year. There is a lot of stuff to go into in depth. It is supposed to be a non-partisan committee where we try and get to the root of things, and we are not able to do that because we are going on and on and on, with numerous witnesses on this, when there is nothing further to discern.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member's speech was very calm. She explained, in detail, the entire problem with this motion without using any political rhetoric like we see from the other side of the House. I want her to expand on one particular thing. If we go ahead with this demand that we give this document, through the law clerk, to the RCMP, which the RCMP has conveyed in writing is irregular and that it is very unlikely that they will be using it, there are unintended consequences that may actually hamper any possible criminal investigation.

The end objective of all of us here is that anybody who has done anything wrong should be held accountable. If we go through this process, this may have unintended consequences of actually scuttling that.

Ms. Valerie Bradford: Madam Speaker, the member is quite right. Not only is it the wrong thing to do, it is completely ineffective for what the opposition is trying to accomplish. RCMP officials have clearly stated that, one, they would not be able to use the information and; two, they have other means to obtain the same information through the normal course of the judicial process, which they could actually use in bringing forward any prosecution. So, not only is it a waste of time, it is an ineffective use of time, and it will not accomplish what the Conservatives are trying to do.

I agree completely with the member. Also, it would send a very bad message to the Canadian public that their charter rights are not being protected, that they can be abused by the Parliament of Canada, which is not anything we would want to convey.

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to serve with my colleague, but she said something in her previous answer to my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue that is not entirely true.

The House asked that the government submit the documents to the law clerk and parliamentary counsel, who could then pass them on to the RCMP, if the RCMP so wishes. The order is quite clear. It says to send the documents to the law clerk and parliamentary counsel.

Yesterday, the law clerk and parliamentary counsel confirmed in a report that some of the documents had not been sent and that the others were heavily redacted. It is time that the member acknowledged the primacy of Parliament and persuaded the government to hand over the documents so that we, as parliamentarians, can do our job properly.

• (1140)

[English]

Ms. Valerie Bradford: Madam Speaker, I do not recall saying that the documents could be provided to the law clerk. However, I do realize that some of the documents have been heavily redacted, we just heard this yesterday in testimony, and that is the first I became aware of it. The people submitting them must have their reasons for that. I think if they could be reassured that they were not going to be passed over to a third outside party, perhaps they might revisit it, but I have no first-hand knowledge of that.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Madam Speaker, many Canadians are struggling to make ends meet at this time, and when we see this Liberal government giving cushy, multi-million dollar contracts to their friends, Canadians feel cheated. Imagine being a taxpayer who is struggling to pay the rent or to buy food, and then to hear that billions of their tax dollars were being wasted by government.

Food will cost families \$700 more this year than it did last year. Food insecurity has become such a problem in this country that, since 2021, food banks have seen a 50% increase in visits. According to the latest data from Statistics Canada, 8.7 million Canadians were food insecure in 2023, including 2.1 million children. Even poverty diseases like scurvy are resurfacing in Canada, and doctors are being warned to look out for them.

We are in a crisis. We have never seen this kind of government waste and suffering of Canadians before in this nation. Yet, here we are debating a matter of privilege, because this government's negligence, incompetence and corruption have resurfaced in the most recent scandal. The negligence continues because, after nine long years, this Liberal administration is being propped up by the NDP.

We would not be here today spending days debating this matter of parliamentary privilege if this government was prioritizing the best interests of Canadians. Instead of debating, we would be working on issues that are impacting Canadians, including record high inflation, cost of living, a housing crisis, a crime crisis and chaos in the streets. These are crises that have erupted because of the failed policies and leadership of this Prime Minister and his NDP coalition partners.

While this is happening, the government has once again chosen to serve its best interests and not the best interests of Canadians. It has failed to take the ethical path and to demonstrate leadership, transparency and accountability by handing over the documents that are at the very centre of this motion and at the very centre of the \$400-million scandal. Let us now review some of the history that has got us to this point.

Sustainable Development Technology Canada was a \$1-billion fund that was supported by multiple governments. In fact, it ran smoothly without incident up—

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, I rises on a point of order. It was referred to that we have record inflation, but when we do a quick search, we had record inflation under Brian Mulroney—

Privilege

• (1145)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is a point of debate. The hon. member can make reference to it in his question.

The hon. member for Haldimand—Norfolk.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Madam Speaker, in reviewing the history, Sustainable Development Technology Canada was a one billion dollar fund that was supported by multiple governments and ran smoothly, in fact, without incident until 2017. It was designed with the noble cause of helping green technology start-ups get off the ground, with some government support in order to accelerate action on climate and the environment. Then the Prime Minister appointed a new Liberal board chair to the SDTC.

However, after the Conservatives put forward a motion asking for the Auditor General to conduct audits into the SDTC, she found that the fund had approved projects for funding that were ineligible for taxpayer funds. She further found that SDTC executives violated at least \$400 million of taxpayer funds. Eighty per cent of the cases the Auditor General looked at had conflicts of interest. She also found that the green slush fund had frequently overstated the environmental benefit of the projects they funded.

We know that the Auditor General's findings were just the tip of the iceberg. She did not conduct an exhaustive audit. She just looked at a sample of cases and investigated them. This sample revealed such conflicts of interest that are a part of this privilege motion today, yet 80% of those cases were found in violation of the law.

We also know that some of those at the centre of the scandal, the Liberal-appointed board members who benefited from these contracts, managed to jump ship and secure other government-appointed positions.

One of the green slush fund directors, Andrée-Lise Méthot, actually admitted to several conflicts of interest with funds that went to companies in which she had a financial interest. In fact, the Minister of Environment, prior to joining cabinet, served as a strategic adviser for a venture capital firm called Cycle Capital from 2009 to 2018. This is the same firm that Ms. Méthot founded and was the managing partner of, the same firm that received a significant amount of SDTC funding while she sat on the board.

As this scandal was coming out, she was then coincidentally appointed to the board of the \$35 billion Canada Infrastructure Bank. This is the same bank where Liberal-friendly McKinsey consultants have been deeply involved. She went from one plum board appointment to another, even after finding that she had engaged in conflicts of interest by enriching companies in which she had an interest while she sat on the board. She has since resigned, but yet Ms. Méthot is implicated in mishandling \$42 million of taxpayer funds by awarding contracts to companies in which she had financial interest.

At the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, the Conservatives are, right now, trying to get to the bottom of this scandal. We have put forward a motion to investigate this issue. It is completely unacceptable that those who repeatedly violate conflict of interest policies should be promoted to plum

government positions because they have connections with Liberal insiders. How is it that the government thought it was perfectly fine to appoint her to the Canada Infrastructure Bank after she was found to have violated conflict of interest laws to enrich her own company?

• (1150)

In light of all these egregious refusals to honour the authority of Parliament and to act in a way that is befitting of the Canadian democracy, the Conservatives have been forced to put forward a motion in the House to demand that the government get to the bottom of the green slush fund scandal by handing over all the files, communications and financial records to Parliament. Parliament would then hand over all documents to the RCMP for further investigation. However, after that motion passed, the 30-day deadline came and went without action.

What did we find? Some departments partially complied and some blatantly disobeyed the order. The government failed to hand over the documents and fell into contempt of this Parliament. The Speaker of the House ruled on this matter and stated, "In some instances, only partial disclosures were made, owing either to redactions or the withholding of documents. In other instances, the House order was met with a complete refusal."

The Department of Justice alone withheld 10,000 pages from Parliament. The Speaker of the House decided the matter of privilege, ruling that the Liberals violated the will of Parliament to turn over the evidence so that the RCMP could conduct the criminal investigation. Since then, the RCMP has confirmed that it is indeed investigating this scandal and that it is ongoing.

This is not a trivial political matter. This is not a trivial matter that has seized the House. The RCMP is not investigating because the Conservative opposition has directed it to do so. It is, in fact, an independent agency. It is investigating because there are reasonable grounds upon which to base an investigation into offences committed under the Criminal Code. Once it investigates, it will decide what to do with the documents in question and whether to prosecute. That is in its sole discretion. It has full power to conduct its investigation within the bounds of the law.

Parliament has supremacy in our constitutional democracy. It has supremacy above the government. It has supremacy above the Prime Minister. The House of Commons is the representation of the people of Canada and, as such, has powers that are absolute and within the authority as afforded by our Constitution, yet what we see here is an open contempt of authority. The government has demonstrated a complete lack of respect for the powers of Parliament to order the production of documents, which is key to the role of the House to act as a check and balance on the executive branch.

Privilege

For months the government has flouted the authority of Parliament by refusing to comply with the will of Parliament in this matter. If we allow this to continue, when will this attack on Parliament's authority end? We are at risk of having the chamber of the people of our great nation in the House of Commons devolve into nothing more than an echo chamber, without true power to exercise its role and to do the work of the people in the House.

• (1155)

The very strength of our democratic institutions lies within the power of the House to put a check on the power of the executive branch, to oppose and expose ethical breaches. In other words, the issue goes to the very heart of our democracy and as such is a litmus test of its strength.

The question is, what does the Liberal government have to hide? Why is it so desperate to keep these documents hidden from Canadians? How deep does this corruption go?

We know that the Liberal government has been so embarrassed by the revelations of mismanagement of the green slush fund that it decided to outright abolish it, or at least transfer it to another government agency. However, none of this absolves the SDTC. Nor does it absolve the government from its responsibility to Canadians. It must provide Parliament and the RCMP with answers as to what it knew, when it knew it, how this happened and how deep this corruption goes.

This paralysis of Parliament could be over today if the Liberals displayed the moral courage to comply with the order of the House by turning over the documents for the RCMP to investigate. However, they do not want to and we all know why. These files would certainly reveal the depth of corruption with respect to the green slush fund over the past nine years.

We have seen this movie before. In 2019, when it was revealed that scientists working in Canada's highest security lab were collaborating clandestinely with the People's Republic of China, it took 10 months for those scientists to be fired. When the House first asked for the documents to be released, the Liberals refused. They even took the former Speaker to court in order to cover up their failure.

Are we going to allow the tired government to continue to flout the authority of Parliament as it betrays the trust of Canadians with its endless scandals and reckless management of our economy? Let us not forget that the NDP has been complicit in these scandals by propping up the government with its coalition deal. It is clear that both the Prime Minister and the NDP have been desperately clinging to power. Only the Conservatives are committed to getting to the bottom of these scandals.

My constituents expect me to hold government to account, not prop it up. They expect me to represent their interests and to fight for their concerns. The truth is that our democracy and our shared Canadian dream is at risk. We have seen a sharp decline in the state of our nation over the last nine years. For one, Canadians are poorer than they were nine years ago. Since 2016, the cost of an average home in my constituency of Haldimand—Norfolk has increased by over 150%. Families now need a household income of \$208,000 to own a home. Between 2023 and 2024, the average cost of a one-

bedroom rental unit increased by 35%, from \$892 to \$1,190 per month.

• (1200)

Even the health care system has become less reliable and less accessible than it was nine years ago. Streets are less safe, and freedom of speech and freedom of thought are more restricted than they were nine years ago.

The motion before us is about the \$400-million siphon to Liberal friends; perhaps the money was even stolen. Canadian tax dollars have been mismanaged at a time when Canadians cannot afford to eat, heat their home or house themselves. Many are living paycheque to paycheque.

It is time for the government to own up to its record and let Canadians decide for themselves. We need to restore transparency and integrity and ensure that taxpayers are once again put first. That is the magnitude of what hangs in the balance in what we are debating today.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, at the beginning of her speech, the member referred to the importance of the work we do in this place and how we serve Canadians. We are the House of Commons after all. At the end of her speech, she referred to the importance of respecting tax dollars and respecting taxpayers to ensure that they have the benefits and services they need to receive. Yesterday one of her colleagues spoke about how part of why the Conservatives were delaying the privilege motion was that they did not want the government to be able to introduce a ways and means motion that would actually help so many Canadians and ensure that each Canadian and corporation pays their fair share.

Is the member aware of any political party or any member of Parliament who opposes the motion on the question of privilege before us? I believe that all members support it, respecting the Speaker's ruling and watching the process unfold so we can get to the work of this important privilege motion and also to the work of the chamber. Can the member explain to the House why she does not want to hear the question be called so we can get to work and respect taxpayers and the public purse?

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Madam Speaker, it is a very simple issue of having the Liberals comply with the House's order to turn over the documents to the RCMP. That is what we are here to debate today. It is an issue that is very important to Canadians. When there is continuous mismanagement of taxpayers' dollars and when millions and sometimes billions of dollars are siphoned off to agencies, organizations and companies in which Liberal-appointed board members have an interest, Canadians see the erosion of our very important democratic system.

We need to bring back accountability, and the way to bring back accountability is for the Liberals to agree to comply with the House's order and produce the documents.

Privilege

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC, is an example of something that started out as a good idea but, when entrusted to the Liberal government, it was ruined. Unfortunately, the Liberals managed to ruin a program that was needed to invest in clean technology and sustainable development companies.

I would like my colleague to tell us where the Conservative Party stands. Does her party agree that the money given to SDTC should stay in the same sector and continue to fund green technology companies, but this time in a responsible manner, contrary to what the government has done?

[English]

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Madam Speaker, the funds that were misappropriated and sent to companies in which board members had an interest is at issue today. We know that environmental protection is something every member of the House agrees on, but the Auditor General found that many of the projects did not even have an environmental component. Many of the projects did not fund what they said they were going to fund. There is a breach of trust that has to be addressed, and the only way it can be addressed is by turning over the documents.

• (1205)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, the documents of the testimony about SDTC are available on Open Parliament for the industry committee. I would invite the member to look at them.

One of the things I am interested in, though, especially after listening to the speeches, is that perhaps we should subpoena Stephen Harper, Maxime Bernier and Tony Clement, who actually were part of empowering Annette Verschuren at SDTC during the process. For those who are not aware, Stephen Harper was very much part of Annette Verschuren's rise. Maxime Bernier, who ran as a Conservative leadership candidate at one point and is now part of another party, was industry minister. Tony Clement, whom I have seen in this place with his lobbying and who is still in the universe of the Conservative Party, was part of Annette Verschuren's rise as well.

I would ask the member whether Conservatives would agree to subpoena Stephen Harper, Maxime Bernier and Tony Clement, because their fingerprints are all over this?

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Mr. Speaker, it is very important, when dealing with such an important issue and when Canadians are watching, that we do not engage in misinformation and that we present Canadians with the totality of the information.

I want to note that SDTC was an organization that actually functioned quite well until 2017. It did good work, but then the Liberal appointment of board members changed the way the entity functioned. There was a proliferation of corruption, mismanagement and siphoning of money to enrich politicians and Liberal friends. While Canadians are struggling to buy food and heat their homes, and while they can barely pay for their daily living expenses, politicians and politicians' friends are getting rich off taxpayers. That is

egregious and something that every member of the House should oppose and stand against.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member just used the word “misinformation” and talked about Liberal friends. The individual she is talking about was a political adviser to Brian Mulroney, Stephen Harper, and Jim Flaherty. Ms. Verschuren is a major contributor to the Conservative Party of Canada. She has contributed thousands of dollars. Yes, we did appoint her. With hindsight, maybe she should not have been appointed, given what has taken place.

Having said that, the games the Conservatives have played over the last three weeks are disgraceful. At the same time, the leader of the official opposition is scared to get a security clearance so he can look at what is happening with foreign interference. Why will the Conservative Party not stop playing this game and get serious about the issues Canadians are having to face? A good starting point would be for the leader of the Conservative Party to get the necessary security clearance so he can see the so-called 11 names.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Mr. Speaker, sometimes I feel sorry for the people at home who watch what happens in the House. What we are seeing is the art of deception by misdirection. That is what the Liberals practise. They change the narrative in order to deflect from what is really happening.

What is really happening here is that the Conservatives are seeking to have documents turned over. It is a simple issue, yet there is a desperate attempt by the Liberals to scapegoat everybody, including the RCMP, instead of doing what they are supposed to do, which is to be accountable to the people of Canada who elect them and pay their salary.

• (1210)

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my hon. colleague's answer to the question from my colleague from Terrebonne. I was not particularly satisfied with the answer, so I will ask the question another way.

Let us say that, instead of talking about a green fund, we were talking about a fund that invests in oil companies, which generate billions of dollars in profits and receive tax credits. The government gives so much money to oil companies that it does not even have \$3 billion to spare to give seniors a bit of a break and a better quality of life.

If the study had been about an oil fund, would the Conservatives have been so keen to find out the truth? If it had been an oil fund, would they have thought it was okay to hide it from their buddies?

[English]

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have always had an environmental plan, and we do not morph it into a scheme for generating tax revenue. We have always done that. We did it under Stephen Harper and did a very good job of protecting the environment. We will continue to do so.

Privilege

In order to move forward, we are simply asking for the production of the documents.

Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in debate in the House of Commons today, I would like to take a few moments to highlight why the Conservative Party of Canada is determined to have the matter in the business of the House of Commons, in the chamber, for all Canadians to see and hear. We do not want another committee established. It is House business, and this is where the matter must be debated. It always seems to be the same thing with the current NDP-Liberal government: Who can get away with what at this time?

Upon researching SDTC, I found it interesting to see its initial purpose. It was a vital initiative launched by the Canadian government to foster the development of clean technologies. Its primary goal was to help innovators address some of the most pressing environmental challenges, while driving economic growth. At its core, SDTC provided funding and other resources to projects that focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving air quality and water quality and promoting sustainable resource use. The support was critical for early-stage projects, particularly those that might struggle to secure private investment due to inherent risks of pioneering new technologies.

One of the most defining features of the SDTC was the broad scope of sectors it covered. From energy to the agriculture and transportation sectors, the organization played a key role in helping innovators across industries. In the energy sector, for instance, it supported clean-energy solutions such as renewable power, energy storage and advancements in energy efficiency. In the agriculture sector, SDTC backed projects that focused on sustainable farming practices, reducing emissions from food production and conserving water resources. In the transportation sector, SDTC helped drive innovations aimed at reducing the carbon footprint on public transportation and at promoting electric mobility.

Beyond just financial support, SDTC fostered a collaborative ecosystem. It connected industry players with academia, researchers and government agencies, and it encouraged partnerships that accelerate the development of these technologies. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, SDTC not only helped ideas become a reality but also ensured that clean technologies reached the market faster and more effectively.

Sustainable Development Technology Canada was essentially turned into a slush fund by Liberal insiders. The Auditor General of Canada uncovered that \$400 million in taxpayer funds was misused. Nine board members are linked to 186 conflicts of interest. The situation has escalated due to the refusal of the Liberal government to comply with a parliamentary order demanding the release of documents related to the scandal. This has resulted in a halt to parliamentary business for two weeks.

SDTC was originally established in 2001 to fund green-technology initiatives. Instead it became an open channel for insiders' dealings by the Liberal government. The Prime Minister appointed numerous board members implicated in the scandal. The Auditor General's findings uncovered numerous serious issues of misappropriation of funds and conflicts of interest. Despite the Auditor Gen-

eral's findings, the government has refused to release documentation requested in the House of Commons.

The reluctance of the Liberal government to share the documents raises serious concerns about transparency and accountability. This has created a very clear picture of a deep web of political insiders. The refusal to release the documents is a scathing misuse of public funds. The House must respect the seriousness of the situation. The House and the taxpayers of Canada need to know what is in the documents, and a refusal to release the documents does not respond to the seriousness of the situation.

The concerns we have raised highlighted a deep dissatisfaction within the current NDP-Liberal government, particularly regarding the recent scandal involving Sustainable Development Technology Canada and the alleged misappropriation of the \$400 million in taxpayer funds. That is taxpayers' money. Taxpayers are the people who are providing money for Canada, and the government is spending it without any accountability.

The Speaker's ruling indicating that the government violated a House order by refusing to turn over evidence to the police only adds to the perception of a cover-up, especially when the Auditor General's findings revealed 186 conflicts of interest involving Liberal appointees directing funds to their own companies.

● (1215)

The situation is exacerbated by the real economic struggles Canadians are facing. There are rising housing costs, food inflation and increasing crime rates, which many feel the government is failing to adequately address. The argument that the NDP-Liberal coalition has paralyzed Parliament by focusing on damage control instead of solving these pressing issues resonates with those who believe that government corruption is not just a political issue but one that directly affects the ability of Canadians to meet basic needs, such as the need for food, housing and energy.

Government is being called to stop the cover-up and provide the necessary documents for a criminal investigation. This would be a step toward restoring integrity and allowing Parliament to refocus on the real problems the country is facing. For critics, the solution lies in a change of leadership, with the common-sense Conservatives being presented as a party that will end corruption, deliver answers and focus on reducing costs for Canadians.

Privilege

In terms of the misallocation of funds, \$58 million was allocated to 10 projects that did not meet the eligibility criteria; this goes against the fund's intended purpose. These funds were disbursed without contribution agreements, indicating a lack of oversight and due diligence.

The Auditor General found that \$334 million was given to projects in which board members had conflicts of interest. Specifically, 186 conflicts of interest were identified among nine board members, including cases where the individuals approved projects that financially benefited them. In other words, they were approving money that was going to their own companies.

In the board transactions audit, the Auditor General reviewed 226 out of 405 transactions approved by the board over a five-year period and found that 82% of them involved conflicts of interest. We can imagine what would be found if they reviewed all 405.

This indicates a systematic ethical lapse within the governance of the fund. One striking example of conflict of interest involves a board member who runs a venture capital firm, Cycle Capital. Her firm reportedly received significant government grants, up to \$250 million, while she was on the board. Even while serving on the board, there was \$114 million of funding approved for companies she previously invested in, which directly benefited her firm. This apparent self-enrichment highlights the gravity of the governance failure.

In terms of the failure of oversight by government, the Auditor General attributes a large part of this scandal to the Liberal government's industry minister for insufficiently monitoring the contracts and ensuring that proper checks and balances were in place. Despite managing nearly a billion dollars in public funds, the Liberal government seemed lax in its oversight, contributing to the lack of accountability and fiscal responsibility.

The above is clearly a serious lapse in both ethical standards and financial oversight. How can we possibly be confident of the management of taxpayers' dollars when we have a lapse in judgment? If there is no accountability, where is the money going? If it is not our money, and it is taxpayers' money, where is the confidence from the people who elected us to be here? Every person in the House, I am sure, is elected to represent not only their constituents but also people in Canada or abroad who are Canadians. If we do not have any accountability in terms of the money they provide us, then where is confidence within our government? Canadians' tax dollars are missing here.

Political connections and insider connections cannot be seen as a pathway to financial gain. Parliament's role is to hold government to account, and the Liberal government is protecting those involved at the expense of the Canadian taxpayer. How can we possibly allow this critical matter to go unresolved? Taxpayer dollars have been wasted. Without exception, Conservatives will hold the Liberals to account.

The hardships described are painting a stark picture of the economic challenges many Canadians are facing today, with food insecurity being one of the most pressing concerns. According to recent reports, food prices have indeed soared, with families expected to pay \$700 more for groceries this year compared with 2023.

• (1220)

The increased reliance on food banks, with a 50% spike in visits since 2021, just underscores the scale of the struggle for many Canadians to meet their basic needs, yet here we are today with \$400 million that is unaccounted for. The government has been ordered by the Speaker to produce documents as to where the money went, and we are still arguing about that. There are people going to the food bank wondering why we are doing that.

StatsCan reported on food insecurity, showing a jump from 11.6% in 2018 to 15.6% in 2022. This just illustrates a growing financial strain under the current NDP-Liberal government. The surge in food insecurity, exacerbated by inflation and policies such as carbon tax, is leading to further economic stress. Food Banks Canada's 2024 poverty report card indicates that nearly half of Canadians feel worse off financially compared with last year, with one in four experiencing food insecurity.

Critics of the government point to its inflationary policies, such as increased spending and the carbon tax, as contributing factors. The carbon tax in particular has been criticized for raising costs throughout the supply chain, going from farmers, ranchers and truckers to consumers. This has made food and other essentials more expensive for families. This burden is compounded by inflation. It is seen by many as a direct result of the government's approach. Economists have highlighted the significant cost burden the carbon tax imposes on the food industry, further validating concerns that these policies are driving up costs for ordinary Canadians. The Conservative position focuses on reversing these policies, specifically by axing the carbon tax, fixing the budget and implementing measures to bring down costs for consumers.

Privilege

In a letter tabled in Parliament on October 21, the House of Commons law clerk told MPs that he recently received new documents from three government departments relating to Sustainable Development Technology Canada. In all three cases, information was withheld. Testifying to MPs at the public accounts committee on Monday, the law clerk said that three departments are still failing to comply with an order by the House of Commons. According to one article, the law clerk “wrote to [the Speaker] about Finance Canada, Innovation, Science and Economic Development and the Treasury Board Secretariat” that “[a]ll three government institutions provided documents containing redactions and/or withheld some pages purportedly relying on the Access to Information Act”. He also testified that “only eight government organizations had forked over all their unredacted records on SDTC. The vast majority of others (22) had either withheld documents or redacted them.”

He went on to say, “We’re talking about documents, sometimes hundreds of pages, that have been withheld, and redactions that are not only about personal information, but also solicitor-client privilege or other motives under the Access to Information Act”.

The scrutiny and accusations surrounding SDTC, particularly when it comes to allegations of conflicts of interest, are significant. The claims that Liberal appointees funnelled \$400 million to startups with ties to senior SDTC management and that 82% of the reviewed projects had conflicts of interest raise serious concerns about governance and transparency. Conservatives’ concerns about the mismanagement of \$400 million in taxpayer money through Sustainable Development Technology Canada resonate with many Canadians, especially in light of their current economic struggles. With inflation rising, rising costs and many people living from paycheque to paycheque, the perception that public funds are being misused or awarded to connected insiders can be deeply frustrating for citizens.

Many Canadians see the government’s handling of the Sustainable Development Technology Canada issue as emblematic of larger problems. The refusal to turn over documents related to the green slush fund has fuelled accusations of a government trying to hide potential corruption and conflicts of interest.

• (1225)

The lack of transparency shows contempt for Parliament and, by extension, for the public, the taxpayers supporting the government. The claim that Parliament has been paralyzed because of the government’s refusal to co-operate adds to the urgency. At a time when Canadians are facing crises in housing, food security and public safety, the perception that government is prioritizing a cover-up over helping citizens exacerbates frustration. With the cost of living skyrocketing, crime rising and affordable housing in short supply, many Canadians are looking for leadership that is focused on addressing these immediate concerns.

The demand for the government to finally turn over the documents is about more than just the scandal: It is about restoring trust and allowing Parliament to get back to addressing the critical challenges that everyday Canadians are facing. The lack of action is seen as preventing the government from making meaningful progress on issues that directly affect the quality of life for millions. It is deeply concerning when public trust in government institutions

is undermined by allegations of mismanagement and self-dealing, as appears to be the case with the green slush fund. The fact that we are discussing this issue speaks to a broader problem with accountability and transparency, things that should be fundamental in any democratic government.

The Auditor General’s findings that the Liberal government allegedly turned SDTC into a slush fund for insiders and that nearly \$400 million in contracts were inappropriately awarded only fuel the frustration felt by many Canadians. When a government initiative designed to foster sustainability and clean technology becomes embroiled in allegations of corruption, it raises serious questions about the governance and integrity of those responsible for overseeing public funds. The troubling part is that such a situation should not require the lengthy debates of a prolonged effort to bring the truth to light. Ensuring that public funds are managed transparently and ethically is a basic expectation, and the need to debate such a clear-cut issue reflects how far things have gone astray.

Citizens rely on the government to act in the public’s interest, particularly when it comes to something as critical as environmental and economic sustainability. For the government to restore any sense of trust, not only does it need to release the documents that detail these conflicts of interest, but it also needs to take decisive actions to rectify the situation and prevent it from happening again.

Earlier this year, through her report on the SDTC, the Auditor General revealed the shocking truth of the extent of Liberal corruption. This showed that the Liberal government had turned the organization into a slush fund. For organizations connected to Liberal insiders. In total, contracts worth \$123 million were found to have been given inappropriately, and \$76 million was given to projects where there was a connection with Liberal friends appointed to the roles within SDTC.

At this point, keeping the current government accountable seems to be an unattainable task or a bad joke. We have Canadians living in their cars because of unaffordability, food bank attendance at record highs and kids living at home because they cannot buy a house. Nevertheless, the Liberal government is playing games with how much money it can distribute without getting caught. Continued delays will only further erode public confidence. Pressing issues such as affordability, crime and housing need to be addressed. In the end, all we are asking for is transparency and accountability. The government should present the requested documents to this chamber immediately and answer to the taxpayers of Canada. With \$400 million spent and 186 ethical violations, it is time to present the documents.

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• (1230)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting watching Conservative after Conservative stand up when they know full well that all this information has been provided. It is nothing more than a game that the Conservative Party is playing.

The RCMP has very clearly indicated that it is uncomfortable with the game. What is being asked is to hand information over to the RCMP directly. We are listening to what the RCMP, the Auditor General of Canada and many other stakeholders are saying. That is what the Government of Canada is actually doing; the Conservatives want to play a game.

I will highlight another game regarding the Conservative leader: “[A]ccording to one national security expert”, he is “‘playing with Canadians’ by refusing to get a top-level security clearance and receive classified briefings on foreign interference”. This is a security expert who advised both Liberal and Conservative governments.

The games, whether inside or outside the chamber, continue with the Conservatives; they are putting the Conservative Party ahead of the interests of Canadians.

Whether it is this game or, more importantly, the game related to interference, very simply, why will the leader of the Conservative Party not go ahead and get a security clearance so that he can actually be informed on the foreign interference file? Why is he playing a game?

Mr. Rob Morrison: Mr. Speaker, we are here today to talk about the \$400 million, the 186 ethical violations and SDTC.

Let us start with SDTC. Its funding allocation was created to provide funding support to innovative projects that have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and drive sustainability forward. However, being lax in how funding is distributed means we will not meet any of the goals we want to meet, and here we are today.

SDTC, in 2001, was there for a reason. It was doing what it needed to do to support new companies that were trying to do innovative things, whether through oil and gas or through renewable energies. Now all we are asking for are the documents so we can see where the \$400 million went and who is responsible for the 186 ethical violations. Then we can move forward and get SDTC back on track.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my hon. colleague when he talked about food banks and the work of Parliament, work that he and his colleagues are obstructing. We have serious issues, and this issue is meant to be referred to committee.

However, I am very concerned by the recent revelations we are learning from CSIS and other investigations into foreign interference in his party, with key people who supported as leader the man who is now in Stornoway, and by the unwillingness of the Conservatives to name names. It is a fundamental principle that we put our nation above our party. We should certainly put our nation above the partisan interests of the member in Stornoway.

I would like to ask the member about the allegations coming forward now. The Brown campaign, which was taken out by the guy who lives in Stornoway, said, “we knew that local pro-Modi organizations alongside Indian government actors were mobilizing against the Brown campaign as they were concerned with the strong support we had from both the Sikh and Muslim communities.” We know that in the 48 hours before the member for Stornoway won, 70,000 online memberships were sold, which raises questions about how that happened so quickly. A 2024 study published in the International Journal suggests that “foreign actors could influence the selection process of party leadership...simply by purchasing party memberships that distribute ballots in leadership elections without identity verification.”

Is this the reason the man who lives in Stornoway is unable or unwilling to get security clearance? Is it because of the help he got from the Modi government to take control of his party?

• (1235)

Mr. Rob Morrison: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the NDP-Liberal government is ignoring the \$400 million that has gone somewhere and the 186 ethical violations. However, we can back up and go to the WE foundation. We can go back to ArriveCAN. Where is the money going? The Liberals are not worried about that.

They should provide the documents so we can move forward. We do not need to be standing here discussing what is important. What is important for the people I talk to? They want to know what is happening with taxpayer dollars. If taxpayer dollars are not accounted for, where are they going? They are concerned about that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what is happening right now is an absolutely fruitless debate. The two sides of the House are talking about completely different things. One side is talking about documents not being submitted. The other side is talking about security clearances. I do want to point out that both things are important, but we need to get to the substance of the matter, and that is not what we are doing right now.

I think that the Conservative Party should hurry up and push its leader to get his security clearance. I also think the government should hand over the documents.

Does my colleague think it is time to move on to something else? The House has been paralyzed for a very long time.

*Privilege**[English]*

Mr. Rob Morrison: Mr. Speaker, I would love to move on today. If the Liberals produce the documents today, we can move on to government business. I am looking forward to that, and I agree that it is time to move on. It is troublesome that \$400 million is lost and there are 186 ethical violations, and nobody will produce the documents.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague explained a little about this, but he understands documents and the importance of understanding where money goes and how critical following the money is. Innovation is important, as he pointed out, as is looking for successful innovations.

Following the documents and money is a critical piece to this issue. Would my colleague like to comment on that?

Mr. Rob Morrison: Mr. Speaker, SDTC had such a great purpose in promoting innovation in Canada. We have a lot of smart people in Canada who can help us in developing greener solutions in all sorts of industries.

If we do not follow the money and cannot find out where the money went, there is no accountability, which is the problem. There is no accountability today, and without accountability, we do not know where the money went. How do we address future individuals who are looking for funding from SDTC? It is shut down until we can figure out how we are going to get accountability.

If the documents are produced, we will follow up from there and the RCMP can follow up. Then we can move forward to government business.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question of privilege being debated in the chamber at this time is meant to be referred to the procedure and House affairs committee so that a process can be determined for how best to obtain documents and whatever else needs to happen.

This is my fourth, fifth or maybe even sixth time asking this on behalf of the constituents of the riding of Waterloo, but is there any member or political party in this chamber who opposes this question of privilege? Do all members and all parties agree that it needs to follow the process I noted so that we can get to the bottom of this issue? Why are we not calling the question to ensure the next steps can take place so we can get to the bottom of this matter?

• (1240)

Mr. Rob Morrison: Mr. Speaker, the Chair directed the government to produce the documents, unredacted, in this House. That is what we are waiting for.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, when it comes to debating privilege in this place, and not all Canadians have the same level of privilege, it is important that we remain with the facts. The Speaker's ruling stands as it stands, and we should not be using misinformation or disinformation. I assume the member is not intentionally doing it, but we all know what the Speaker's ruling was. We all know what the question of privilege is about.

The Deputy Speaker: That descended into debate.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand in the House today to speak to this issue.

It was in the spring that I walked here with our shadow minister of innovation, and he said, "Kevin, I'm on the cusp of a big story." This was in March. We were walking from the Confederation Building over to West Block and he said it was going to shake the country. He did not say much else.

The member for South Shore—St. Margarets told me back in March about this green slush fund, which I did not really know anything about. In fact, I do not think Canadians had heard about the green slush fund until probably June. It is called green for a reason, I can see, as the Liberals have filled their pockets. It is appropriate that we call it the green slush fund.

I was walking over in March when the innovation shadow minister told me to think about this: He said it would rock Canada because it was way bigger than the sponsorship scandal of the Chrétien government, when \$42 million was handed off to many advertising agencies and Liberal friends. We all remember the golf balls being presented at the time. The total bill was \$42 million.

Today, we are talking about 10 times that amount, \$400 million. When the member for South Shore—St. Margarets told me that in March, little did I realize that, wow, it was 10 times the \$42 million of the sponsorship scandal, which, by the way, took the Liberals down in defeat. Now this is way bigger.

When I walked over to the House with the member, I said that Saturday was my ninth anniversary as a member of Parliament. I was elected in 2015. It was bittersweet then because the Harper government had lost in 2015, but we retained the seat in Saskatoon—Grasswood.

Mr. Charlie Angus: That was a sweet day.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: What have we accomplished in nine years—

Mr. Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I hear the member for Timmins—James Bay heckling, and I am wondering if he wants to apologize for the tweet—

The Deputy Speaker: That is descending into debate.

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

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that there is so much rage—

The Deputy Speaker: We are descending into debate. I will just wait for this to calm down before acknowledging the hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Are we done with the secondary conversation?

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I invite you to remind members that there are child care services available on Parliament Hill.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: We have descended far into something other than the debate we are having.

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

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I am just following up on my colleague. After you asked us to settle down and show respect, the member continued to throw personal attacks at me. It is really unacceptable. I ask you to make sure that he behaves. This is the House of Commons, not a frat house.

• (1245)

The Deputy Speaker: I will make sure that we stick to the conversation we are having, which, of course, is on the privilege motion. It seems like there are a lot of side conversations going on at the same time. I suggest that hon. members stick to what the agenda has for us today and take the conversations outside if they need to.

The hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood has the floor. I would say from the top, but he can at least back up a couple of sentences.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, Saturday marked my ninth year as a member of Parliament, which is bitter-sweet because the Conservatives lost the government that year. What is interesting is that Sustainable Development Technology Canada was a pretty good organization. It was started in 2001. It did a lot of good work in energy, agriculture, transportation and cutting greenhouse emissions. Jim Balsillie was once the chair of SDTC. It was run pretty well until the Liberals took over and filled the board with their cronies. In 2017, all of a sudden, Sustainable Development Technology Canada changed.

As I mark my ninth anniversary, I look at the scandals of the government. Almost immediately, that Christmas, we had the Aga Khan, with the Prime Minister taking that paid vacation. Later, there was SNC-Lavalin, one of the biggest controversies we have had in the last nine years in the House. There was the Winnipeg lab; the WE Charity, which cost the former finance minister his job; and the arrive scam, when \$60 million was paid for an app that should have cost maybe \$80,000 to produce.

Now we have another one, the green slush fund. In nine years, we cannot count how many scandals the Liberal government has been involved in. We are on day 12 of this debate. The Liberals, of course, are refusing to obey an order of the House, which would permit the distribution of the documents regarding a \$400-million scandal. Canadians have seen countless scandals in the last nine years, and I have mentioned a number of them already. However, this one reaches new heights that we have never seen in the House of Commons. The Liberals have gone to tremendous lengths to

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make sure the public, the RCMP and even the House do not obtain access to these documents that would expose the injustice done at SDTC.

Sustainable Development Technology Canada turned into a slush fund for Liberal insiders. The program was made to give away taxpayer dollars to green technology initiatives, some even in my province of Saskatchewan. It is important to note that the government was directly in charge of appointing the board members of this fund. This means the Prime Minister would have personally appointed some of those board members.

What happened to those Liberal insiders who directed funds meant for green technology toward, unfortunately, their own companies, totalling \$400 million and 186 conflicts of interest? Those were 186 incidents where money from taxpayers, like us, could have gone to help many families in this country, a good portion of whom, in fact, are dealing with the cost of living. We could have helped small businesses in this country stay afloat. Instead, the money was funnelled to companies with ties to senior Liberal officials.

Furthermore, the Auditor General found that, on top of those staggering numbers, \$58 million was given to companies that were not eligible for the fund. There were 10 ineligible projects, and I have them right here, totalling \$58,784,613. That means not only that taxpayer money was given to people who should not have received a single nickel, but that \$58 million plus was given to those who should never have been considered for the fund. It is ridiculous.

The current Prime Minister's Canada is where so many are now forced to line up at food banks, including in my city, with over 20,000 a month in a city and a province that feeds the world. What has happened in this country in the last nine years is disgusting. Let us think about that. I met with SARM, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, this morning. My province feeds the world, yet when we look at Saskatchewan these nine years out, from 2015 to 2024, there are lineups in every community for food because of the cost of living.

• (1250)

We wonder about the contracts that were given out to Liberal insiders. It is important to note some of those 186 conflicts of interest just to give Canadians an idea of the Liberal corruption we are seeing today.

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There was a board member appointed to the green slush fund way back in 2016. Interestingly, that was a year after the election. The board member runs a venture capital firm called Cycle Capital. Her company received a total of \$250 million from the green slush fund. Some of that came before she was even a member, but \$118 million came to companies that she had invested in while she was on the board. The value of her company, amazingly, tripled when she was there. The Minister of Environment was a strategic adviser for Cycle Capital from 2009 right up to 2018 before joining the cabinet. In fact, he also owned shares in that company, which is interesting since the company got so much money from the green slush fund.

The green slush fund director Stephen Kukucha previously worked for a Liberal environment minister and as an organizer for the Liberal Party on behalf of the Prime Minister in B.C. That is how someone gets a job on the board of the green slush fund. Unsurprisingly, companies in which he had financial interests received \$5 million from the fund. Even worse, when questioned in a committee hearing, he downplayed the issue by stating that it was just a small amount of money, no big deal at all. It was \$5 million, but it was no big deal to the Liberal insiders. That is the attitude of the government and of the board of SDTC.

A lot of us have been on boards. We have taken governance training. I was part of Johnson Shoyama, a group out of Regina. I cannot believe they were not scolded long before this. These are board members who, when they were put onto a board, went through governance training. They should not be in the room at all when there are votes on certain issues dealing with companies they are associated with.

Why are we surprised? The finance minister stood in the House and said the budget would not exceed \$40 billion this year. We are into mid-October and we are at \$47 billion. Nothing surprises us. We are already 17% over budget in the middle of October. Liberals know how to spend. They know how to spend to keep their friends happy. This is ridiculous.

I think Sustainable Development Technology Canada, 20 years ago, was put in place when we needed it. It was for innovation. I look at my province of Saskatchewan with regard to agriculture. Saskatchewan companies are the most innovative in the world when it comes to agriculture, and the SDTC fund certainly helped them. They continue to be among the best in the world. They do not need government money to be innovative. Our companies are doing it on their own.

Insider favouritism, at the expense of taxpayers, has become all too common with the Liberal government. One thing is for sure: It really pays to be a Liberal insider. We have seen it with all the violations: the WE Charity, the arrive scam and SNC-Lavalin, along with SDTC. However, this is \$400 million. This is not a chunk of change. This is \$400 million of taxpayers' money. What could we do with that? We could do a lot in this country.

It is only fair to assume the Liberals do not want to comply with the will of the House in order to cover up this scandal. The Speaker has ruled that this failure to adhere to the will of Parliament constitutes a breach of privilege, which is why all business in the House has been stalled now for 12 days. Canadians from coast to coast to

coast have a right to know what is inside the documents and what the Liberals are trying to hide.

• (1255)

Conservatives want to see the documents released not only to give Canadians answers, but also because the RCMP has concluded there are reasonable grounds to believe an offence under the Criminal Code may have been committed. The people of Saskatoon—Grasswood who send their hard-earned tax dollars here want to know where that money went. They want to know where the \$400 million is. We have 10 ineligible projects, totalling \$58 million. There were 90 cases where conflict of interest policies were not followed; that was \$75 million. All totalled here, it is \$390 million.

I was looking over the testimony by one of the whistle-blowers, who said:

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.

To give "full authority" would be to give the papers over. That was part of the whistle-blower's comments, whom we commend for stepping up and helping this country defend \$400 million of taxpayers' money given to Liberal insiders. It is unreal that this has taken place in Canada.

I read an interesting article. I know a lot of my friends on the other side probably will not agree with this, but I am going to quote it. Canada's national newspaper, *The Globe and Mail*, stated:

The most outrageous show of contempt has been the government's months-long refusal to hand Parliament a complete set of documents that they were ordered to produce in a motion passed by the House last June.

The Liberals argue that the production order goes too far...

More importantly,...were the reference to the RCMP not in the order, the Liberals would find other excuses—

They have, Mr. Speaker.

—not to hand over documents about Sustainable Development Technology Canada — or to release only some of them, with heavy redactions, as it has done so far.

That's because the federal Ethics Commissioner and the Auditor-General both found dozens of cases where SDTC handed out grants totalling tens of millions of dollars without following conflict-of-interest guidelines.

This is an editorial in *The Globe and Mail*, Canada's national newspaper, not the Conservative Party of Canada. This is a well-respected media outlet in this country. According to *The Globe and Mail*:

...the government has no choice but to turn them over. The House has the absolute power to order the production of government documents, and only it can decide if the order has been respected – as the Speaker ruled on Sept. 26.

The Globe and Mail editorial states:

The power to order the production of documents is essential to Parliament's role as a check on the government. Without it, it cannot do the work it was created to do. The Liberal government's efforts to subvert that power is a direct attack on Parliament and a show of contempt for the institution.

That was from the editorial board for The Globe and Mail, last Thursday.

Canadians know this is far from the first scandal of the current government. I named nine or 10 already that were in the nine years that I have been here. They include SNC-Lavalin, Winnipeg labs and WE Charity. We had a number of ventilators by a former Liberal MP, Frank Baylis, that came through here.

I know my colleagues on the other side of the House like to think this is just incompetence on the government's part and has nothing to do with them. Let me remind them that the government is supposed to be accountable, and every one of the ministers is supposed to be accountable for their departments. Let me make them aware that taxpayers in this country are watching the people involved and making sure taxpayer money is spent correctly without corruption.

● (1300)

The Minister of Innovation, who the Auditor General said was at fault, is clearly not being accountable for his actions in this case. If these actions are criminal, like the RCMP has indicated they could be, would this not be a cover-up of criminality? The whole scandal could end if the Liberals simply hand over the unredacted documents today. If the RCMP finds nothing of value in the documents, then so be it. Then we move on to Randy versus Randy. That is another one that we are going to be talking about in the House very shortly.

Over a span of five years, the board approved 405 transactions. Out of those, the auditor found 186 conflicts of interest, which equals about 82%. That means that in 82% of the examined transactions, individuals gained from their own decisions to sign over the money. This lack of oversight, as highlighted by the Auditor General, has allowed for more conflicts of interest to persist without even being addressed, ultimately contributing to a very serious ethical lapse within the government's handling of these transactions.

Canadians have a right to know where \$390 million has gone. They pay their hard-earned taxes, each and every one of them, and it is deplorable how the government has wasted that \$390 million. Not one of the Liberals has stood up in the House in the last 12 days to talk about government waste, and this is a form of a violation. We need to have those documents sent to the RCMP, unredacted. It needs to see them, and we can move on to another corruption that I think the House will deal with, and that is Randy versus Randy.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member referred to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's note on the deficit. I would like to ask the member for his comments on the inflation rate, which has fallen to 1.6%. For the fourth time, tomorrow the interest rate will be cut by the Bank of Canada. In fact, the interest rate is projected to be 3% by July 2025. Yesterday, there

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was a report on the Canadian consumer index rising to a 30-month high. The Toronto Stock Exchange year to date has risen by 18%.

Why does the member not also comment results of things because of the government's actions, such as a falling inflation rate, falling interest rates, a rising consumer confidence index, a rising Toronto Stock Exchange index. I would like to hear the member's comments on that.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, there is no confidence anymore in the country. The member is from Nepean. I look at the Toronto condo industry right now, which has collapsed. Why? It has absolutely no faith in the government. It has destroyed the housing industry in nine short years. We have tent cities in every city. It is deplorable. When I walk down Bank Street in Ottawa, I see our big friend Mike outside in his tent. We all talk to him. He used to be from Saskatchewan. Has the member ever stopped and asked him why he has been in that tent for the last three years? I have. He has a tent and his dog. He cannot afford anything. Canadians cannot afford anything. Two million-plus Canadians are lining up at a food bank, and that member thinks we are okay right now. I really cannot see it. Canadians are hurting more than they have ever hurt under the Liberal government.

● (1305)

[Translation]

Mr. Louis-Philippe Sauvé (LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the philosopher Schopenhauer often said that life is a pendulum that constantly swings back and forth between pain and boredom. Here on this side of the House, we are getting pretty bored, while the other side of the House is creating a lot of pain with these obstacles and the Liberals' self-sabotage of their own legislative agenda.

Could my esteemed colleague explain to the House why he thinks the government is sabotaging itself by refusing to hand over the documents that the House is demanding?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, if I could be a fly on the wall in the Liberal caucus meeting tomorrow we might know. The Prime Minister has not been here for weeks. He is facing a revolt within his own caucus. The Liberals are 20 points down in the polls. Do they want to be here? Probably not, but two or three of them are here talking about this. They should hand over the documents so we can move on. A government bill has not been debated in the House for over two weeks, and it appears Liberals are in no hurry to do that, which is a crime for all Canadians.

It is not the fault of opposition members. It is the government's fault that it has not sent the unredacted documents to the RCMP so we can move on.

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

I always love listening to my colleague. Not only does he make many great points, but he says them so eloquently. It is so easy to listen to his beautiful voice.

I would ask the member one question. Canadians need to know the truth, \$400 million worth of the truth. What could the Liberals possibly be hiding that they would be prepared to grind Parliament to a standstill? It must be something salacious. Does he agree?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo has done a great job on this.

As I said, the sponsorship scandal back in the day was \$42 million and all Canadians gasped. What are they saying about this? It is 10 times the amount, \$400 million. We do not know all the specifics because the Liberals will not hand over the documents to the RCMP. All we are asking is they hand over the unredacted documents to the RCMP, and then we can move on. Canadians deserve to know where \$390,072,774 went.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are not playing the game that the Conservatives want to play. The Conservatives want to put the Conservative Party first and foremost. We want to put the concerns of Canadians first and foremost.

They are giving the false impression that the government is preventing legislation from being debated when it is the Conservatives who refuse to allow a vote on a motion that they put on the floor. It is the Conservative Party of Canada, the far right, that discredits the RCMP, does not listen to what the RCMP says, does not listen to what the Auditor General of Canada has said and does not listen to what the former deputy law clerk has said. They have their game to play and who gives a damn about Canadians. That is attitude we see the from Conservatives day in and day out.

When is the Conservative Party of Canada going to start caring about Canadians as opposed to its personal self-interests?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, I would say one thing for the hon. member for Winnipeg North, and that is to call a carbon tax election.

The government does not want to hand over any of the documents or tell Canadians where the \$390 million went. The Conservatives and the RCMP have an idea where it went. The Auditor General has an idea where it went. It went to the Liberals' friends, and they are embarrassed about it. Obviously, they do not want to provide the documents because it would be troubling not only for those involved in their companies but for the Liberal Party of Canada and the government.

● (1310)

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

I hear the member for Winnipeg North, and it is not what he says, but it is the volume with which he says it that always impresses me.

My colleague from Saskatoon—Grasswood is speaking in eminently reasonable language, yet the member for Winnipeg North, interestingly enough, speaks on behalf of the whole Liberal caucus. In fact, in this whole debate, and it would be interesting to find out, we have probably heard him speak more than every other Liberal combined. Does that mean he is the only one who really believes these things? It is ridiculous and unbelievable.

I wonder if my colleague could say a word about that.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, what is at stake is the 186 ethical violations of this organization, which started out very well in 2001. I talked about a lot of good things that Sustainable Development Technology Canada did. However, since the Liberals took over and filled the board with their Liberal cronies, we are seeing some issues. There are 186 ethical violations, totalling \$390 million. Canadians deserve an answer.

Mr. Chandra Arya: Mr. Speaker, in answering a previous question, the hon. member mentioned that the Liberals were lagging 20% below in the opinion polls. With inflation rates falling to 1.6%, interest rates falling, consumer confidence index increasing, the so-called lead of 20% has already dropped to 13% today and it will disappear to 0% soon.

I would like to ask for the member's comment on that.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, all I have to say is that Canadians are hurting. I go everywhere in my riding. I go to rinks and the legion and I door knock. In fact, we are having a provincial election right now. It is funny, because Scott Moe, who is the premier, is not running against the provincial NDP. He is running against the national NDP and the Liberals, and he is going to win next Monday on that. People in my province are fed up with the federal Liberals and the NDP, and on Monday, we will see what happens in my province. They will be returned again. Mr. Bill Waiser wrote a wonderful editorial today in the Saskatoon StarPhoenix. This will be a historic election win for the Sask Party on Monday night.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to stand on behalf of the great people of Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley. Axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. Conservatives have been saying this for months. To be honest, when I have been saying, "Stop the crime", I was not, until now, thinking about the crime actually being committed by the government.

What made me think about it was the response in debate last night made by my colleague from Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner. He was asked about delivering documents to the RCMP. He is a retired police officer, and what he said was that the government is not acting like the victim of a crime. He went on to say that victims normally want to co-operate with the police. He said that the Liberals were behaving the way the perpetrator of a crime would behave: not co-operating, deflecting, stonewalling and trying to avoid at all costs providing important evidence to the police.

Conservatives say, “Stop the crime”, and it is sad that people now need to be wary of their own government's participation in the crime. It is time to call the cops. Where is ministerial responsibility in all of this? Why is the minister not insisting on documents being delivered to the RCMP? I know my colleagues will say that the RCMP has said it does not want the documents, that it is a breach of charter rights and a violation of people's privacy, and that it is not the place of the official elected body, the House of Commons, to provide evidence to the police.

However, I have a letter to the chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, dated October 9. It is from the commissioner of the RCMP, Mike Duheme. He writes, “I wish to inform you that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police investigation into SDTC is ongoing.” He goes on to say that the RCMP has received documents from the law clerk and parliamentary counsel that were produced pursuant to a June 10 order of the House of Commons. The RCMP is obviously okay with receiving documents from the House of Commons.

The argument the Liberals are making, the fallacious argument they are standing behind, which is that this is somehow a breach of charter rights and that the RCMP does not want any documents from us, is just not true. It begs the question of why they are not delivering these documents. I am going to get to that.

For people watching, I want to go back a bit and explain what happened. The House voted for the evidence to be produced, and various departments and agencies of government have refused to comply. The Speaker correctly ruled that the House order had not been complied with and that this was a matter of privilege. Liberals are now saying that the Auditor General's report is not sufficient. They want to turn this over to committee to study it even more. Most people who are the victim of a crime, and who are asked whether to call a committee or the police, do not say to call a committee. They say to call the police.

Most people would say that the Auditor General's report alone is reason enough to call the police. Another committee report would not do anything but further delay the process, again stonewalling the ability of the House to hold the government accountable. To those watching the proceedings today, if someone steals from them, do they call a committee or do they call the police?

There are so many problems with SDTC that need to be highlighted. I am going to go through some of the horrible details that have fanned the flame of this scandal. From March 1, 2017, to December 31, 2023, Sustainable Development Technology Canada's board approved 226 start-up, scale-up and ecosystem projects to receive \$836 million. Eight start-up and scale-up projects totalling \$51 million did not meet eligibility criteria. For example, some projects did not support the demonstration of a new technology or the projected environmental benefits were unreasonable. Two ecosystem projects totalling \$8 million were ineligible because they did not fund or support the development or demonstration of a new technology.

● (1315)

The board of SDTC approved \$20 million for seed projects without completing the screening and assessments required by the contribution agreements with the government. There were 123 million

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dollars' worth of contracts that were found to have been given inappropriately. This is from the Auditor General. There was \$59 million that was given to projects that never should have been awarded any money at all, and 82% of these contracts were found to have been part of a conflict of interest.

On top of this, the Auditor General found that over \$330 million in taxpayers' money was paid out in over 180 cases where there was a potential conflict of interest with Liberal-appointed directors. This is the important part and what this is all about: Liberal appointed directors were funnelling money to companies that they owned. Let me say that again. Liberal appointed directors were funnelling money, taxpayers' money, to companies that they owned. In other words, they were funnelling money to themselves.

What do we do when somebody illegally funnels taxpayer dollars to themselves? What do we do? We call the police, but again, we do not have ministerial accountability. The minister is nowhere. He will stand up to say that they shut it down, but of course they shut it down. They had no choice but to because the Auditor General had caught them red-handed.

What is next? Why are they not co-operating with the police? That is really the big question, and the answer has to be that there has got to be some really bad stuff in these documents that the Liberals do not want to come out. I can understand why the Liberals do not want it to come out. They are hanging on by a thread.

There are several members I am looking at across the aisle here who have signed a letter saying that they want the Prime Minister to step down. There is discord within. They are over there. They are everywhere. They have all signed the letter.

However, for some reason, these members have come into the House today to say that they are trying to circumvent charter rights and the privacy of Canadians and that, when money is stolen, we do not call the police, we call a committee. That is what these members are trying to have us believe, and it is just total nonsense.

It is obfuscation, and I feel sometimes that some of these members are suffering from Stockholm Syndrome. They do not know what to do. They are like held prisoners. Should they criticize the Prime Minister or protect the Prime Minister? They are protecting the Prime Minister one day, and then they are criticizing the him the next. They do not know what to do. They are completely lost. They are completely falling apart, and Canadians see it for what it is. The Liberal government is a tired, out of steam, corrupt government that really needs to call it a day.

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There are other things that happened at SDTC. It was not even in compliance with the basic requirement to have 15 members who were separate from its board of directors to represent Canadians and appoint most of its board. Instead, they only had two. As a direct result of this, Canada's Ethics Commissioner ruled in July that the Prime Minister's hand-picked chair of the Liberals' \$51-billion green slush fund broke the law. The Liberal government was aware of the chair's conflicts but decided to appoint her to the position anyway.

Of all this, the Auditor General said, "Like all organizations funded by Canadian taxpayers, [SDTC] has a responsibility to conduct its business in a manner that is transparent, accountable, and compliant with legislation." This sordid affair leaves serious concerns about the government's ability to account for public funds.

I ask the question of how we can account for public funds. We are the official opposition. It is our job to hold the government to account, but its members do not want to be held to account. All they have to do is release these documents to the RCMP. As I said earlier, the commissioner said, "We have received documents from the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel".

● (1320)

The argument that the RCMP is not interested in seeing documents produced by the House of Commons is just simply not true. It does not hold up. I am still trying to get my head around this. As stunning as these revelations are by the Auditor General, we should not be surprised because the government has no problem with ethical lapses.

My short time today does not allow me to go through every scandal of the Liberal government. There are really too many to mention in the short period of time that I have. However, we all remember, for example, the SNC-Lavalin affair. That company had been charged under the Criminal Code and was actively lobbying the Prime Minister for something called a deferred prosecution agreement. The problem was that our Criminal Code did not allow for a deferred prosecution agreement. What did the Liberals do? They slipped the provision into a massive budget, what we call an omnibus budget bill, hoping nobody would ask why it was there. Sure enough, nobody did. All of a sudden, the Criminal Code contained a clause that allowed for a deferred prosecution agreement.

The Prime Minister pressured his then attorney general, the first indigenous attorney general in Canadian history, Jody Wilson-Raybould, to agree to a deferred prosecution deal for SNC-Lavalin. What I find interesting about this story is that I read Jody Wilson-Raybould's book after she left office. She said a bunch of really interesting things. I wish I had enough time to read out the whole book, but I am just going to read this one passage:

As I sat there in that room – a big room, all by myself – waiting for Prime Minister...to arrive, I asked myself why I felt that I had to try to help him out of this mess, to protect him. Especially when his government had been digging a deeper and deeper hole by the hour by not coming clean on how I was pushed to take over the prosecution of SNC-Lavalin to enable them to enter into a deferred prosecution agreement, or DPA. Especially when his office had been telling their MPs to repeat lines they knew were not accurate.

That sounds like a very familiar pattern because it is exactly what is going on right now. The Prime Minister is sending his members out. He is sending the member for Winnipeg North out to

defend the indefensible. The member for Winnipeg North knows it is indefensible, but he will stand up and do it anyway because he is not being true to himself. As Polonius in *Hamlet* said to his son, Laertes, "to thine own self be true". I know that the member for Winnipeg North has been co-opted by the Prime Minister into saying things he would not normally say to defend the indefensible.

That is the tale of the Prime Minister. He has a pattern of using people. He used Jody Wilson-Raybould. He is using the member for Winnipeg North. He has used every single Liberal member in the House who has said that the RCMP will not accept the documents or that the Conservatives want to breach Canadians' charter rights.

Earlier, one of my colleagues asked a Liberal member about which charter right. The answer he got back was that she did not know. She rambled on and on about something incomprehensible. We have asked that question a few times. I would like an answer to that question. Maybe we should do an Order Paper question to get in writing specifically what the charter right is, what section, what right of Canadians they are protesting.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, the members are heckling me. I know the member for Winnipeg North likes to heckle. It is too bad they do not let anyone else in that caucus talk except for him. He probably holds some kind of record for the most words spoken in the House. He could be down in the Guinness book of world records for that.

This is a pattern. The Prime Minister used Jody Wilson-Raybould. He is using the member for Winnipeg North. He is using all these Liberal members to protect him, but it is as though there is cognitive dissonance at play. They are signing letters for him to leave and then they are coming into the House and protecting him. We cannot make this stuff up.

Then, of course, there was the WE Charity scandal. The Prime Minister wanted to help out his friends at WE Charity by giving them an untendered billion-dollar sweetheart deal after they paid large speaking fees to his family members.

● (1325)

A bit closer to home, in my home city, the Liberal government once again refused to release documents, which sounds familiar, relating to the Winnipeg lab and those who work there. We have spoken a lot about foreign interference in the House of Commons lately, and this is a prime example of it. The Prime Minister knew about the shady dealings that were taking place and still refused to come clean. In fact, the Liberals were so worried about these Winnipeg lab documents that they sued the former Speaker. They actually went to court to try and stop the Speaker from releasing documents, which ultimately ended up getting released.

This whole debate about security clearance is interesting. I was security clearance because I was the sub on the Winnipeg labs sub-committee. I actually read all the documents months before I knew about the Communist Party spies in the Winnipeg lab. I knew about all that, but for six months, I could not say a word. I was muzzled. When the member opposite from Winnipeg North gets up and asks me the question, “Why won’t the Leader of the Opposition get a security clearance?”, that is going to be my answer. So, I am going to preempt the question right away. He does not need to ask me, because he knows very well that we can have all this information, but if we cannot talk about it, we cannot hold the government accountable, and that is the reason, not the tinfoil hat conspiracy reasons that member holds for why the Leader of the Opposition does not want to get security clearance. His reason is to protect Canadians, to protect taxpayers, from the malfeasance of this Liberal government.

Back in 2015, soon after Canadians granted the Liberals a majority government, the Prime Minister said that:

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.

Whatever happened to that? Where is that transparency, those sunny ways that the Prime Minister promised? They are gone, and I really wonder what it would take for Liberal MPs to do the right thing. They have been strung along by this Prime Minister for years, one excuse after another, one con after another. I look across the aisle to the government benches and I see several Liberal members who may have believed in the Prime Minister at one time. I wonder what they believe now. If the WE Charity scandal, the SNC-Lavalin scandal, the Winnipeg lab scandal, the ArriveCAN scandal and all the other scandals, all of which cost Canadians hundreds of millions of dollars, were not enough for them to stand up to the Prime Minister and say, “enough is enough”, what will cause them to finally do the right thing? Canadians have been taken advantage of by this Prime Minister, and those who are sitting in the Liberal backbenches are idly standing by, just allowing it to happen.

So, I ask my colleagues across the aisle, just as I said earlier, just as Polonius said to Laertes, will they be true to themselves? Will they stand up in the House of Commons and refuse to sit idly by while the Prime Minister keeps increasing taxes on Canadians for the benefit of wealthy Liberal friends and insiders? Will they stand up and fight for their communities and their constituents who sent them to this place, or will they once again give this failing Prime Minister a pass?

• (1330)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to disappoint the member opposite, because he does raise a very interesting issue. However, before we get into the actual question, it should be noted for all the Conservative members who are speaking that the only prime minister in the history of Canada to be held in contempt of Parliament was no other than Stephen Harper. Guess who his parliamentary secretary was?

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It was the current leader of the Conservative Party, the great defender of the contempt back then.

Nothing has changed if we think about it. Now, the leader of the Conservative Party feels that it is okay and that he does not need to get a security clearance. He is the only leader in the House of Commons who figures that he does not need to get it. The member opposite is saying that, well, he should not get it; after all, it is not in his best interest to do it.

I will read what Wesley Wark said in an article. However, before the member is critical of this individual, he was an adviser to both Conservative and Liberal governments. The article reads: “Conservative Leader...is “playing with Canadians” by refusing to get a top-level security clearance and receive classified briefings on foreign interference, according to one national security expert.”

I am wondering if the member might want to retract some of his comments and give advice to his leader to do the honourable thing, to do what the leaders of the Bloc, the NDP and the Green Party, and the Prime Minister have done and get the security clearance.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, there are people who are going to be voting in the next federal election who were not even born when former prime minister Harper was elected Prime Minister. That is how far back they have to go to dig these things up. I always also question that.

It just seems odd to me. We can go back and look at other governments, and some things go well and some things maybe do not always go so well. However, they will pick on something that did not go so well, and say that that was bad, so what if this is bad? In other words, they are defending their malfeasance. They are saying that they did it, so it is okay that we did it. That is absolutely shameful.

We should be striving for more. Governments should be striving for more, and that member should be striving for better.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my Conservative colleague referred to the member for Winnipeg North’s quasi-monopoly as the only one speaking for the Liberal government.

If elections were based on the ability to defend the indefensible, and if current trends continue, would my Conservative colleague expect the member for Winnipeg North to be the only Liberal left in Parliament after the next election?

• (1335)

[*English*]

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, I love that question, because we have an excellent candidate in Winnipeg North, Rachel Punzalan. She has been door knocking relentlessly, and I have no doubt that she is going to be the next member of Parliament for Winnipeg North. Do members not all agree?

Privilege

Rachel is great. She is going to be here, and she is actually going to do something that the member for Winnipeg North does not understand. She is actually going to stick to the facts and get things accomplished for her constituents, not just speak ad nauseam about nothing.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to ask my Conservative colleague a question.

We are in an odd situation. The Prime Minister has said that he was informed that some Conservative members and candidates are or were under foreign influence. The leader of the Conservative Party asked the Prime Minister to provide the names of those people, which is obviously completely illegal. Then, the Conservative leader said that he would rather not know the names and that he would rather not get his security clearance.

Why does the Conservative leader prefer to remain in the dark?

[English]

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, looking over at that member, it is difficult for me to respond because he is sitting next to the member from Timmins—James Bay, who actually tweeted out a highly anti-Semitic tweet just the other day—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, members cannot do indirectly what they cannot get away with directly.

This morning, the Conservatives called us dogs. They called us cockroaches. Now they are throwing anti-Semitic smears. I am here to do—

The Deputy Speaker: Again, we should not be calling people names.

I will let the hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley continue.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, I said the tweet was anti-Semitic, and it is. The member is feeding into anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. He said that when it comes to foreign political interference, nothing matches the Israel lobby—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I just want to clarify that, for you, it is okay if the Conservatives refer to New Democrats as anti-Semitic conspiracy theorists. Is that your ruling?

I would like to have that ruling clarified. To me, that would stand as a personal attack and beneath the dignity of this House. I am not sure how low the dignity of the House goes these days watching the Conservatives.

Mr. Speaker, could you clarify if anti-Semitic attacks or attacks of calling people who are here to do their job anti-Semitic is parliamentary? I personally would be very surprised, but I certainly would like to hear your judgment on this.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member was referring to a tweet. He was not referring specifically to any individual in this House. It has been allowed in the past, on reference.

If we are going to continue to do that, I would just caution everyone to refer to issues and not specifically to the individuals who happen to be in this chamber.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, let me just read it. “When it comes to foreign political interference nothing matches the Israeli lobby who are all over parliament and NDP conventions. No surprise that Israeli media throw their support behind Poilievre, who is mired in his own foreign interference scandal.”

My question—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member did refer to the Leader of the Opposition by his name so I just want to make sure that he does not do that.

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

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, in terms of the work that we have been doing on foreign interference and this attempt to draw in something, I was not even part of this discussion. I am sitting here doing my work, and you are saying it is perfectly okay to make these attacks?

The Deputy Speaker: I think we are just falling into debate.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands is rising on a point of order.

• (1340)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, as I am observing, and I do apologize, as I am participating virtually, but it did appear to me that the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay was accused of posting something anti-Semitic specific to his name and the name of his riding, saying he had done it by tweet. It does strike me that this is unparliamentary. Again, I am not attempting to call any of your rulings into question. I just was not sure if you were aware that this had transpired, at least from what I saw from where I am—

The Deputy Speaker: I am well aware of that. I will go back and look at that more specifically.

The hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, if the member had wanted to do the right thing, he could stand up and apologize to Canada's Jewish community for making that post. I would like to ask for consent to table his tweet.

The Deputy Speaker: There is a request for consent for the hon. member to table that document.

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

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to belabour the point but what has happened here is that a statement I made about the Israeli lobby has been taken by the Conservatives and made to be as though I am anti-Semitic. That is a false statement. You may think that is parliamentary but that is a false statement. It is also, given the dark history—

The Deputy Speaker: I said I would go back and review it.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Privilege

The Deputy Speaker: I have the microphone and I said I would review it. I would maybe caution the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley to complete his comment and to be careful.

The hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, I made my point. I would like to table this, though. Do we have consent?

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Bow River.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know, from my hon. colleague's background and history, that tracking of accounting, tracking of documents and following the money are really critical aspects of this particular case. I know, from his background, how thorough he is and how he would understand this.

I just would like him to make a comment on how critical this issue is, in terms of following the money.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, that is what this is all about. There were Liberal appointees at SDTC, the green slush fund, who literally directed hundreds of millions of tax dollars to themselves. The only way we can find out exactly what happened is for the government to produce the documents that the House called for and that the Speaker ordered. Until we receive those documents, we will never know. It just begs the question, that it must be really bad for the government to not give up those documents so that we can actually see where hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars actually went.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member is aware that the individual the Conservatives consistently bring up as a Liberal-friendly appointment was actually a Conservative adviser to Brian Mulroney, Stephen Harper and Jim Flaherty, all Conservatives. Not only that, but she donated literally thousands of dollars to the Conservative Party and yet they want to call her a Liberal insider giving Liberal grants.

That might have been the case in the days of Stephen Harper, and the way he treated appointments and so forth. That is not the way that has been taken here. When the government found out about the information, it took swift action to shut the thing down and actually ensure that we could continue moving forward in getting to the bottom of the issue.

Why does the Conservative Party continue to mislead Canadians, speech after speech, when Conservatives know it is just not true?

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that there were people appointed to SDTC under the current government's watch who directed hundreds of millions of dollars to themselves. That is the point.

The other point is that the Liberals can say they shut SDTC down, but they are not taking the next step. When someone is a victim of a crime, they call the police. If they are a perpetrator of a crime, they want to avoid that at all costs. I will allow people watching the debate to decide which one it is.

• (1345)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find it quite amazing that the Liberals try again and again to mislead the public. There were 186 conflicts of interest found by the Auditor General in SDTC. There was \$390 million given to Liberal insiders. Therefore I think that a huge problem now with the Liberals is that they will not release the documents to show the actual facts with respect to who got rich, which was most of their friends, and they will not release the names of traitors in Parliament. Why are the Liberals being so unaccountable, when in 2015 they promised to be the most accountable government in Canada?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. I know that calling people anti-Semitic is okay. Now the Conservatives are calling people traitors. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, because the accusations are about members of his own party, that if he is going to call people in his own party traitors, he should at least have the—

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo is rising on a point of order

Mr. Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, I just wonder whether the member would like to apologize for his comment over the weekend. Let us—

The Deputy Speaker: I am not playing the game. We are done discussing it.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, just in fairness to my colleague, you have ruled that these are perfectly acceptable conversations, so I do not think I have to apologize for standing up for the rule of law in Canada. They need to explain why they are supporting—

The Deputy Speaker: We keep falling into debate, and I am almost done talking about debate.

The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé has the floor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us change the tone in here. I think it is time for someone calm and collected to take the floor. Let us come back to questions and comments to advance the debate.

I want to congratulate the last member who spoke because his arguments were better articulated than anything we have heard in several days. He said that when someone is a victim of a crime, they call the police. They do not call a parliamentary committee. I would like to confirm what he thinks. Indeed, if something were to happen to me, I would call the police, not a parliamentary committee. We know how long it takes to get things through parliamentary committee and we know that the results are hit or miss.

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We agree that the documents need to be submitted. Even though he says otherwise, it seems like the member for Winnipeg North is starting to come around because he has been talking about it for a long time. The issue was raised. It was a rather interesting comment. I would be curious to know how long the member in question spoke. It boggles the mind, the things he comes up with to run out the clock.

It would be nice if people stopped running out the clock. Can we work for the people who elected us? I am appealing to the people in the Conservative Party. We are ready to vote. We will vote and force the government to produce the documents. Then we could move on to something else. We have legislation to move forward, including the super interesting bill on old age pensions that the Conservatives support. When are we going to vote?

[English]

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, there is a lot there, and I have a great deal of respect for the member. I do think it is just common sense for the government to turn over the unredacted documents to the RCMP. The commissioner has said he is receiving documents already, so the argument that it cannot be done for some reason just is not true. The government should just get it done so we can get to the bottom of this mess.

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine long years of hardship from the NDP-Liberal government, Canadians are tired of being confronted again and again with undeniable evidence of corruption, mismanagement and a complete lack of regard for accountability. The negligent Liberal government, propped up by its NDP accomplices, has consistently failed Canadians, leading us down a path of rising costs, crime and scandals.

The time has come for us to question the integrity of the elected people who choose to benefit themselves instead of doing their duty to serve the public. We must face the truth: The NDP-Liberal government is not only unreliable but also fundamentally untrustworthy. We as Canadians deserve leadership that serves the people, not leadership that serves itself. We deserve transparency and accountability, not a government that uses its power to cover up its misdeeds. We deserve a country where the priorities are affordable living, public safety and honest governance, not one plagued by scandal after scandal.

Let us take a moment to reflect on how damaging the past nine years have been. One of the most blatant examples of the government's betrayal of public trust is why we are holding today's debate: the \$390-million corruption scandal tied to Liberal appointees in Sustainable Development Technology Canada, SDTC. The Auditor General's report uncovered 186 conflicts of interest in which Liberal insiders used taxpayer dollars to enrich themselves through various companies. Members should let that sink in. Through the green slush fund, there were 186 separate instances in which people in positions of trust exploited public funds to line their own pockets. That is not mere incompetence; that is corruption at its absolute worst.

In response, what has there been from the Liberal government? There has been deflection, obstruction and a refusal to accept responsibility. It has paralyzed Parliament by refusing to hand over

unredacted documents to the police for a criminal investigation. The Speaker of the House has ruled that this refusal is a violation of parliamentary privilege. It has even been revealed that, despite the Speaker's ruling, the Liberal government is still withholding and censoring information. I am not going to sugar-coat this. The Liberals even lack the integrity to follow the rules made by one of their own members, yet the NDP-Liberal coalition continues to obstruct justice, protecting its friends while Canadians suffer.

The government is more focused on safeguarding its own interests than on addressing the real issues that are crippling Canadian families right now. This pattern of scandal and corruption runs deep. The government has continuously attempted to bury its wrongdoings, not only in this case but also on over 15 other occasions in the past nine years. The integrity of our democracy is at stake when those who are in power believe that they are above the law. Canadians deserve better, and they will get that when they elect a Conservative government.

The current \$390-million corruption case is just one scandal in a long line of Liberal misconduct since the Prime Minister took office in 2015, from the SNC-Lavalin affair to the WE Charity scandal and to invoking the Emergencies Act without cause and freezing citizens' bank accounts. The NDP-Liberal government has demonstrated time and again that it is willing to break the rules to serve its own interests.

Let us start with the SNC-Lavalin affair of 2019, one of the most high-profile scandals in recent memory. The case involved allegations of the Prime Minister and his staff when they attempted to pressure the then attorney general, Jody Wilson-Raybould, to intervene in a criminal prosecution of the Quebec-based engineering firm SNC-Lavalin, which was accused of bribery in Libya. When Wilson-Raybould refused to comply, she was removed from her position.

• (1350)

That scandal sparked outrage, leading to Wilson-Raybould's resignation from the cabinet. The Ethics Commissioner ultimately ruled that the Prime Minister had violated ethics laws by exerting undue pressure, showing a blatant disregard for the rule of law in Canada.

Then there was the WE Charity scandal in 2020. The Liberal government awarded \$912 million in student grant contracts to WE Charity, an organization with very close ties to the Prime Minister and his family. It was later revealed that both the Prime Minister and the then finance minister, Bill Morneau, had family members who received payments from WE Charity for speaking engagements. In the face of conflict of interest, the contract was cancelled and Morneau resigned. While the Prime Minister was cleared by the Ethics Commissioner of any wrongdoing in this case, Morneau was found guilty of breaching ethics rules. Once again we saw a Liberal government mired in scandal and corruption.

Then there was the Aga Khan vacation scandal of 2017, yet another example of the Prime Minister's personal disregard for ethical governance. The Prime Minister and his family accepted a vacation on the private island of the Aga Khan, whose foundation receives millions of dollars in taxpayer money through federal funding. The trip was paid for by the Aga Khan, and this led to the Ethics Commissioner's ruling that the Prime Minister had violated four sections of the Conflict of Interest Act, making him the first sitting Prime Minister in Canadian history to be found in violation of the act.

Who can forget the blackface scandal of 2019? During the federal election campaign, multiple photos and videos surfaced of the Prime Minister wearing blackface and brownface makeup at various events. Although the Prime Minister issued a half-hearted public apology, Canadians were left questioning his judgment and values.

The list of scandals does not stop there. In the trip to India controversy in 2018, the Prime Minister's official trip to India turned into an international embarrassment when it was revealed that Jaspal Atwal, a convicted Sikh extremist, had been invited to official events with the Canadian delegation. The trip was widely regarded as a diplomatic failure, and questions were raised about the Prime Minister's judgment and the government's vetting processes.

Then there was the cash-for-access fundraising scandal of 2016, in which wealthy individuals paid large sums of money to attend exclusive fundraising events where they were gaining personal access to the Prime Minister and senior Liberal ministers. This scandal was so blatantly corrupt that it prompted changes to Canada's political financing laws and raised concerns about the integrity of the Liberal government's dealings with donors.

There was also the issue of former governor general Julie Payette. She was a Liberal appointee who created an environment of toxicity and harassment and needed to be fired for her gross misconduct. What else would we expect from a friend of the current Prime Minister? Of course we cannot forget the reckless spending; despite racking up expenses while in her role, she went on to cause over \$277,000 in additional legal expenditures. Ultimately, the lack of scrutiny in making government appointments, and the problems this causes, is a very common theme for the Liberal government.

In the Winnipeg virology lab scandal in 2021, the Liberal government came under fire for refusing to provide Parliament with unredacted documents about the firing of two scientists from a high-security virology lab. The case remained shrouded in secrecy, with concerns about potential security breaches and the shipment of dangerous viruses to a Communist Chinese military research facili-

ty. The government's refusal to comply with House orders has raised serious questions about transparency and national security.

More recently, in 2023 we learned about the McKinsey contract scandal, in which the federal government awarded \$209 million in contracts to McKinsey & Company without proper and adequate oversight. Many of these contracts were awarded on a non-competitive basis, raising concerns about the government's procurement practices and the potential conflicts of interest. Once again the Liberals were giving away Canadian taxpayer dollars to their friends. It was remorseless corruption to the core.

• (1355)

We also have the ArriveCAN controversy, or should I say arrive scam? Corruption was evident throughout the entire saga of the NDP-Liberal government's \$60-million arrive scam app, which could have been developed for a fraction of the price. It ended up enriching GC Strategies, a shady two-person IT company that did no actual IT work but had strong connections to officials in the Liberal upper ranks.

The Auditor General has confirmed that they will be conducting a performance audit of all contracts and payments related to GC Strategies and other companies incorporated by the founders. This will have an impact on all departments, agencies and Crown corporations that had dealings with the group.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

LABOURERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION OF NORTH AMERICA

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, gratitude and pride were the two themes that permeated the opening of LiUNA Local 183's headquarters in the city of Vaughan. There was pride in the official opening of the new state-of-the-art headquarters, representing 70,000 members strong and their families. There was gratitude for those 400 workers who, in 1952, formed Local 183, as well as the members who have followed and fought for better working conditions, better benefits and a better and brighter future for us all.

Statements by Members

On this remarkable occasion, I extend my warmest congratulations to business manager Jack Oliveira, as well as the LiUNA Local 183 executive board, staff and members. I thank LiUNA international vice-president and Canadian director, Joseph Mancinelli, for his ongoing leadership. I also join the strong LiUNA family in honouring two giants who helped pave the foundation of LiUNA and the industry: Enrico Mancinelli and Julio Oliveira Sr.

I extend my gratitude and best wishes, always, to the LiUNA members, who keep Canada moving forward. To them, I say “feel the power”.

* * *

CAPITAL EXPERIENCE

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, each year, two students from each of the seven secondary schools in my riding are selected to participate in a program called the “Capital Experience”. It was started 19 years ago by my predecessor, Barry Devolin. During the past three days in Ottawa, they have learned about the various career opportunities that await them.

I would like to introduce this year's participants: Calvin Smith and Evan Lane from I.E. Weldon, Sofia Entzin-Telford from Fenelon Falls, Sadie Evans-Fockler and Trevin Bain-Gross from Haliburton Highlands, Sara Woychesko and Daniel Patterson from St. Thomas Aquinas, Ella Wilson and Becca Lang from LCVI, Bronte Weber and Tyler Pettit from Brock, and Allison Carroll and Brayden Boughton from Crestwood.

I would like to thank the sponsors: the Lions clubs, Rotary clubs and local legions. I would also like to thank the guest speakers for their ongoing support of the program. It is my hope that these students will be inspired as they consider their future.

To that end, I invite my colleagues to welcome these young leaders to Ottawa.

* * *

NEW BRUNSWICK PROVINCIAL ELECTION

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the winds of change have blown through New Brunswick. Last night, New Brunswickers voted for change and helped make history too. New Brunswick has elected its first female premier.

Susan Holt led her Liberal team to a solid majority government, bringing an end to six years of Conservative rule. Even Premier Blaine Higgs lost his seat in the red tide of change. The final tally is 31 seats for the Liberals, 16 for the Conservatives and two for the Greens, including the Green Party leader, David Coon.

It is a new day for my home province, and under the leadership of premier-designate Holt, I am confident that New Brunswickers have put their faith behind someone who will listen, lead with authenticity and put their best interests at the centre of every decision she makes.

I say congratulations and go team Holt.

[*Translation*]

SYLVIE BOLDUC

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I want to acknowledge Sylvie Bolduc, general manager of the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation in the Laurentians for the past 15 years.

She is stepping down to take her well-deserved retirement. I want to highlight her remarkable contribution to the development of many large-scale economic projects in the Laurentians that have had a tremendous impact.

She set up Synergie Économique Laurentides, an organization dedicated to the circular economy. It is now a leader in its field.

Sylvie Bolduc has contributed to and made a difference in the economic landscape of the Laurentians and brought a female face to regional economic development. She was one of the pioneers who cleared the way for those women with an entrepreneurial spirit.

On behalf of her collaborators and economic and community partners, I wish Sylvie a happy and long retirement and thank her for her unifying leadership.

* * *

[*English*]

PHARMACARE

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government will always protect universal, publicly funded health care, as well as sexual and reproductive rights. These two principles underlie the Pharmacare Act, which received royal assent on October 10. The landmark legislation will establish a framework for a national, publicly funded system for universal drug coverage; very soon, it will ensure that all Canadians from coast to coast to coast have access to essential diabetes medications and contraception.

Pharmacare means that nine million women and gender-diverse Canadians will no longer need to bear the financial burden of accessing contraception. Additionally, more than three and a half million Canadians living with diabetes will gain access to the medications and supplies to manage their disease. We know that cost is one of the biggest barriers for Canadians to get access to the medication they need.

Our role as parliamentarians is to protect and better the lives of the Canadians we serve. The passing of the legislation will be of lasting benefit to Canadians.

* * *

● (1405)

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years under the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

*Statements by Members***CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION**

Is the Speaker interested in a heat pump? The Liberals know a guy. He goes by the name of carbon tax Carney, conflict of interest Carney, heat pump hustle Carney and future leader of the Liberal Party Carney. He has as many nicknames as he does conflicts of interest.

For instance, he has been caught lobbying governments to scale back rules on heat pump qualifications, helping his firm earn a few quick bucks. With sleight of hand, he not only pitches the idea but also installs the product. He has been caught trying to enrich himself with Canadian tax dollars. Brookfield is the name; \$10 million is the gain.

It is clear that carbon tax Carney has too many conflicts of interest to be advising the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister needs to fire him now or bring him under the umbrella of ethics rules.

* * *

PHARMACARE

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the passage of our pharmacare legislation is a huge step forward for universal health care in Canada. Millions of Canadians and Albertans living with diabetes will be able to follow their treatment plans without having to make tough financial decisions.

I am so proud that we will be able to help over 3.5 million Canadians living with diabetes so that they can focus on their health and wellness instead of the amount of money it will cost to maintain their treatment plan.

Caring for our neighbours is what Canadians do. Every Conservative member in the House voted against pharmacare because they do not want to work on solutions that will put the health of Canadians first. On this side of the House, we will always stand up for Canadians and their right to universal health care.

* * *

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, women and gender-diverse Canadians deserve to know their government has their back. With the recent passage of the Pharmacare Act on October 10, we will soon see nine million women and gender-diverse Canadians have access to free contraceptives if they need it. This will change millions of lives for generations to come, and we will look back at this critical moment for women and gender-diverse people across Canada and be proud that our government stepped up to make the Pharmacare Act a reality.

Having family values means valuing and supporting families. The latest policy, through the Pharmacare Act, gives access to free contraceptives; this joins universal child care, the Canada child benefit and many others in supporting families. Our Liberal government does not just talk about family values; we invest in them through progressive policies, such as access to free contraceptives.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years under the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up and crime is up. It turns out that CBC bonuses are also up. Yesterday, at the heritage committee, Catherine Tait, the Liberals' hand-picked CEO of CBC, refused to rule out accepting a fat taxpayer-funded bonus and severance as her term comes to an end.

With its viewership down, ad revenue falling and less trust all the time, CBC responds by giving \$18 million in bonuses, including an average of \$73,000 for each of the broadcaster's 43 executives, as well as millions more for its hundreds of managers. It then pays for a \$1,000-a-night hotel room in Paris so that Ms. Tait can attend luxury balls at the Louvre. All the while, CBC is asking for more money, firing hundreds of employees, cutting services and getting woke.

Even the Liberals admit CBC is making its own case for it to be defunded, which is something that Ms. Tait says is gaining momentum. The solution is simple: We should reject the bonuses, fire the Prime Minister and defund the CBC. That is common sense.

* * *

● (1410)

[Translation]

PHARMACARE ACT

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 10, An Act respecting pharmacare received royal assent. Among other things, this act will provide Canadian women with universal single-payer coverage for various contraceptives. Nine million women and gender-diverse people will benefit from that.

Over the past few months, many women in my riding of Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne have told me how important this act is for them. Canadian women want to be able to choose if, when and how they start a family. Our government listened to them. Unfortunately, the Conservatives voted against this act every step of the way.

[English]

We know the cost of contraceptives is one of the many barriers to gender equity in Canada. Our government will always stand up for a woman's right to choose and make medical decisions about her own body. Our Pharmacare Act delivers on that commitment.

*Statements by Members***FIREARMS**

Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are sick and tired of the Prime Minister's misleading statements about gun violence. Yesterday, the Prime Minister had the audacity to pat himself on the back over his appalling handgun crime record.

I am a Canadian who lost a friend three years ago to gun violence, and I take the Prime Minister's deception personally. Handgun crime is up 116% since the Liberals came into power. Families are grieving, and the Toronto Police Association is calling out the Prime Minister for being out of touch and offensive to victims.

Canadians simply deserve better. Canadians deserve a prime minister and a government that will stop the crime, not this Prime Minister, who is focused on celebrating his own failures.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal government is not worth the cost or the corruption.

Today, the Auditor General confirmed a full investigation into the Liberal government deals awarded to arrive scam contractor GC Strategies. This shady two-person firm that did absolutely no IT work charged taxpayers \$2,600 per hour for over \$100 million in government contracts, sole-source deals that froze out hard-working Canadian companies. In the arrive scam scandal alone, the Liberals' preferred contractor, GC Strategies, pocketed \$20 million of a \$60-million price tag for an app that should have cost a fraction of that price.

Why has the Prime Minister given these arrive scam middlemen \$100 million since he took office? When will the Prime Minister stop robbing Canadians of their hard-earned money and doling it out to well-connected Liberal elites?

After nine years of the NDP-Liberals, tax are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up for these corrupt Liberals and their well-connected friends. Common-sense Conservatives are going to end the corruption and bring home a carbon tax election.

* * *

GOVERNMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for Islanders who live in my riding, this government's commitment to lowering costs has resulted in real benefits. Whether it was keeping the retirement age at 65 or making the Canada child benefit tax-free, the decisions we have taken have been a real help to thousands in my riding. The Pharmacare Act is another important chapter in the journey toward a fairer society.

On Prince Edward Island, we are already seeing the results. Millions have been saved, and more importantly, Islanders know they have the affordable access they need to keep themselves healthy. What I am hearing from constituents in my riding is to keep going and, more importantly, make sure we protect the gains we have made. They say their lives are better than they were under the former government and that they need us to protect the gains we have all made together.

DYSLEXIA

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize October as Dyslexia Awareness Month, in line with Dyslexia Canada's campaign "Mark it Read". This year's theme is "Breaking the Silence", shedding light on the 10% to 20% of Canadians living with this often overlooked learning disability.

Dyslexia affects reading, writing and spelling, but with early identification and the right support, its impact can be reduced and individuals can thrive. As a nation, we must commit to raising awareness and supporting those with dyslexia by lighting up our buildings and monuments in red this October. Together, let us break the silence and advocate for the needs of children and adults with dyslexia across Canada.

* * *

• (1415)

[*Translation*]

250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAINT-JACQUES

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to mark the 250th anniversary of Saint-Jacques, a wonderful municipality in my riding. This great little town is considered the cradle of New Acadia.

Founded in 1774, Saint-Jacques was a refuge for many Acadian families, who found there a welcoming and peaceful place after they were shamefully deported by the British Crown during the Great Upheaval. Nestled in the heart of Lanaudière region, Saint-Jacques is a lively community known for both its culinary delights and its rich history. It has an impressive built heritage and is also home to gems like Parc des Cultures, where one can admire an Acadian commemorative monument; various sculptures, each more beautiful than the last; and a bust of one of my mentors, a great Jacobin and former premier of Quebec, Bernard Landry.

I have a secret to share: Saint-Jacques's greatest asset is its people.

I want to wish all residents of Saint-Jacques a very happy 250th anniversary.

*Oral Questions**[English]***10TH ANNIVERSARY OF ATTACK ON PARLIAMENT HILL**

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago, our country witnessed a horrific attack on the heart of our democracy. Corporal Nathan Cirillo, standing guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, was senselessly murdered.

[Translation]

That was 12 days after Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent was murdered at the Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu military base.

[English]

Both were targeted for wearing the uniform of our country, defending our freedom.

In the midst of this darkness, we also saw examples of extraordinary courage. Civilians rushed to aid Corporal Cirillo, showing the compassion and resilience that define our nation.

Inside Parliament, heroes emerged as well. A parliamentary security constable, Samearn Son, saw the attacker armed with a rifle and acted without hesitation. In a struggle that cost him a bullet to the leg, Constable Son showed unparalleled courage when he attempted to disarm the terrorist. His brave actions bought crucial moments for the rest of the security personnel to react and ultimately stop the terrorist before he could take any more innocent lives.

[Translation]

Today, we honour the memory of those who were taken from us, and we marvel at the courage of those who acted with such self-sacrifice.

[English]

Remembrance alone is not enough. Unfortunately, there are people today in Canada glorifying terrorist attacks and celebrating those who commit these evil acts. That is why on days like today, we should not only honour the lives lost and celebrate the heroes of the day, but clearly and unequivocally condemn those who advocate violence to achieve political goals.

Let us honour the memory of Corporal Cirillo and Patrice Vincent and grieve with their families. May perpetual light shine upon them.

* * *

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF ATTACK ON PARLIAMENT HILL

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to mark the loss of Corporal Nathan Cirillo, who was gunned down 10 years ago today while standing guard on sentry duty at the Canadian National War Memorial.

On October 22, 2014, we lost a son, brother, father, friend and national hero. When we lost Nathan, a 24-year-old reservist from Hamilton, we all mourned as one Canadian family. My prayers continue to include his family and his loved ones, as well as the wonderful people who came to Nathan's aid.

I want all men and women in uniform to know that they are valued and we appreciate their work. I want our Parliamentary Protective Service members who continue to serve and those who have since left to know that their efforts will forever be remembered. Today is a devastating memory in our history, and I hope all members in this place will continue to work together to ensure that PPS members are given the resources and regard they deserve.

As we honour the courageous Canadians in uniform who defend our values and freedom at home and around the world, we are reminded of the responsibility we all share to denounce hatred and to promote inclusion in our communities and in Canada.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1420)

*[Translation]***GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are now about 40 Liberal MPs who agree with what Canadians already know: This Prime Minister is not worth the cost, crime or corruption.

Those MPs are telling us that they need the Prime Minister's permission to speak at tomorrow's caucus meeting. He will be able to prevent them from talking about how housing costs have doubled and how the debt, inflation and corruption have doubled.

Will he allow freedom of expression so those MPs can say what they think?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is once again very clear that the Leader of the Opposition's main focus is on his political priorities, not the priorities of Canadians.

We are delivering results for Canadians on dental care, pharmaceutical and \$10-a-day child care. The Conservative leader is offering nothing but budget cuts, austerity and political games. On this side of the House, we will stay focused on Canadians and their well-being.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is the one who is distracted by political games because 40 or so of his own members see that he is not worth the cost, crime or corruption. In fact, they have lost confidence in this Prime Minister. It is odd that the Bloc Québécois still has confidence in this Prime Minister when even the Liberal members do not.

Again, members have to be able to express themselves freely. Will the Prime Minister stop preventing them from speaking so that they can say that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost or the crime?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, we see how preoccupied the opposition leader is with his own partisan political priorities and not the well-being of Canadians. We are here to invest in pharmacare, which will give free insulin to those who need it and will give prescription contraceptives to women across this country.

The Conservative leader prefers to talk about politics. He prefers to talk about the cuts he is going to make to the programs that Canadians rely on. We will be there for Canadians.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have now learned that about 40 Liberal MPs believe the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the cost, crime and corruption. However, there is a strange rule in the Liberal caucus that they need to have permission from the Prime Minister to speak at the microphone. If a Liberal MP wanted to get up and say that quadrupling the carbon tax is a bad idea or that doubling housing costs is making people homeless, they could not do that.

Will the Prime Minister lift the gag so that his Liberal MPs can say to his face that he is not worth the crime, the cost and the corruption?

The Speaker: None of these questions have to deal with the administration of government, but I see that the Prime Minister is rising to his feet.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems the Conservative leader is confusing rules that apply in the Conservative caucus with the rules we have in the Liberal Party. The reality is, we can see the point to which the Conservative leader is simply focused on playing politics and gaining power. That is why he wants to talk about things that do not have to do with delivering for Canadians. He does not want to talk about the fact that close to a million Canadians will be receiving dental care because of our Canadian dental program, which he says does not even exist and which he has voted against every step of the way.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I would ask the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot to please not take the microphone when the Speaker is on his feet or when other speakers who have been recognized by the Speaker are taking the floor.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

• (1425)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to have to bring up this terrible rule. It is just that Liberal backbench MPs are coming and talking to all of us to say that they are not allowed to speak to him. They are wondering if I could perhaps pose some questions on their behalf. I guess they cannot get anywhere with the current Prime Minister, so they would rather talk to the future common-sense Conservative prime minister.

Instead of silencing his own MPs, will the Prime Minister let them get up to the mic tomorrow to tell him that he is not worth the cost, crime and corruption?

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that he cannot administer the government because he is too busy fighting for his job after nine years. Even his MPs know it.

He broke immigration. He doubled the debt, doubled housing costs, doubled crime and doubled the cost of living in a home. He wants to quadruple the carbon tax that has already forced two million people to a food bank, one in four kids to hunger and 25% of Canadians to poverty. Canadian food prices are up 36% faster than in the States. Statistics Canada officials say that we have the biggest gap between rich and poor in our recorded history. His MPs know that he has broken the country.

Will the Liberals call a carbon tax election so we can fix it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, like all of us in the House, knows that Canadians are facing challenging times. His solution, however, is to offer them cuts, to offer them no programs that they can rely on, and to vote against things like dental care, pharmacare and investments in a green economy, which is going to create jobs and careers long into the future. He wants to harm Canadians, where we are focusing on delivering for them. He wants cuts to programs and services, while we are busy investing in Canadians and their futures. That is the choice Canadians get to make.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, time is running out. Four million retirees in Canada, and one million in Quebec, are waiting for their buying power to actually improve, and not just as part of a slogan.

Tens of thousands of supply-managed farmers are waiting for their business model to be protected in perpetuity.

Will the Prime Minister seize the opportunity to make a difference and improve the lives of four million retirees in Canada, one million in Quebec, and tens of thousands of farmers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague well knows, we will always defend supply management. We will always protect our farmers from one end of the country to the other.

With regard to seniors, he says he wants to see action and not just words, but we took action when we lowered the retirement age from 67, where the Conservatives had set it, to 65. Unfortunately, the Bloc Québécois voted against that.

Oral Questions

We took action when we increased the GIS by 10%, but the Bloc Québécois voted against that.

We offered a dental care program to almost one million Canadians and the Bloc Québécois voted against that.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is playing fast and loose with the facts, but the time for action is just a few days away.

In a paralyzed Parliament, and with a paralyzed government, we are proposing something that is good for people. This proposal could actually stabilize Parliament for a few weeks. Parliament really needs this.

Is the Prime Minister going to let his government be eaten up from both inside and out, or will he make a difference for millions of people?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, I completely agree that it is important to be there for seniors in need. That is why our government has taken many measures over the years to invest in seniors and to be there for our seniors. We remain open to working with everyone in the House to provide even more for seniors.

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● (1430)

GROCERY SECTOR

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, more and more people are becoming vulnerable and falling into poverty. One study reports that, month by month, 40% of Quebecers are just \$200 away from bankruptcy. The situation has reached such a crisis point that the expression “tightening one’s belt” is literally coming true. Twenty per cent of people are eating less just to save a little money. That is just plain wrong. It shows the Liberals’ lacklustre results in forcing the CEOs of big companies to control their prices.

When are they going to stand up and force these big companies to control the price of essential food items?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the NDP is well aware that we took steps to increase competition among the major grocery chains. For example, we provided direct assistance to help families in need with their grocery costs. We are in the process of introducing a school food program that will save families across the country hundreds of dollars a year. We will continue to be there to support Canadians. We will continue to be there to invest in programs that will help them while the Conservatives keep on threatening to impose austerity measures and cuts.

* * *

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, last week, first nations leaders respected the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society by voting to guarantee all first nations children would be protected from Canada’s discrimination in child and family services. The Liberals had offered a weak funding plan with an expiry date. Discrimination must stop now and forever.

Will the Prime Minister finally respect the Human Rights Tribunal, stop discriminating against first nations children and offer first nations an agreement that upholds their rights?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, reconciliation means walking as true partners to indigenous peoples. We of course will continue to be there to invest in supports for indigenous peoples. It means that we will continue to work with them in the ways that make sense.

I will highlight that the Chiefs of Ontario and the Nishnawbe Aski Nation are continuing to look for ways to move forward with the government to support kids who have been affected in care.

We will continue to be there to work in partnership with indigenous leadership and communities to deliver the supports so deeply needed by so many young people.

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FINANCE

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the Liberal-NDP government, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed what Canadians already know. The incompetent finance minister cannot do math. She is going to blow through her own deficit this year by \$7 billion. That is higher taxes and lower standards of living. One in four Canadians are already skipping meals, and the Liberal-made misery is only going to get worse.

Why not call a carbon tax election now so Conservatives can fix the budget?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so glad to hear the Conservatives talk about the PBO, because just a few weeks ago the PBO did a report on the sustainability of the federal finances. I am going to quote what the PBO said, “Current fiscal policy in Canada is sustainable over the long term.” In fact, according to the PBO, the federal government could even, “permanently increase spending...by 1.5 per cent of GDP.”

The only fiscal threat to Canada is the Conservatives, who would cut health care, child care and the national school food program.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that PhD in wackonomics has no clue. The incompetent finance minister, not knowing how to do math—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Oral Questions

The Speaker: Colleagues, I try to encourage as much freedom as possible in terms of the way people express themselves here. I am going to ask hon. members to, as much as possible, refrain from using language that is directed at particular members and is considered insulting to those members. I have spoken about this in a previous ruling.

I am going to ask the hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn to start his question again, but to rephrase it so that he does not use that kind of language.

• (1435)

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, that sounds like Liberal wackonomics. The incompetent finance minister, not knowing how to do math, ensured 50% of Canadians cannot afford basic necessities like food. She will give cushy contracts to rich Liberal insiders, while telling the two million Canadians she sent into a food bank that they can solve their Liberal-made misery by cancelling their Disney+.

The minister knows higher deficits lead to higher taxes and lower standards of living. She just does not care. Why not call a carbon tax election now so Canadians can fire these economic arsonists?

The Speaker: I am going to come back to members on this matter, but I am going to encourage all members to please keep their counsel when they are not recognized by the Chair.

The hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for your remonstration, but speaking for myself, puerile playground insults from the maple syrup MAGA do not bother me one bit.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. This is precisely why we should be very mindful of our language, because things will be said on all sides, which is going to be disturbing to the order of the House.

I am going to come back to this matter, and I will ask the Deputy Prime Minister to start her question again without using those words.

The hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: As I said, Mr. Speaker, I can handle it, but what makes me really mad, what I cannot handle is seeing crocodile tears from those Conservatives. The only time they care, notice, vulnerable Canadians is for a partisan photo op. We know they do not care, because they are opposed to a national school food program, which is feeding 400,000 Canadian kids. They are opposed to dental care, which is helping a million people. We care about Canadians; they just care about themselves.

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CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, taxes are up, costs are up, crimes is up and time is up. The costly NDP-Liberal coalition has doubled the cost of housing, and the majority of Canadians are unable to keep up with their grocery needs.

Canadians have had enough, but the NDP-Liberal coalition only wants to drive up costs by quadrupling its carbon tax. Will the Prime Minister finally call a carbon tax election so that Conservatives can offer Canadians some relief?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under the Conservative leader, slogans are up, rhymes are up and parroting talking points so that a member can get a shiny gold star in caucus seems to be up. I cannot imagine diminishing myself when I have the opportunity to represent my community in the House, or to cheapen the arguments that we can put forward on the floor of the House.

If the Conservatives care about helping people, why do they not actually support the policies that help build homes for people who cannot afford them? Why do they not actually help advance policies that will let families put food on the table, whether that is child care, a middle-class tax cut or the Canada child benefit? Every time we put measures forward to help Canadians, they vote against it and stand up with this nonsense.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians who are lined up at food banks are not buying their pathetic rhetoric.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has already confirmed, once again, that the carbon tax is costing Canadians more than they receive in rebates. For families in Saskatchewan, the quadrupled carbon tax is \$2,000.

Will the Prime Minister finally give Canadians the carbon tax election that they so desperately need?

• (1440)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me provide a few facts to the hon member.

The fact is that the PBO confirmed that the vast majority of Canadians get more money back than they pay. The fact is that over 300 economists say that carbon pricing is the best way to reduce emissions, which is best for the economy. The fact is that Alberta Premier Danielle Smith said that her family gets more money back with the carbon rebate. The fact is that Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe said that he looked at all alternatives to the carbon price and they were all too expensive.

We are reducing emissions while we are addressing affordability. On that side of the House, they have no plan to address climate change. They are actively denying the reality of climate change. They have no plan for the economy. Shame on them.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSING

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk facts.

The young Quebecers listening to us today are seeing their dream of owning a home evaporate. In just five years, house prices in Quebec have risen by 74%. In concrete terms, that means an extra \$1,000 a month. This situation has been fuelled by the Liberal government's chronic deficits, which it ran with the enthusiastic support of the Bloc Québécois.

Could the Prime Minister please stand up, look Canadians in the eye, and tell them why he has made life worse for young people?

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague that it was this government that implemented the first national housing strategy and built thousands of homes across the country. We also created a tax-free savings account. One of the young people who signed up was my brother, who is 33. Now, 700,000 people across the country have signed up, and they will have a chance to realize their dream of buying a home. They have this government to thank.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not the Conservatives saying that, it is the realtors association noticing the increase. In Quebec City, the price of a house is now \$400,000. In Gatineau, it is \$460,000. In Montreal, it is \$590,000. Beyond the numbers, the issue is that the dreams and ambitions of young Quebecers are evaporating under this government's watch.

I invite the member for Papineau, who is the Prime Minister, to rise and explain to young Quebecers why he made the situation worse and why, today, young Quebecers are unable to buy a house because of his leadership.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent, whom I quite like, talks about ambition and numbers. He should be talking about the ambition and numbers of his Conservative leader. When he was minister responsible for housing, in his entire time in that role across the entire country he built not one, two, three, four or five, but six affordable housing units. He talks about ambition and a record. He should talk about his Conservative leader and ask him to visit the 160 affordable housing units we built in his own riding.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the new Quebec lieutenant told us that secularism in Quebec falls under Quebec's jurisdiction, not Ottawa's. He is quite right. Ot-

Oral Questions

tawa has no business interfering in secularism. Ottawa has no business interfering in how Quebec operates as a society. I thank the hon. minister for that reminder.

Is it fair to say that Ottawa has no intention of challenging a Quebec law that does not fall under federal jurisdiction? Is that what we are to conclude from what the minister told us yesterday?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right. This falls under the Government of Quebec's jurisdiction. Simply put, Quebec has jurisdiction over education.

If my colleague wants to inform, guide or advise the Government of Quebec, he should not do so here in the House of Commons. He should do so in the National Assembly. I respectfully shared that recommendation with him yesterday.

• (1445)

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister used his appearance on the Stephen Colbert show to state, and I quote: "we try to [make sure] people keep their culture and keep their languages". Come on, that is not how integration works in Quebec.

In Quebec, we agree on a common set of values: equality, religious neutrality and French as the common language. Learning French and adopting common values is part of what it means to integrate into Quebec. Does the federal government recognize that its multiculturalism is incompatible with Quebec's integration model?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, my colleague is entirely correct. Millions of Quebecers, including newcomers, have the good fortune and privilege of learning French, integrating into Quebec, becoming a Quebecer, living up to being a Quebecer, growing up, living and flourishing in Quebec. The member is entirely correct. That is how things work in Quebec, and we are very proud of it.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Ottawa wants to challenge Bill 21 in court and weaken secularism in Quebec. Ottawa continues to uphold a religious exemption in the Criminal Code. Ottawa refuses to exempt Quebec from the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. The Prime Minister is telling the Americans that everyone who comes to Canada can keep their language, that there is no common language and that there are no problems.

In short, the federal government is undermining integration, secularism and the French language. Does this government actually realize that what it does best is undermine Quebecers' ability to live together in harmony?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my Bloc Québécois colleague, whom I hold in high regard, is trying to pick a fight. A lot of new Quebecers come to Quebec partly because Quebec is part of Canada. A Quebecer is also a Canadian. Many newcomers in my riding say they are proud to be both Quebecers and Canadians.

*Oral Questions**[English]***CARBON PRICING**

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

The Prime Minister's own Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed yet again that the carbon tax costs more to Canadians than they get back in rebates. When the NDP-Liberals quadruple the carbon tax, families in Alberta will pay nearly \$2,000 more in carbon taxes.

Will the NDP-Liberals finally admit that their tax is simply a scheme and call a carbon tax election?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the risk of correcting my hon. colleague from the other side, let me state very clearly that the PBO has indicated that eight out of 10 Albertans get more money back from the Canada carbon rebate than they pay in carbon taxes. Members do not have to take my word for it. They can take the word of Premier Danielle Smith, who said that not only did she get more money back because she lives in rural Alberta, but she even got the 20% top-up.

To my colleague, I am sorry. That is a fact.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I ask the hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake not to take the floor unless he is recognized.

The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians that wind up at food banks are not buying that rhetoric; I am sorry.

Food bank usage is up. The Cold Lake Food Bank is the busiest it has ever been, with a 28% increase in usage over 2023, which saw an increase of 16% over 2022. The carbon tax is driving up the cost of groceries, gas and heating, making things more difficult for families and food banks, which are pushed to their limit.

The question is simple. Will the Prime Minister admit that his carbon tax is not working and call a carbon tax election?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the numbers are in and the cheques have already arrived. In Alberta, a family of four gets \$2,500 per year. It is more than they spend on the price on pollution, which is something those on the other side do not understand because they do not care if the planet burns.

Let us go one step further. Why did those on that side vote against the Canada child benefit, which gives \$7,800 per kid in Alberta? Why did they vote against child care? Why did they vote against supports for workers? They care about themselves, not about Canadians. We are on the side of Canadians each and every day.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with that much hot air, I could run a couple of windmills.

After nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has once again confirmed that Canadians pay much more in costs than they get back in rebates. In Saskatchewan, after these guys quadruple the carbon tax, it is going to cost a family \$2,000 a year.

When will the Liberals call a carbon tax election so that Canadians can have their say at the ballot box?

● (1450)

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is really difficult to take any of this rhetoric seriously. When I was first elected nine years ago, that party used to send cheques to millionaires to help them with the cost of raising their families. That presented two questions. Millionaires would ask me in my riding why they were getting this money, and people of lower income would ask me in my riding why it was getting taxed.

What we did is created a Canada child benefit that is tax-free and means-tested. What we have also done is established a national school food program. If they are really serious about addressing child poverty and family poverty, why do they not get on board?

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, back home, the number of people asking for help at Moisson Saguenay—Lac-St-Jean is soaring.

However, the Bloc continues to support this incompetent government and ignores the real problems facing Quebeckers. As we know, the Bloc Québécois is no longer a party of the regions.

Families in the Saguenay are desperate. Their situation is becoming more and more precarious because of the rising cost of groceries and housing.

When will the Prime Minister call an election so that Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean can finally be represented by the only party of the regions, the Conservative Party?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, but I am surprised to see that after voting against lowering the age of retirement to 65, after voting against the dental care plan, and after voting against increasing the guaranteed income supplement for the most vulnerable seniors, this gentleman is rising to ask us why the cost of living is going up.

The cost of living is going up, sir, because you and your party are promising to make cuts, and that will affect most of the people in your riding.

The Speaker: There have been a few answers today in which comments were addressed directly to the members. Members must go through the Chair.

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[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the numbers are out, and last winter was the worst on record for Edmonton's unhoused population. It was so bad that over 100 people living on the street lost a limb due to frostbite.

Indigenous people make up over two-thirds of Edmonton's houseless population. Indigenous people will lose their limbs and their lives this winter because the government has failed to build affordable homes.

How many indigenous people need to freeze before the Prime Minister takes action?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his advocacy on the issue of supporting those who have the most acute housing need, which disproportionately impacts indigenous people across this country.

As my colleague very well knows, we have advanced billions of dollars specifically to help address some of these concerns, including support directly to the City of Edmonton, working with partner Homeward Trust, to make the situation better to the extent money can help. In addition, we have put hundreds of millions of dollars on the table to work with provinces that cost match. More than a month ago in his province, I sent a letter, which is yet to be responded to. In the absence of that sort of co-operation with other levels of government, we will work directly with cities and indigenous governments to help address this very challenging situation.

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when I asked the minister about why he is doing nothing to stop Rogers from gouging Canadians on their cable bills, he refused to answer the question. He is not telling Canadians that his Liberal government is too weak to stand up to Rogers and big telcos ripping them off. It is under his government that the Rogers-Shaw merger was even allowed to happen, leading to higher bills for Canadians. People feel defeated and the Liberals are doing nothing to help. In fact, they are piling it on.

Why are the Liberals caving to big telcos while Canadians are getting gouged? Just because he is a Rogers rollover does not mean the rest of us have to accept that.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite ironic to hear from the New Democrats about standing up. When they had that

opportunity, they folded. I think everyone in this House understands that.

The member knows well, like everyone in the House, that we stood up to the big telcos in this country. We will always stand up for Canadians and consumers. We fought for more competition, lower prices for Canadians and better choice.

On this side of the House, Canadians at home know we will always stand for consumers, stand for Canadians and stand for competition.

* * *

● (1455)

PHARMACARE

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Pharmacare Act received royal assent on October 10. British Columbia has been benefiting from that act, saving the province \$28 million because of free contraceptives. Now with the passage of this bill, women and gender-diverse Canadians have access to contraceptives across Canada. The Pharmacare Act also includes access to expensive diabetes medications and tools. These life-saving drugs are too often unaffordable to patients.

Can the Minister of Health tell the House how the Pharmacare Act will positively impact the health outcomes of Canadians and—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me start by thanking the member for Vancouver Centre, who is one of the longest-serving members of this House. Her tireless advocacy for health care in this country and for pharmacare are a huge reason we have pharmacare.

It was just passed. We are ready to sign deals. What is that going to mean? It is going to mean that people who cannot afford medication are going to get it. That is not just an issue of fundamental justice; it is about cost avoidance and creating a system that avoids bad outcomes.

Not only are the Conservatives against it, but most disappointingly, they have no plan for people who do not have access to the medication they need. They want to cut dental care and other essential services. We are not going to allow it.

*Oral Questions***INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY**

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. What else is up? Liberal cover-ups are up. The Speaker ruled that the NDP-Liberals had violated the order to turn over the green slush fund's \$400-million scandal documents for criminal investigation. The Liberal obstruction of justice continues with 19 government departments censoring documents and two agencies refusing to turn documents over.

Will the Prime Minister end the Liberal corruption cover-up and turn the uncensored documents over now?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member gets up every day and says things that are simply not true. What he will not answer is why his leader is refusing to get a security clearance. That is the real question on every Canadian's mind right now.

While we are facing a time when we have to put the country first and stand up for Canadians, the Leader of the Opposition is hiding something from Canadians. What is it, and why is it stopping him from getting his security clearance?

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister could release the 11 names, and he could also release the documents uncensored so Canadians could learn the truth about the \$400-million, Liberal, green slush fund cover-up.

Canadians, I am sure, will also be shocked to learn that, on the Prime Minister's order, more than 10,000 pages were censored to cover up the most important information about the Prime Minister's hand-picked Liberal appointees to the green slush fund. The government does not exist to protect corrupt Liberals from criminal investigation.

Will the Prime Minister stop the cover-up of Liberal corruption and hand the uncensored documents over now?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect police to follow due process. Let me be perfectly clear: The government obviously complies with anything that follows due process. Canadians also expect their leaders to act in the best interest of Canadians, not to protect their own partisan interests.

Why is that member, and all members of the Conservative Party, covering up for the Leader of the Opposition, who is refusing to get his security clearance? It is easy to get. All the other members have done it. When will the Leader of the Opposition get it?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: For the second time today, I am going to ask the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot to please not take the floor when he is not recognized. I would not like to do this a third time.

The hon. member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington has the floor.

• (1500)

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

The Speaker ruled that the NDP-Liberals violated a House order regarding the criminal investigation into the latest \$400-million scandal. The government's refusal to respect the Speaker's ruling has paralyzed Parliament. The Auditor General found that Liberal appointees at SDTC gave millions to Liberal insiders, with over 186 conflicts of interest.

Will the NDP-Liberals end the cover-up and comply with the Speaker's lawful order so we can get accountability for corruption and Parliament can get back to work?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I expect my hon. colleague on the other side to at least be honest with the facts. What was said was that this motion was highly unusual and it should be referred to committee for study. We support that. It is only the Conservatives who are obstructing their own obstruction. This is unsurprising because they are also trying to cover up their own leader's refusal to get his security clearance.

All of the other leaders of the political parties in the House have done that. Canadians want to know why. What is he hiding, and what is he trying to protect?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of scandals under this Liberal government, here we are again, paralyzed by Liberal corruption.

Canadians need to know where their money is going and why nearly \$400 million ended up in the pockets of Liberal cronies. Canadians are struggling to find shelter and put food on the table while Liberal cronies get rich at their expense.

Will the Liberals put an end to the secrecy and hand the evidence over to police so that Parliament can work for all Canadians?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, it is disappointing that the Conservatives are not telling the truth on this issue.

What is even more appalling and what Canadians are wondering is why the Leader of the Opposition is not getting his security clearance. Is it because he has something to hide? Why is he refusing to get his security clearance? He must have something to hide, because it is so easy to get it.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec is facing another gang war. It is a war between organized crime, which has been around for far too long, and new, less organized groups.

These groups are recruiting young people, teenagers, to commit serious crimes. They are luring children into crime with the promise of a chance to change their lives and a fistful of dollars to boot. Once they are in that world, these children are unable to escape.

What will the government do to protect children, our children, from organized crime?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fight against organized crime, the fight to protect our youth, is extremely important.

On this side of the House, we invested \$390 million to fight guns and gangs. We also invested \$28 million in resources for the CBSA and \$3.5 million over three years to help Interpol.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it takes a lot of prevention work to stop young people from joining criminal gangs. We applaud everyone who does this hard work on a daily basis.

However, we also have to crack down on the criminals who deliberately recruit children knowing that they do not face the same harsh penalties adults do. They have to be deterred from targeting children. That is our role as elected members.

Is the government willing to work with us on that?

[*English*]

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I support the initiative that the member opposite has raised and thank her for her work on our public safety committee, where we have discussed this.

We agree that it is crucially important to crack down on criminal organizations, particularly those that recruit young people to subvert the justice system. This is precisely why we restored the funding cut by the Conservatives to invest against gun and gang violence in this country. I hope that we can work across party lines to continue with this investment.

• (1505)

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. The Toronto police are on the front lines of gun violence in Canada. One of their officers was recently shot by a repeat violent offender, yet shockingly, yesterday, the Liberal Prime Minister took a deranged victory lap on social media for his attack on licensed, trained and police-vetted sport shooters. Let us remember that, after nine years of the Liberals, gun violence in Canada is up 116%. Their approach has categorically failed.

When will the Liberals finally get tough on the criminals responsible for gun violence?

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 a shame to see, once again, Conservatives using the talking points of the gun lobby instead of standing up for victims of crime and standing up to get guns off our streets. We also know that women are disproportionately affected by gun violence. What do Conservatives do? They want more guns on our streets. They cut funds from CBSA to stop the import of illegal guns and then stand in this place acting as if they support victims of crime. It is a shame.

We have committed to get guns off our streets while Conservatives work for the gun lobby.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will read the words of the Toronto Police Association to the Liberal Prime Minister. It said, “Criminals did not get your message. Our communities are experiencing a 45% increase in shootings and a 62% increase in gun-related homicides compared to this time last year. What difference does your handgun ban make when 85% of guns seized by our members can be sourced to the United States?”

“Your statement is out of touch and offensive to victims of crime and police officers everywhere. Whatever you think you’ve done to improve community safety, has not worked.”

When will the Liberals call an election so we can finally bring an end to the crime and chaos they have created in our streets?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, let us talk about Conservative logic. Conservatives think that putting more guns on our streets is going to somehow keep our communities safer. We know that does not work. Their cuts to the CBSA allowing the import of illegal guns is something that we had to clean up. Conservatives care only about the gun lobby and not about Canadians.

We have put in place—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I have been having difficulty hearing the answer to the question, and I would ask hon. members to please allow us to hear the answer. There was a lot of heckling from the moment the member stood up.

Oral Questions

I am going to ask the hon. parliamentary secretary to start from the top.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that, every time I stand in this place and call out Conservative hypocrisy around violence in our communities, they cannot stand it. This is why they try to silence voices like mine, which stand up for women in particular, who are disproportionately affected by gun violence. What Conservatives believe is that more guns on our streets will somehow help keep our communities safe.

We know that what keeps communities safe is getting these guns off of our streets and investing in the CBSA to protect our borders. This is while Conservatives take their talking points from the gun lobby.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the past nine years, the policies of this Liberal government have caused a tragic rise in crime, including drug trafficking, arson and the recruitment of youth into street gangs. Canadians and Quebeckers are living in fear.

However, instead of protecting Quebeckers and taking a stand against this incompetence, the Bloc Québécois continues to support a failing government. This government's inaction will undoubtedly lead to a spike in crime figures. It is time to bring back common sense and call an election.

Do they have the guts to call an election?

• (1510)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe the Conservatives' hypocrisy. They voted against our measure to freeze the handgun market across the country, yet they come here and ask questions about gun violence. It makes no sense.

We know we need to take action. We have in fact taken very concrete measures. We froze the handgun market a year ago. It is starting to work.

Keeping our communities safe will take the co-operation of all parties in the House.

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HEALTH

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Pharmacare Act came into force in Canada this month. Nine million women can now make informed medical decisions about contraceptives without having to worry about the cost.

Can the Minister of Tourism tell Canadians about how the Pharmacare Act guarantees women the reproductive autonomy they deserve?

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her ongoing activism in the area of women's rights.

The coming into force of the Pharmacare Act is a historic moment. This legislation will allow people like my daughter and future generations to choose for themselves and to have access to contraception without having to worry about how to pay for it.

Unlike the Conservatives, who want to take away women's freedom of choice, our government will always support women's autonomy over their bodies, their lives and their future.

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[English]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the Liberal-NDP government, taxes are up, costs are up, corruption is up and time is up.

The Auditor General is finally investigating GC Strategies, which received \$100 million from the government and \$20 million for the arrive scam scandal. That was only one incident of Liberal insider corruption. Others include the green slush fund, McKinsey, Global Affairs Canada and Environment Canada.

Just how much taxpayer money did the Prime Minister give fraudsters and scamsters?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives play with theatrics, we are actually committed to ensuring that our procurement system is something Canadians have trust in. Anybody who has operated without following the rules and the laws should be held accountable; we have said that from the beginning. This is precisely why CBSA has already initiated a number of measures and recommendations and is working with the Auditor General to ensure that there is trust in our procurement system.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, corruption is up, crime is up and time is up.

Yesterday the Auditor General announced that she will be investigating the \$100 million in contracts awarded by the Liberal government to GC Strategies, a two-person IT company that did no IT work but was paid \$20 million for the arrive scam app.

It has been months since the Liberal minister promised to recover the money paid to GC Strategies. When will the Prime Minister get taxpayers their money back?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we welcome the opportunity to get to the bottom of the situation to ensure trust in our procurement system.

Let us also be clear with Canadians on the fact that it was the Conservative Party that first initiated contracts with GC Strategies. Therefore I really hope the Auditor General looks back and ensures that any wrongdoing is also looked at from the beginning of the contracts with that company, because all Canadians deserve to know that there is trust in our procurement system.

The Conservatives went quiet all of a sudden.

• (1515)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two million Canadians are lining up at food banks every month, while Liberal cronies are lining up to pad their pockets.

Let us remember that GC Strategies, a two-person company, was given \$20 million to develop the ArriveCAN app, when it had no IT expertise. According to the latest news, the Auditor General has announced that she is going to investigate the \$100 million in contracts awarded to GC Strategies. GC Strategies benefited from Liberal largesse at taxpayers' expense.

How many Liberal cronies lined their pockets by emptying the pockets of Canadian families?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, has already provided a very good answer to that question.

However, there is one question that we still do not have an answer for. A few moments ago, my colleague talked about children who are going hungry, but his riding is home to many organizations that are fighting to ensure that children go to school in the morning with full bellies. How does he explain the fact that his Conservative leader describes helping children go to school with a full belly as bureaucracy? How is he going to tell educators and teachers that feeding children who go to school in the morning is feeding bureaucracy?

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, access to contraceptives like the birth control pill improves equality and provides women with the ability to decide if or when they will start a family. We know that cost is the single most significant barrier for women and gender-diverse Canadians in accessing these medicines.

Can the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth please share with the House how the Pharmacare Act will impact Canadians?

Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, access to contraception should not

Oral Questions

be a luxury but a fundamental right. The Pharmacare Act provides women and gender-diverse people with the freedom to make their own choices about their bodies and not worry about the cost, but Conservatives do not want Canadians to have free access to contraceptives or reproductive freedom. How do we know this? We know it because the members opposite continue to introduce anti-choice petitions and bills.

Let us make no mistake; Conservatives will cut free contraceptives. On this side of the House, we will always stand for choice.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives created the low-wage temporary foreign worker stream, and the Liberals fuelled it to help rich CEOs. They restricted workers to one employer with closed work permits; subjected migrant workers to abuse, wage theft and exploitation; and suppressed wages for Canadians. Chain CEOs are ramping up exploitation and abuse. Workers like Rowell Pailan have said that their boss, Canadian Tire, paid them less wages and threatened them if they told anyone.

Will the Liberals stop caving to CEOs, and end the abuse, with open work permits?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have been very clear in the chamber and at committee, there is a new sheriff in town. Businesses need to be very careful and need to make sure that they are respecting workers from coast to coast to coast.

Stay tuned later today for more changes to the temporary foreign worker program. We are serious about making sure that the program is a program of last resort. Jobs belong in the hands of Canadians, of youth, of newcomers and of people who already live here. We are going to make sure the temporary foreign program is cleaned up. That is what we promised Canadians. It is exactly what we are going to do.

* * *

SPORT

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Bloc and the Liberals joined together in committee to cover up the soccer drone scandal that took place during the Olympics. The Liberals refused to investigate how this happened, and they are happy to ignore the problem; that is apparently good enough for the Bloc, which shamefully joined them. Canadians deserve better. They deserve to know that this will not happen again.

Tribute

Why will the government not support accountability? Why will they not listen to the players, the soccer community and fans who want to ensure that the focus is on the tremendous effort on the pitch and not on the actions of a few people and institutions that do not get it that soccer, like any sport, should be about fair play and integrity?

• (1520)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the committee of course is free to determine its own business, but I can assure the House that upon learning of the scandal, the government took immediate action and suspended the funding to Canada Soccer for the coaches who were implicated.

There has also been direct action taken by FIFA, by the Canadian Olympic Committee and by Canada Soccer itself, and I can assure the member we are watching the situation closely.

* * *

[*Translation*]

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF ATTACK ON PARLIAMENT HILL

The Speaker: It being 3:20 p.m., pursuant to the order made on October 21, I invite all hon. members to rise and observe a moment of silence to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the attack on Parliament Hill.

[*A moment of silence observed*]

[*English*]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago today, Canada was in shock. Our capital, the centre of Canadian democracy, was the target of a cowardly and shameful terrorist attack aimed at both the National War Memorial and Parliament Hill.

Corporal Nathan Cirillo, standing sentry at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, was killed, and several others were injured.

[*Translation*]

Unfortunately, this was not the only tragic event that happened in Canada that week. Two days earlier, Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent had been killed in a separate attack in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec.

Today, I invite all members and all Canadians to join me in honouring these two devoted members of the Canadian Armed Forces. We offer our deepest condolences to their families, their loved ones and their fellow armed forces members.

[*English*]

Let us never forget this tragedy and the victims who were targeted because of their commitment to their country and to Canadians. It is a reminder of the sacrifices that members of the Canadian Armed Forces made and continue to make to keep all of us safe, sacrifices that are in fact symbolized by the National War Memorial. Whether during operations around the globe or while responding to natural disasters here at home or even in our very capital, service

members put their lives at risk every single day so that we can all live in a peaceful, safe and democratic society.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the paramedics, police officers and those members of the Parliamentary Protective Service who rushed towards danger to protect Canadians. I am thinking notably of Constable Samearn Son, who was shot and injured while doing so, and who is with us today. I know that I am not the only one who remains inspired by the incredible courage that Sam showed that day.

When remembering these events, I also think of former sergeant-at-arms Kevin Vickers, who by acting decisively was then able to bring the attack to an end. I think all Canadians should be proud of their Parliamentary Protective Service.

They should also be proud of the courage of their fellow Canadians, passersby who, motivated by their compassion, acted to help and held Corporal Nathan Cirillo in their arms during his final moments.

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

The solidarity that Canadians showed during this tragic event is also a reminder. It is a reminder that anyone who tries to attack Canada and our democracy is doomed to fail. Canada will always respond the same way. We will come out closer, stronger and more united. We will come out even more dedicated to the principles and values that define our society: freedom, peace and openness. When the chips are down, Canadians will always choose to stand against hate and violence.

[*English*]

Today, let us take the time to mourn Corporal Nathan Cirillo and Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and remember who they were: proud, devoted, selfless and brave patriots.

As we approach Remembrance Day, let us think of all the sacrifices made by members of our Canadian Armed Forces past and present, and let us take every opportunity to thank them for all that they do for each and every one of us.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, ten years ago, we witnessed an attack on our democracy.

The attack began on October 20, 2014, in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, with the murder of a courageous soldier, Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent. Mr. Vincent served his country. He wore the Canadian uniform. He had a family and friends who loved him but lost him. Two days later, there was another attack here on Parliament Hill, and, perhaps worse, at our great memorial to Canadian soldiers.

*Tribute**[English]*

The terrorist attack of October 22, 2014, took the life of a courageous Canadian, Corporal Nathan Cirillo, who was standing on guard for those who had fallen standing on guard for our country. There he was at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, ambushed and shot, lying bleeding in the arms of a half a dozen courageous Ottawa residents who held him and told him “You are so loved”. Moments later, the life would drain out of his body. Some might have looked at him and said that he was an ordinary Canadian. Certainly, when I saw the picture of him a few days later in the newspaper with his muscles bulging after a trip to the gym, I thought that he could have been like any young Canadian, but he was not. He was not ordinary at all, he was extraordinary, as are every single one of the men and women who put on the uniform of our forces.

The terrorist, who then made his way to Parliament Hill in a carjacked vehicle, burst in through the front door. I remember being in the caucus meeting of the then Conservative government and hearing large crunching sounds, which I learned later to be the repetitive echo of a single gunshot bouncing off the oval-shaped ceiling of the rotunda back down onto the marble floors. That was the first shot inside Parliament, and it was a shot that bore wound, but it could have been so much worse. When this terrorist entered, he planned to cause maximum carnage, but there was someone waiting for him. One of our courageous guards, Samearn Son, saw the gun, grabbed the assailant, pushed the gun downward and took a bullet in the ankle, giving his compatriots enough warning time to draw their own weapons and take cover behind the large limestone pillars that hold Parliament up. Had he not done that, it is almost certain that the gunman would have taken more lives.

We did not know about the story of Samearn Son, because he did not tell anyone. Instead, he quietly hobbled out of the building towards the abandoned hijacked vehicle to see if there were any other terrorists. There may well have been other gunmen at that point taking aim at him, but he fearlessly continued his work. He did not tell anyone what he did, he did no interviews, and the only quote I can find of him from that day was “I’ll survive.” He got into an ambulance and made his way to the hospital and quietly went back home to recover with his family. That is the calm, humble, courageous character that embodies the best of Canada. Samearn Son is Canada’s son.

The terrorist would proceed through the Hall of Honour. I remember those firecracker sounds going off. We did not know at the time that those were gunshots fired by our security forces, thank God, bringing the terrorist to the ground and ultimately to his deserved fate.

I want to thank each and every one of our security members who fought so hard to protect us while putting their lives at risk on that day: The first responders who arrived quickly on the scene to minimize the damage done and the lives lost, the military members, the RCMP and countless others who protected us all and stood with us on that day. I want to thank all parliamentarians who showed courage and camaraderie in coming together, responding to defend this institution of Parliament and to grieve the loss of those who had defended us.

What we learned on that day is that if we can see over the horizon, it is because we stand on the shoulders of giants, like Corporal Cirillo, like Patrice Vincent, like Samearn Son and like the countless other heroes who defended us on that day. May we remember today, every day, the precious gift that is our parliamentary democracy and the even more precious gift that are those who defend it.

- (1530)

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ):

Mr. Speaker, ten years ago today, on Wednesday, October 22, 2014, Parliament experienced one of the darkest days in its long history, a day that would forever change life in the House of Commons.

Ten years ago, a terrorist killed a man just steps from Parliament before bursting into Centre Block targeting elected representatives with deadly intentions. Ten years ago, Corporal Nathan Cirillo lost his life in a completely senseless attack, when he was shot by a deranged jihadist sympathizer. The Bloc’s thoughts go out to Corporal Cirillo’s loved ones. His life should never have ended that day, at the age of 24, because of a senseless act.

As Quebeckers, we cannot help but remember that the Ottawa attack came barely two days after another traumatic incident in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu. Just two days earlier, another individual inspired by radical Islamism mowed down two soldiers in a parking lot. One survived but the other, Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, lost his life. We remember him today, too. Our thoughts are still with his loved ones, ten years later.

All parliamentarians, all staff and even people who were working in the area around the Hill will remember October 22, 2014, for the rest of their lives. That was the day all of downtown Ottawa wondered whether we were safe, as we were all locked down in our offices until the end of the day. It was the day a madman killed a soldier and then stole a minister’s limo to get to Centre Block.

It was a Wednesday, a caucus day, when Parliament is more crowded than any other day of the week. That was the day this man started a shootout with parliamentary security in the Hall of Honour, right by the library. It was the day Sergeant-at-Arms Kevin Vickers and the police heroically opened fire and brought down the shooter.

History will always remember the heroism demonstrated that day by Mr. Vickers and by members of Parliament’s law enforcement service, particularly Corporal Curtis Barrett and Constable Son. It was a very heroic moment, but it did not mark the end of the crisis because nobody knew at that time that the shooter was acting alone. It was the end of the threat to Parliament, but the beginning of a long day for all MPs, staffers and House personnel, who feared for their safety.

Tribute

No one knew what was really going on. We were told to keep our offices locked, to stay away from the windows and to close the curtains. We called our loved ones, our spouses, our children. We wanted to reassure them. It is very difficult to reassure loved ones when we have no idea what is actually going on. Finally, though, we were told that it was safe to leave and go home.

Life in the House of Commons changed that day. It changed for the many people who suffered post-traumatic stress following that horrible event, which continues to leave a mark 10 years on. It also changed with the creation, the following year, of the Parliamentary Protective Service in its current form and with the heavily tightened security measures around the Hill, which are still in place this fall. Most of all, Parliament lost a lot of its innocence that day.

● (1535)

Gone are the days when we believed such things would not happen here on Parliament Hill, which used to be more like a tourist attraction with a laid-back atmosphere. The change is probably for the best, considering the current climate of hostility and threats against elected members. It will forever be deplorable and tragic that, in order to get to this point, Nathan Cirillo, a young man in the prime of his life, had to lose his life to a terrorist. We will never forget him or what happened on Wednesday, October 22, 2014.

In closing, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to thank all the Parliamentary Protective Service officers who are here with us every day and who put themselves at risk to keep us, our employees and all the dedicated House of Commons staff safe, as this commemoration clearly reminds us.

We thank them.

● (1540)

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the New Democratic Party and the Parliament of Canada, I pay tribute to Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo, the soldiers who gave their lives 10 years ago, and I extend our deepest love and sympathy for their families and comrades who still grieve.

Today, we pause to remember a day of deep trauma and violence, but it was also a day of heroism and human decency. When our Parliament was attacked, all of us were there sharing the same load and the same determination, from the cooks in the cafeteria, the cleaners and our security to the most important cabinet ministers on the front bench. All of us were there.

I remember every minute of that day; at least I think I do. It began when the gunshot rang out in the Hall of Honour. That shot injured our parliamentary security hero Samearn Son, who, in taking that shot, bought valuable time. He represents the best of who we are as a nation.

I remember when the shot rang out, and in our caucus room, there was no way to lock the doors. We were not prepared for something like this. We feared, hearing the shots, that we were facing multiple shooters and a hostage situation. We were all trying to figure out what to do next. Alain Gervais put his body against the

doors to protect us. There was a bullet lodged in that door. He represents the best of who we are as a nation and I thank him.

I think of Joël Lepage, the guard on the other side of the hall, and Jean-Benoit Guindon, who was at the library. They represent the best of our country and I thank them because they continue to serve Parliament. I also thank all those who were there that day who are no longer here.

I thank Sergeant-at-Arms Kevin Vickers, who has always been larger than life. He put his life on the line and took the shooter out and never spoke about it. He just did what had to be done.

It was a day of chaos and uncertainty. There were so many rumours that day. We thought there were multiple shooters. In the chaos, we did not know what we were dealing with, but one thing was really clear, and this is what I want to stress today: the incredible heroism of ordinary people, including the frontline responders, the staff here and the people of Ottawa. People stood along the barricaded streets and shouted out encouragement as we were trying to get out of lockdown. People came down to be with us.

I did not sleep much that night. Early the next morning, I felt the need to go to the cenotaph in the darkness to be where Nathan Cirillo had been killed, and there were hundreds of people already there. They were there from all walks of life. I have never forgotten that moment because I thought, this is who we are as a nation. This is what we do in the face of violence. We do not return hate.

We came together as a city, as a nation. That is what we have to remember from this day.

I mention this because there are heroes who have not been given their due. I think of Barbara Winters, who, when the shots rang out, did not run away. She ran into the danger. She held Nathan Cirillo and told him over and over again, "You are loved." What a beautiful moment. That is who we are. This is the best of our nation. I praise Martin Magnan, who came forward to comfort Nathan Cirillo, and Margaret Lerhe, the nurse who was there in the midst of the chaos.

These people represent the best of us and there is unfinished business in the Parliament of Canada because they have never been properly given their due. Sending people a certificate might be a nice idea, but we do not send a certificate to people who comfort and keep our warriors alive as long as possible. We recognize what they did and we recognize the trauma they carry to this day. I ask my colleagues across all party lines to come together to find a way to recognize not just our parliamentary heroes but the civilians who were there on the front line that day, because they represent the best of who we are as a nation, and we need to remember them.

I would like to conclude by saying there is another reason we need to remember this day. We are watching, around the world, growing radicalization, disinformation and hate. Words matter. They have an impact. When I see the rising threats against everyone from municipal councillors to people going to work in Parliament, words matter. It is incumbent upon all of us in this Parliament to call that out, because on that day, two brave people died.

• (1545)

That day, people were traumatized by violence and disinformation and hate. Words matter. We cannot let that happen again, and we will only let that happen if we forget the lessons of October 22, 2014. The real lesson we have to remember is that that day, despite the chaos and uncertainty, brought out the best of who we are as a nation. It showed the world what Canada is. Canada stands up at times of hatred. Canada reaches out. Canadians were there for each other. That is the lesson we need to remember every day.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saainich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues for their own memories.

[*Translation*]

That was 10 years ago, but, as my colleagues have already said, the tragedy had begun on October 20 with the murder of Patrice Vincent.

[*English*]

A lot of us were here that day. I really resonated with the words of our colleagues who remember that day. I remember, as the leader of the official opposition was saying, what it was like inside the Conservative caucus room. For those who never served in Centre Block, it is almost incredible to believe that through the unlocked doors of the reading room were the prime minister, the cabinet and the Conservative caucus. All of those doors on three walls opened outward. We could not lock them.

Across the hall, in the railway committee room, which, fortunately, had double doors, was the NDP caucus. As was just remembered by the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay, Alain Gervais of the protective service stood to guard those doors. Thank God it was a double door, because the bullet went through one door and lodged in the second one.

So many individuals showed so much courage. The unbearable murder of young Corporal Nathan Cirillo will stay with us always, as will the courage of Samearn Son, who, as I understand it from talking to people in those days, actually had the barrel of a gun against his chest and pushed it downward to where it fired into his leg and his foot. He protected all of us, unarmed.

Also, I remember friends in the Conservative caucus who had histories in law enforcement. David Wilks and Shelly Glover organized themselves within that room to protect their colleagues. There was heroism on all sides, bravery, courage and many tears, but there was never an inquiry. I will add now that it is never too late to actually look with fresh eyes at what happened and learn those lessons.

With that, I want to again thank our former Sergeant-at-Arms Kevin Vickers and resonate with what he has recently said in the media: Yes, there are still lessons to be learned.

Tribute

God bless Canada. God bless everyone who, on that day, showed such courage.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Hon. colleagues, thank you for your kind words on this sad anniversary.

Many of us remember that day 10 years ago, and many of us can picture that day 10 years ago, but it affects us all.

We all mourn the terrible and senseless death of Corporal Nathan Cirillo. We honour him and remember his sacrifice and his service to our country. Our hearts and prayers are with his loved ones, who miss him still.

[*English*]

We also remember and honour the strength and courage of our Parliamentary Protective Service personnel on duty that day, our heroes who put their own lives at risk without hesitation to keep us all safe. We have colleagues serving today who bear the scars of that day. Out of respect to all members of the Parliamentary Protective Service and the RCMP, I will not individually name them, but on behalf of all of us, I want them to know that we see them, we recognize them and we recognize their service and devotion to this place. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank them all.

If I may, I would also like to recognize three ordinary Canadians who the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay directly brought to our attention. These incredible Canadians, in an extraordinary way, stepped into a dangerous situation and provided succour to Corporal Cirillo in his hour of need. Margaret Lerhe was a nurse who tried to save Corporal Cirillo's life, Martin Magnan held the corporal's hand and Barbara Winters told Corporal Cirillo in the final moments of his life that he was loved.

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

We also remember all those who helped our community in various ways that day and thereafter. We thank them. We thank those who ran to Corporal Cirillo and tried to save him, as well as those who stood by him with love and compassion in his last moments.

[*English*]

Countless others, ordinary people and others in uniform, found themselves living an impossibly dangerous moment and acted with bravery and humanity to do whatever they could to help others. Ten years later, the healing continues. Some scars can be seen, others are invisible, but all are lasting. We never deny them. We recognize them and try to come together as a community to find healing and peace.

Privilege

[Translation]

Canada's Parliament is the seat of our democracy. Any attack in this place is an attack on all Canadians. The safety of each and every one of us and all who visit us is a constant priority for our parliamentary community. We can also commit to doing our part to contribute to a respectful workplace and a community that cares for its members and leaves no one behind.

[English]

We recognize that the attack 10 years ago led to a loss of innocence. We cannot take it back, but we can move forward knowing we share a commitment to ensuring that Parliament Hill, our workplace, is safe and secure for all of us who work here and all Canadians who come here to see their democracy in action.

Thank you for your attention.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[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.

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not far-fetched at all to expect that, once results are returned, we will once again uncover more Liberal corruption.

Let us not forget to return to the green slush fund scandal, because there is still more to unpack here. In 2019, former Liberal industry minister Navdeep Bains began appointing executives with severe conflicts of interest to the board of SDTC. Conflicts of interest were rampant from the beginning, but they got worse with time, with members of the SDTC board voting on projects that they stood to gain from. Again, this was \$390 million of taxpayer money wasted on a slush fund that doled out money for projects to enrich Liberal insiders who should have been ineligible to receive funding. This scandal highlights the reckless mismanagement of taxpayer dollars and the government's failure to uphold even the most basic standards of governance.

While the Liberal government has been busy covering up scandals and protecting its insiders, Canadian families have been left to bear the brunt of its policies. Life under the Prime Minister and his NDP-Liberal government has never been more expensive. Housing costs have doubled; grocery costs have soared, and inflation is eroding the value of every dollar that Canadians earn.

Apart from scandal and corruption, we also have a government that is completely incompetent. A prime example of this is the NDP-Liberal carbon tax, which has made life more expensive for every Canadian. The Parliamentary Budget Officer's report confirms what many have suspected all along: Canadians are worse off under this tax. In Newfoundland and Labrador, households are paying an additional \$652 a year because of the carbon tax. In Ontario, it is \$903. Families in Saskatchewan are paying \$894 more; in Al-

berta, it is an extra \$697 a year. These are real taxpayer dollars being taken out of the pockets of hard-working Canadians, all for a policy that has failed to achieve any of its environmental goals.

The carbon tax has driven up the cost of everything, from gas to groceries to home heating. This year alone, families will be paying \$700 more for food while millions of Canadians are lining up at food banks. All the while, the government continues to waste and squander public money on failed policies and scandalous dealings.

The Liberals have even gone so far as to hide internal government numbers showing that the carbon tax will cost Canadians \$30.5 billion by 2030. That is an extra \$1,824 per family per year. In addition to taxing Canadians to the point that they cannot even afford to drive, the government is wasting billions of dollars chasing an electric vehicle mandate that Canadian consumers are just not interested in. I have driven an EV, and even on a reasonable commute across the most developed area of Ontario, the infrastructure to support vehicles is just not available. Fast chargers are few and far between; a lot of times, they are mysteriously broken. In some cases, the price to charge the car from empty is actually more than it would cost to fill a tank full of gasoline.

Let us consider the cost to even get one of these vehicles. It is absolutely prohibitive to the vast majority of Canadians. Even further, the government has slapped a luxury tax on a few of the EVs that have any form of functionality. It is a scam, and it gets worse when we consider the massive investments in factories that the government is making when they are not even going to fully employ Canadian labour. That is right: We have learned that, after committing billions of dollars to build electric vehicles, the factories intend to employ foreign labour. While Canadians struggle to make ends meet, the government is either punishing or ignoring them.

Meanwhile, we see that the streets of our cities have become more dangerous. Violent crime has increased 39% since the Prime Minister took office. The justice system, once a source of pride in this country, has become a revolving door for repeat offenders. Instead of addressing these issues, the NDP-Liberal government has weakened laws, making it easier for dangerous criminals to go free. Our communities are no longer safe, and families no longer feel secure in their own neighbourhoods.

Privilege

• (1555)

The government has failed to protect Canadians. Instead of taking action to stop the rising tide of violence, they have chosen to focus on ideological crusades that have done nothing to make our streets safer.

In fact, just yesterday, the Toronto Police Association posted the following message on X in response to the Prime Minister's boasting about banning handguns two years ago: "Criminals did not get your message. Our communities are experiencing a 45% increase in shootings and a 62% increase in gun-related homicides compared to this time last year. What difference does your handgun ban make when 85% of guns seized by our members can be sourced to the United States?"

The NDP-Liberal coalition is simply not worth the cost, the crime or the corruption that they bring. After nine years, it is clear that they have failed to deliver on their promises. Instead, they have delivered higher taxes, higher costs, higher crime rates and a government plagued by scandal after scandal. The only solution is a government that will put Canadians first and that will end the waste, the corruption and the inflationary policies that are strangling families across this country.

Only a common-sense Conservative government can restore accountability and trust in government. We will end the corruption, clean up the mess and give Canadians the answers they deserve. We will ensure that taxpayer dollars are used for the benefit of Canadians, not for lining the pockets of Liberal insiders. We will axe the carbon tax that is making life more expensive, and we will get back to work on building homes, fixing the budget and stopping the crime that is destroying our communities.

The NDP-Liberal government has had nine years to show Canadians what they can do, and they have shown that they absolutely cannot be trusted. They have put their own interests ahead of Canada, hidden the truth rather than face accountability and wasted taxpayer dollars on pipe dreams and vanity projects while Canadians struggle.

It is time to bring an end to this corruption and restore integrity, transparency and common sense to our government. Canadians deserve a government that will put them first, and it is time to bring home a common-sense Conservative government. We will axe the tax, restore trust and rebuild our great country. Canada and Canadians deserve nothing less.

• (1600)

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech. Her comments on the cost of carbon pollution and attacks on the electrical vehicle industry show that the Conservatives deny that climate change is actually happening. Over the last two years, despite the attacks from Conservatives, we have continued to invest in Canadians. Today we are seeing the results. Inflation is down to 1.6%. Interest rates will continue to fall for the fourth time tomorrow. The consumer confidence index is rising to a 30-month high.

Government action is resulting in what is good for Canadians, which is totally different from the picture the hon. member is trying to paint. Could she comment on how that is possible?

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, what I hear from my constituents in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex and across the country in places I have lived is that they are actually worse off under the Liberal government. The Liberal members claim all these policies, and they have all these ideologies. However, in reality, Canadians are far worse off under the current government. The carbon tax is just one example.

The member across the aisle should come to a rural community. I challenge you to come shadow somebody in a rural community, even for a weekend, and see how people in the rural parts of this country live. It is much different from your little bubble in the big city of Toronto, Montreal or wherever it is. We actually have to commute places, and we do not have options for public transit. We only have the option of driving to different places. The cost of living under the carbon tax makes life way more expensive for those of us who live in rural areas of Canada.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member that she is to address all questions and comments through the Speaker and not directly to the members.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, in the weeks leading up to the last budget, the federal government launched a \$250-million program to address the homelessness crisis in Canada. A promise was made to end this crisis within the next few years. Today, however, there is still no agreement, in particular with Quebec. Last week we learned that the number of people who died in Quebec's streets has tripled in the past five years. They died from exposure to cold or overdoses.

For the last few weeks, we have been hashing over something that everyone in the House agrees on, except, of course, the government. We agree on the need for more transparency and accountability. Does my colleague not think that it is time to move on, to vote on this issue, so that we can start discussing other topics like the country's housing and homelessness crises?

Privilege

• (1605)

[English]

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, I do not know what is more important than talking about the NDP-Liberal government, which does not want to be transparent with Canadians and is refusing to provide unredacted documents to the RCMP so that it can be investigated for misspending taxpayer dollars. Do we want to talk about homelessness, unaffordability and the cost of living for Canadians? The government has taken hard-earned taxpayer money, wasted it and given it to Liberal insider friends for projects that do not benefit Canadians. That money would have been better spent on seniors or on helping lift people out of poverty. Instead, the government has put them into poverty by wasting away taxpayer dollars and making life so unaffordable for Canadians that they are having a hard time making ends meet and are lining up at food banks in record numbers.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, both the Liberals and the Conservatives are filibustering by having this endless debate rather than focusing on issues, such as maybe approving the Kivalliq hydro-fibre link project in Nunavut. That would help fight climate change and get Nunavut communities off diesel.

Does the member agree that the Conservatives are just as responsible for the state the House of Commons is in?

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, that is a pretty rich comment coming from a member of the NDP, who is no better than the Liberal government. In fact, they are the ones who have been propping up the government for the last four years. If we want to talk about corruption, the NDP members are just as guilty as the Liberals because they have been the accomplices in propping up the government while the Liberals continue to squander and waste taxpayer money.

Now the government is refusing to give unredacted documents to the RCMP so that this can be investigated further. We know there is wrongdoing there; obviously, they are hiding it. If they did not have anything to hide, why would they not just hand over the documents?

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to bring us back to the topic of the day: the fact that over \$400 million of taxpayer funds was essentially stolen. The Auditor General found 186 conflicts of interest where Liberal appointees, the Liberal chair and other members of the board of directors, funnelled \$400 million of taxpayer money to their own companies.

I am going to ask this colleague the same thing as what I have asked other colleagues. The Liberals would like us to get this to committee so that they can study it. However, when somebody steals from our hon. colleague, does she call a committee or does she call the RCMP?

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, I actually have an email here from a constituent of mine. His name is John, and he asks that same question: “How can someone withhold evidence and not be in jail? I steal a chocolate bar and I go to jail, and yet politicians are stealing our money and nothing happens. We need a significant change in this country. We need people who will actually work for Canadians and not their pocketbooks.”

My colleague is absolutely right. We would call the police if somebody were stealing from us. In this instance, the government needs to hand over those unredacted documents and give them to the police. This is not a matter for a committee to look at; we are far beyond that at this point. We need the RCMP to look into this corruption. With 186 instances of mismanagement and of irregularities, something has to give. The Liberals need to give their unredacted documents to the RCMP.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, false facts and misinformation are all we hear coming from the Conservative benches. If we go to the last question, the member said we appointed a Liberal as the chair. The chair the member is referring to was an adviser to Stephen Harper and Brian Mulroney, both Conservatives, and Jim Flaherty, who is another Conservative, and contributes thousands and thousands of dollars to the Conservative Party. However, that does not matter; the facts do not matter.

For the Conservatives, this is nothing more than a cheap political game they play at a great cost. Tens of thousands of dollars have been wasted because of this game. However, it is not the only game. Here is another game. To quote iPolitics, the Conservative leader is “playing with Canadians’ by refusing to get a top-level security clearance and receive classified briefings on foreign interference, according to one national security expert.” Again, this is a national expert who advises both Liberal and Conservative governments. It is nothing but games.

Why will the leader of the Conservative Party not do the honourable thing and get a security clearance so that he can at least be in tune with foreign interference?

• (1610)

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, I am going to read something interesting. My colleague across the way wants to talk about facts, so here is a fact. A whistle-blower said this to the public accounts 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.” The Conservatives trust the whistle-blower, and that is why we need to turn these documents over to the RCMP for an investigation now.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my question for my hon. colleague is very clear and simple. I know it has been asked already, but I want an answer. Why will her leader not get a security clearance so he can be briefed on information about foreign interference in this country? Is it because he has something to hide? Is it because he is afraid that he will not pass the security clearance, will not get the security clearance? We know that if he becomes prime minister, he will not need to get one because by default a prime minister has one. Why will he not get one now?

Privilege

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, Canadians are more concerned about being able to put the next meal on their table to feed their children. Canadians are more concerned about being able to pay the heating bill about to come in the mail as the weather turns colder. Canadians are concerned about being able to pay their mortgage right now. Every single policy out of the Liberal government in the last number of years has driven Canadians deeper and deeper into debt, and they are having a harder time making ends meet. That is the fault of the NDP-Liberal government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss the Speaker's decision concerning the production of documents related to the scandal surrounding Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC, as ordered by the House. The House ordered the production of documents concerning this scandal so that they could be turned over to the law clerk and, potentially, to authorities for investigation.

The process is not complicated. The House has powers that override any other entity, but the Privy Council Office, which reports directly to the Prime Minister, decided to circumvent this order by asking the departments to redact the documents before sending them along. This was a breach of members' privilege, because the order issued by the House did not call for redactions. This scandal raises serious concerns about the management of taxpayers' money and the governance of public funds.

We have just returned from a constituency week. For three days, my team and I set up a passport booth to help people who had not had the privilege of travelling and who could not understand the forms or fill them out properly. We wanted to make it easier for them to get a passport and, in some cases, to avoid extra steps, like taking photos and photocopying their ID. My main goal was to meet with my constituents. Over those three days, we interacted with more than 500 people.

One thing was clear. Canadians are tired of the Liberal government. This government is at the end of its life. It is out of touch with the reality facing people in Quebec's regions. When a 10-year passport costs \$160 and a five-year passport costs \$120, some people will not apply for a 10-year passport because they cannot afford the extra \$40. Then they turn on the news and see the CEO of CBC/Radio-Canada billing taxpayers \$6,000 for a personal vacation. This arrogant attitude is not surprising. As elected members, we must set an example.

It is a symptom of Liberal governance, under which no one is accountable and someone can be called out by the Ethics Commissioner without any consequences. It is also typical of this laissez-faire attitude, this lack of ethics and judgment on the part of certain individuals who managed the green fund. People approached me during those three days to ask what I was doing. They said that the Liberals' management of the green fund was worse than the sponsorship scandal.

Let us review the facts to put them in perspective. Twenty years ago, in May 2002, the then auditor general of Canada, Sheila Fraser, began her investigation into what became known as the sponsorship scandal. Ms. Fraser submitted a damning report to the Liberal government of the day in November 2003. The government pro-

rogued the parliamentary session to delay the tabling of the report, which was not made public until February 2004. Ms. Fraser estimated that roughly \$100 million of the \$250 million allocated to the sponsorship program between 1997 and 2002 had been misappropriated.

Let us now look at a few facts about the SDTC scandal that have Canadians saying that history is repeating itself. In November 2022, whistle-blowers reported their internal concerns about unethical practices at SDTC to the Auditor General.

● (1615)

In September 2023, the whistle-blowers took the allegations public, and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry agreed to suspend SDTC funding. In November 2023, the Auditor General announced an audit, and in June 2024 the Auditor General's report was released, finding severe governance failures at SDTC.

The Auditor General found that Sustainable Development Technology Canada gave \$58 million to 10 ineligible projects that, on several occasions, could not demonstrate 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, while \$58 million was given to projects without ensuring contribution terms were met.

On June 10, the House adopted a motion calling for the production of various documents related to Sustainable Development Technology Canada to be turned over to the RCMP for review. On September 26, the Speaker issued a ruling on the question of privilege and found that the privileges of the House had, in fact, been breached. Now the Prime Minister is working on keeping his job instead of working for Canadians. Prorogation is looming over Parliament.

This is not just about numbers or about wasting taxpayers' money. It is about trust, fairness and accountability. Canadians deserve a government that respects them and that does not hide behind bureaucratic excuses. Rather than answering for its actions, the government has redacted documents, as it is wont to do. The government wants to block investigations to protect those who are at fault. According to the Auditor General, the government made no attempt to uncover criminal intent. How can we trust a government that covers up its own failures?

This week, we are celebrating small business owners during Small Business Week. The SDTC scandal once again shows that this Liberal government is picking who the winners are and who the losers are. What could be more frustrating for a business owner who sacrifices so much time to grow their business than to see on the evening news that some entrepreneurs with privileged connections are finding it easy to get subsidies?

Privilege

I take the time to visit the SMEs in my riding. I take the time to talk about their situation, to take an interest in the owners' lives. Customers have no money. Sales are down, and popular products are often the ones with the lowest profit margins. Businesses are struggling to keep up with expenses that are rising faster than inflation.

• (1620)

What they see and hear is the Auditor General of Canada blaming their government for wasting money.

Canadian entrepreneurs are shocked by the government's actions, and I understand. I even understand the impact it can have on their mental health. One of them told me he cannot sleep at night. He invested everything and did everything he could, but he has no cash left. He also told me that he could not help but feel that he does not know the right people or is not in the right riding when he thinks about the SDTC scandal or the huge sums invested in Taiga Motors in Shawinigan. Winning conditions need to be restored for everyone. People need justice and fairness, as well as confidence in the future. The green fund and the financial failure at Taiga Motors are not the only concerning federal investments for the people of my riding of Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

The government also invested large sums of money in Elysis technology. Some people are telling me that the government would have done better in terms of governance and monitoring if the funds had been used to serve the best interests of Canadians. For example, I was told that the Department of Innovation, Science and Industry could have required the National Research Council of Canada to assess the project and play a role in leading it and setting policy directions, as well as executing certain aspects of the work.

Naturally, such large investments demand a great deal of prudence. The Liberals, of course, are completely unfamiliar with economic prudence. This is clearly evident in the debt and deficits that are consistently higher than their forecasts, each and every time.

This government is living on borrowed time, with the complicity of the Bloc Québécois. It is trying its best to fight its last battles, but they are purely ideological, like their decision to issue the woodland caribou order.

This government, which claims to be environmentalist, gives out money allocated for sustainable development without any obligation to achieve results, while it withholds hundreds of millions of dollars promised to Quebec for biodiversity protection. Workers, business owners and forestry communities are paying the price for this fight. Under the Liberals, it is not the workers or the business owners or forestry communities that will benefit from these funds. We can be sure of that. It is safe to say that there are not a lot of Liberal supporters in the regions in Quebec.

The government is allowing the forestry sector to wither away. It is allowing the European Union to eat into our market share, although it had plenty of money, given the astronomical sums that were squandered in the green fund. That money was needed to harvest more of the wood that was burned by the forest fires. That money could have been used to make our forests more fire resilient and to better adapt to climate change.

• (1625)

That money could have been used to improve our performance in adding value to forest products. It could have been used to develop new markets or new products from species that will thrive in a changing climate.

Canadian families are struggling every day to keep a roof over their heads, to put food on the table and to heat their homes. Meanwhile, the government is misappropriating hundreds of millions of dollars to line its friends' pockets. This is unacceptable and intolerable. We have a right to see the hidden documents. We have a right to understand why this money, our money, is being used to fund companies that are close to power, while we, the people, are struggling to maintain a decent life in a country where everything is becoming out of reach.

This country is not a Liberal family business. Canada belongs to Canadians. Every dollar we pay in taxes must be spent on making life better for everyone, not on lining the pockets of a select few. We need to demand that these documents be handed over, so we can get to the bottom of this and the RCMP can investigate without obstruction. It is a matter of justice for all.

The Auditor General revealed that 82% of Sustainable Development Technology Canada's financial transactions over a five-year period were tainted by conflicts of interest. That means \$330 million worth of taxpayers' money went to companies in which board members had a direct or indirect interest. Publicly funded initiatives such as Sustainable Development Technology Canada must have the confidence of the public and investors to ensure sustainable and transparent economic development across the country. If Sustainable Development Technology Canada's practices continue to be unworthy of this trust, projects critical to our collective future may be stalled. We need to take a moment to reflect on what that really means. If Canadians lose faith in their government and its institutions, that puts our democracy at risk.

How can we build a strong and sustainable future if we are surrounded by an atmosphere of mistrust and cynicism? It is crucial that everything about these practices comes to light to ensure that investments in strategic sectors such as clean technology are made in a fair and transparent manner. This scandal tarnishes the credibility of the management of public funds at the national level, but it also has a direct impact on the future of all Canadians.

We cannot let this government continue to rob us of our future. We have to say enough is enough. That is why we are demanding full transparency. Canadians deserve the truth. They have a right to know where their money is going and to demand a government that respects them, a government that will put an end to corruption. Only common-sense Conservatives will do that. We have seen too many scandals, too much waste and too much secrecy. We will put an end to this corruption and put power back in the hands of Canadians. Together—

Privilege

• (1630)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I must interrupt the hon. member because his time has expired. However, he will be able to add to his remarks during questions and comments.

The hon. member for Nepean.

[*English*]

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member mentioned the deficits. During the last two years, when global inflation affected Canadians and resulted in cost of living increases, we continued to invest in Canadians. We continued to take measures and introduce programs to help Canadians who had been deeply affected. The investments we made are yielding fruit. Inflation is down to 1.6%. Interest rates are coming down. In fact, tomorrow the interest rate is probably going to come down for the fourth time. The consumer confidence index has been the highest in the last 30 months.

Does the member recognize that, as the Conservatives were constantly attacking the programs we were rolling out, today they are yielding results? What is his reaction?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel: Madam Speaker, it is rather surprising to hear my colleague say all those things when Canada has not been doing well at all since this government took office.

I remember that, in the beginning, when the economy was doing really well, this government continued to invest in infrastructure, even though the business owners were saying that they did not need that money. They said that they did not even have any more room to do their work. They were wondering what the government was doing there. They said that the economy was doing great and that wasting money like that made no sense.

Since this government has been in office, the rate of crime has skyrocketed, as has the cost of living, inflation and so on. We are always paying the price.

• (1635)

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, I quite agree with my colleague that this government lacks transparency. That is obvious.

However, there was something in his speech that caught my attention even more. It was when he said that the Bloc Québécois was acting from purely ideological motives. I would like to hear him explain how MAID, protecting supply management and increasing seniors' purchasing power are ideological.

Mr. Richard Martel: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question, but that is not what this debate is about. Today's discussion is about the fact that the government has redacted documents, in typical Liberal fashion. It has blocked investigations and protected wrongdoers. We want to see these documents. That is what today's debate is about.

[*English*]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, the Conservatives, throughout the course of this debate and this filibustering, are showing the extent to which they are willing to play games in this House, but they are not the only ones. The Liberals and Conservatives both are using procedures that are resulting in this stalemate.

If the member truly care about his constituents, is he willing to advise his leadership that what is best for all of our constituents and this House is to move this debate to committee so that we can start debating other important matters, for example, funding the Kivalliq hydro-fibre link project in Nunavut?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel: Madam Speaker, I think it is actually my colleague who does not care about her constituents, since she is the one who reached an agreement with the current government to keep propping it up and accepting its inflationary spending. Then, by just rubber-stamping everything the government was doing, despite how difficult things are in Canada, her party was not honest with Canadians, in my opinion.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord on his speech. He is a real member of Parliament who works very hard for his constituents.

In his speech, he talked about something that caught my attention, specifically, the woodland caribou order. We have often heard my colleague say in the House that 1,400 jobs could be lost and will soon be lost because of an order issued by the Liberal government. Could Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC, have invested in caribou genetics instead of shutting down an entire region and killing a huge number of jobs?

Mr. Richard Martel: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague. Forestry workers are very worried right now. I think that the government has not done much for the forestry sector.

If not for all the waste and all these scandals, I think there would have been enough money to set aside for forest management and to take care of the forestry sector a bit. I think that Canadians need to know the truth. We want to have the documents.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have what is perhaps more of a comment than a question. I listened to the intervention by my NDP colleague a moment ago, and I would humbly suggest to the NDP that there is another way to get through this charade, and that is by the NDP working with the government, like it used to in the supply and confidence agreement that we had.

To my NDP colleague, who is now blaming not just the Conservatives but the Liberals as well for playing games, I would suggest that perhaps the NDP might be playing a bit of a game. If its members wanted to, they could help us get through the motion we have now been debating for, I believe, 15 days. I want my NDP colleagues to know that the door is always open if they want to have that discussion.

Privilege

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I believe that this question was not really meant for the hon. member, but he can answer it if he likes.

Mr. Richard Martel: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments. What I would like to know is whether he still has confidence in his Prime Minister.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member is not really allowed to ask questions.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, I think my colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord's assessment of the relevance of his colleagues' questions is, shall we say, malleable. When my colleague asked a question, the member said it was off topic, but apparently woodland caribou is on topic.

Anyway, in his speech, he talked about the sponsorship scandal. He often questions the Bloc Québécois's relevance, so I would just like to remind him that the Bloc Québécois asked over 300 questions about the sponsorship scandal. The entire House was accommodating. Stéphane Dion's plan B was to promote the flag, promote Canada and foster a sense of belonging to Canada.

Without the Bloc Québécois, there would have been no Gomery commission, and we would never have gotten to the bottom of this. Can my colleague at least acknowledge that?

Mr. Richard Martel: Madam Speaker, that is a good question. That is why we are wondering why the Bloc Québécois is keeping this government in power. That is what we are having a hard time with. It would be really easy to bring down this government and trigger an election if we had the Bloc Québécois's support once in a while.

[*English*]

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague's speech was excellent. Could he comment briefly on the fact that corruption seems to start at the very top of the Liberal Party, beginning with the Prime Minister, and has permeated through, all the way down?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel: Madam Speaker, there is also the matter of public confidence. Canadians are growing increasingly frustrated with this government's lack of accountability. Every day, they tell me that they no longer have confidence in this government. I think that an election should be called as soon as possible for the good of the House.

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. We have consulted with the other parties, and I hope that if you seek it, you will find consent for the following motion: "That the House (1) recognize the RCMP statement from October 14, 2024 on violent criminal activity occurring in Canada; (2) call for all leaders to take necessary actions to protect Canadians from foreign interference; and (3) call for all federal party leaders to get the appropriate security clearance in the next 30 days."

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

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, could you explain why Conservatives said no to this common-sense motion?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry; that is not a point of order on this particular issue.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I just want to make sure that when we heard that "no", it was literally from a member running out of the office.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Getting some clarification is not a point of order on this either.

[*Translation*]

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, Housing; the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Government Accountability; the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Taxation.

• (1645)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I rise on a genuine point of order, and I would like you to consider it.

It is a rule of the House that in order to vote on a motion, we have to have heard the motion and been in the House for the motion. The member who yelled "no" to the unanimous consent motion was not in the House when the motion was read out.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry; it does not matter whether they hear the whole motion. As soon as we hear "no", then the motion is not accepted.

I would just ask members that if they want unanimous consent, they should make sure that all parties are in agreement and that they are able to get it, and maybe give me a little bit of a heads-up and I will know for sure. In the meantime, I would just say that there was no unanimous consent on the motion.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, just on the point order that was brought up earlier on, I also did say nay, and I was sitting in my position.

Mr. Jamil Jivani: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to ask for unanimous consent that the House call upon the Prime Minister to release the names of the members of Parliament who have knowingly or wittingly collaborated with foreign interference.

[*Translation*]

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

An hon. member: Nay.

Privilege

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets has a habit of interrupting the House when others have the floor. I would ask that, if he wants to have conversations with other members, he do so by stepping out of the chamber or waiting until the appropriate time to take the floor.

The hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan has the floor.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have been away for over a week. It is truly a privilege to speak on behalf of the people of Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan and to be back in the House.

The people of Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan are very compassionate, caring, honest and hard-working people, and they have reached out to me recently in my time of loss. This is the first opportunity since the passing of my mother that I have had a chance to speak in Parliament, and I want to recognize not just my fellow party members but also those from across party boundaries for their kind words to my daughters Saoirse and Eilidh and to me. We have buried and mourned the loss of their Scottish grandmother and my mother, Caroline Tolmie.

She moved to Canada in the early 1960s when Prime Minister Diefenbaker was in office. I am sure the fact that I represent what was once part of his riding brings a smile to both my mother's face and my father's face. My parents immigrated to Canada from Bonnie Scotland when Diefenbaker was Prime Minister of our great nation. My mother believed in strong principles. She passed those principles down to me, and I am doing my best to preserve and carry those out for a strong foundation and cornerstones in my life. I am here representing the people of Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan with some of the skill sets and Scottish feistiness that have been passed on to me from my family.

I wish I were speaking about another issue today, one not marred by controversy or that did not have so much hair on it. We could be talking about the cost of living crisis that is impacting Canadians' lives daily and causing stress and duress for people just trying to get by, or we could be talking about the ongoing wars and whether Canada's military is prepared or not. Is it prepared for the instability that the world is experiencing right now? Is the right leadership in charge to stabilize our country and be a positive influence in the turmoil in global affairs that we are experiencing right now?

We could be debating any number of issues that the veterans affairs committee I sit on has been studying, from the recognition of wartime service to the transition to civilian life. Why has the government not recognized veterans in the first Gulf War, the one in which Canada participated in the liberation of Kuwait? Why are our veterans not being recognized for wartime service? More importantly, we could be debating one of the main issues I have been hearing about in my riding since I was elected: axing the carbon tax. Instead we are once again talking about a massive Liberal scandal.

Let us be clear that it is not just a massive Liberal scandal, but another massive Liberal scandal. I have been an MP for only a few

years, but it seems as if we are constantly in the middle of stories like this with a tired, scandal-plagued government. To be honest, this is wearing our country down. Even the Liberals are saying that the Prime Minister has no credibility in their ridings and that their one-time supporters are drowning the Prime Minister's voice out. On many occasions, I wish I could do the same. After nine long years, this is yet more proof that the Liberals are just not worth the cost, crime or corruption.

● (1650)

The Speaker ruled that the Liberals violated a House order to turn over evidence to the police for a criminal investigation into this \$400-million scandal. Instead of simply abiding by the House order, what has happened? The Liberals have decided to paralyze the House for weeks. It really makes us wonder what could possibly be in those documents that they are so scared of. Is fear the reason we are here?

The Auditor General of Canada found that the Prime Minister turned Sustainable Development Technology Canada, SDTC, into a slush fund for Liberal insiders. This was further corroborated by a recording of a senior civil servant who slammed the outright incompetence of the Trudeau government, which gave 390 million dollars' worth of contracts inappropriately—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I think the hon. member realized that he used the Prime Minister's name and recognized it.

I just want to remind members to make sure that when they write their speeches or when their speeches are written for them, they do not put in the names of parliamentarians.

The hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, censorship is alive and well. I hear that from my colleagues across the aisle. I understand what their caucus meeting is going to be like tomorrow. I wish we could join them and see how things go. I would bring the popcorn.

● (1655)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is a point of debate. The hon. member knows full well that it is not about censorship; it is about respect for the House. The rules of the House say that you are not to name parliamentarians in the House by their names. You name them by their positions or ridings.

The hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, thank you for your correction. I do recognize your position. It is not always an easy position to be in.

Privilege

A senior civil servant was screaming from the rooftops about Liberal incompetence and corruption. The Auditor General found that SDTC gave \$58 million to 10 ineligible projects that on occasions could not demonstrate an environmental benefit or the development of green technology, \$334 million to over 186 projects in which board members held conflicts of interest and \$58 million to projects without ensuring contribution agreement terms were met.

Here is what really makes my blood boil when I hear of something like this. Communities across Canada are struggling with aging infrastructure and are begging for a fair and predictable funding model that will help them tackle the backlog of issues they are dealing with. When they hear of this green slush fund and have challenges getting funding and financing for aging infrastructure projects, municipalities get upset, mayors and councillors get upset and taxpayers get upset. I am upset too. The Liberal government is doling out much-needed funds that could be used in communities for important projects essential to a community's operation and survival, such as new water treatment plants, replacing aging waterlines, replacing aging bridges or roads that need upgrading, and building recreational facilities where kids, families and the elderly can get together. Instead, Liberal insiders get the payouts for projects that cannot demonstrate an environmental benefit or the development of green technology.

The Auditor General made it clear that the blame for this scandal falls on the Prime Minister's industry minister, who did not sufficiently monitor the contracts that were given to Liberal insiders. Why would he? SDTC's mandate was supposed to be a federally funded non-profit that approves and disburses over \$100 million in funds annually to clean technology companies. However, from the Auditor General's report, this mandate obviously changed and not for the best interests of the Canadian taxpayer.

Sustainable Development Technology Canada 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. From everything I am reading, it was not doing what it was supposed to do, and the people of Canada are asking for accountability. They want to know why Liberal insiders are getting their pockets filled.

The question I ask is this: Why is an arm's-length not-for-profit organization that was created to support projects that develop and demonstrate new technologies and that address issues related to climate change, air quality, clean water and clean soil being used to line the pockets of friends? I just used the term "arm's length", but it is more like "hand in pocket".

● (1700)

The problems with the government are rampant, and they have been going on for far too long. SDTC executives were awarded projects in which they held conflicts to the tune of over 330 million dollars' worth of taxpayer funds. Why did the executives not do their due diligence? Well, it started from the top.

In 2019, the former Liberal industry minister began appointing conflicted executives to the board of SDTC. The Prime Minister's newly appointed board then began voting to give SDTC funding to companies in which executives held active conflicts of interest.

Then the governance standards at the fund deteriorated rapidly under the leadership of the new chair. It all started from the top.

How did this come to light? The Auditor General and the Ethics Commissioner initiated separate investigations after whistle-blowers came forward with allegations of financial mismanagement at the fund. The Achilles heel of the Liberal government is financial management. What did the Auditor General say? The Auditor General investigation found severe lapses in the governance standards and uncovered that \$390 million in SDTC funding was either awarded to projects that should have been ineligible to receive funding or awarded to projects in which board members were conflicted during the five-year audit report.

There is a clear timeline that tells the story, a horror story, of what has transpired and why we are here today. In late 2018, the former Liberal industry minister expressed concern regarding the Harper-era chair of SDTC, Mr. Jim Balsillie, given his public criticism of government privacy legislation. The minister's office expressed its discomfort with Mr. Balsillie's comments to the CEO of SDTC and requested that the chair stop criticizing government legislation. There was no censorship happening here; just look away.

The minister then proposed two alternative chairs to the CEO of SDTC as replacements in a phone call. One of the candidates proposed was Ms. Verschuren, an entrepreneur who was receiving SDTC funding through one of her companies.

What happened next? The minister, the PMO and the PCO were warned of the risks associated with appointing a conflicted chair and were told that up until that point, the fund had never had a chair with interests in companies receiving funding from SDTC. That was a very clear warning and was, I might add, very good advice.

In June 2019, the minister decided to proceed with the appointment despite repeated warnings expressed by his office not to do so. He did not need advice. The new chair went on to create an environment where conflicts of interest were tolerated and managed by board members. Why not? It was allowed from the top level, so they could do it too.

Board members went on to award SDTC funding to companies in which board members held stock or positions within the company. Their investments were funded by the taxpayers of Canada. How tragic. However, wait, we are not done yet. The minister went on to appoint two other controversial board members, who engaged in unethical behaviour in breach of the Conflict of Interest Act by approving funding for companies in which they held ownership stakes. The cycle continued, to pad the pockets of their friends even more.

• (1705)

ISED officials witnessed 186 conflicts at the board but did not intervene. On January 21, the new minister of industry was appointed. Did he clean up the mess? No. In November 2022, whistle-blowers raised internal concerns with the Auditor General about unethical practices as SDTC. The Privy Council was briefed by the whistle-blowers about the allegations shortly after and commissioned two independent reports.

Not far behind, the whistle-blowers took the allegations public, and the new minister was forced to agree and then suspend funding to SDTC. Just last year, in November 2023, the Auditor General announced an audit of SDTC, which revealed and confirmed the horror story that I have just shared. In June 2024, the Auditor General's report was released, and it found severe governance failures at SDTC.

Only common-sense Conservatives would end the corruption and get answers for Canadians. I say this because it is true, and it is worth repeating. Conservatives recognize that there is only one taxpayer. I am not sure if I have said this before, and I do not like repeating myself, but I will say it again: Conservatives recognize that there is only one taxpayer.

The House could be debating any number of topics, such as the doubling of housing costs, Liberal food inflation or crime and chaos exploding across Canada. Why are people paying more in taxes than they are on the essentials they need to keep their families going? The tired, corrupt government has instead decided to paralyze the work of the House.

It is worth pointing out that this is not just one instance of corruption and spending practices. It is an ongoing cycle. These are Liberal appointees who handed over \$400 million in tax dollars to their own companies, which involved 186 separate conflicts of interest. This must stop. The government must hand over the papers.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to go back to the very beginning of the member's speech, 20 minutes ago, when he admitted that he was one of the people who said no to the unanimous consent motion that the NDP put forward. Importantly, that unanimous consent motion was for every leader of a political party to get a security clearance within 30

days. The member said he said no to that. That is how he started off his speech.

Can the member inform the House why he said no to that motion? Why does he believe that the Leader of the Opposition, the leader of his Conservative Party, should not have a security clearance?

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

We are debating the subamendment to the privilege motion on the government's refusal to release the documents on the corrupt Liberals, which has nothing to do with the subject of that question.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, on that point of order, I am referencing what the member said at the beginning of his speech. I am asking a question about what he said during his speech.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member did put that in his speech. He has risen to answer the question, so I will allow him to answer the question.

I do want to remind members that they should keep their speeches, as well as their questions and comments, relevant to the debate that is before the House.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, just shortly before that motion, the Conservative Party brought forward a motion for the House to call upon the Prime Minister to release the names of the members of Parliament who have knowingly or wittingly collaborated with the foreign interference, and my colleague said no to that. I am very comfortable with my saying no.

• (1710)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. That is not true. I was not even in the room when that motion was brought forward.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is now becoming other points of debate, so we are going to move forward.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, this is all a bit rich. For the past little while, the Conservatives have been talking about everything and the kitchen sink during their 20-minute speeches. When we ask them about it, they do not want to answer and say that it is not related to the topic.

They are completely off topic. They are bashing the government. They are bashing the other opposition parties. They talked about us earlier, and we were unable to answer them. I really find it all a bit rich. I wonder if the Conservatives have been instructed to slow down their speeches, because they are so boring. It has been endlessly mind-numbing to have to listen to this all day.

Privilege

There are major crises happening outside the House at this very moment. We have a language crisis, a climate crisis and a housing crisis.

By debating this and wasting time on it, when the entire House agrees and we could vote on it, does my colleague seriously think that we are serving Canadian democracy?

[*English*]

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, I do not know if I should give a slow answer to that or if my colleague will still be awake at the end of my response. The integrity of this government is on the line. The people of Canada are questioning why their money is going to others when it should be coming back to them, and that is not being answered. That is something that is worth debating, and that is what we are here to do.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member talked about one taxpayer, and certainly the NDP believes, whether it is a Liberal scandal or a Conservative scandal, that we need to get to the bottom of things. That is why we are supporting the motion.

I recall, during the Harper regime, a multitude of Conservative scandals, and the Conservatives blocked any transparency at all. Parliamentarians were not able to get to the bottom of the ETS scandal, which was \$400 million; the G8 scandal, at \$1 billion; the Phoenix pay scandal, at \$2.2 billion; or the anti-terrorism funding, at \$3.1 billion. The Conservative corruption, in terms of dollars, was even worse than the Liberals', yet Conservatives blocked transparency every single time.

I am going to ask the member a very clear question that I know his constituents are asking. Gary Grewal, a conservative Saskatchewan MLA, was just indicted by the ethics commissioner in Saskatchewan for having stolen three-quarters of a million dollars in government contracts.

Will the member stand up in the House and condemn Gary Grewal and the conservative Saskatchewan Party for having fleeced taxpayers?

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, I want to stick to things that are relevant to the speech I brought forward, so I will circle back with the one taxpayer. We are seeing that the carbon tax is not only affecting the taxpayer; it is being downloaded to different levels of government, such as the provincial government, where school board and hospital taxes are going up. What could a million dollars do for a new school? What could a million dollars do for a hospital? Those taxes are being downloaded onto municipalities—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby had an opportunity to ask a question, and I am having a hard time hearing what the hon. member is trying to respond. I would tell the hon. member that if he has other questions or comments, he should wait until the appropriate time.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I have a point of order. I asked the member a specific question. He has to answer it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Now it is becoming a point of debate.

The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands has a point of order as well.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, the member over here knows that the question the member tried to ask was not relevant to the debate or even the business—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): These are not points of order; they are parts of the debate. The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands also interjected at one point, and I had to call for order, so I would just ask members to please hold on to their thoughts and comments until the appropriate time.

The hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan has the floor

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, there is one taxpayer. As for the impacts of the carbon tax, which my colleague seems to be on board with in supporting the Liberal government and its corruption, he fails to recognize that the carbon tax is being downloaded onto provincial levels of government, such as the school board—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

• (1715)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I want to remind the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby that if he wants to continue participating in the debate, he needs to wait until the appropriate time.

If the hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan can just wrap it up, I can get to another question.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, I was having so much fun. I could be here all day. I do not mind.

As I was saying, municipalities are being impacted. Municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals are not getting the refunds. People are paying more for the carbon tax. They are out of pocket, and it is a scam. It is another scandal. We need a new government.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the speech my hon. colleague gave today. I know he is very concerned about his community and some of the things the money could be going toward to be innovative and creative. In this particular case, we need to follow the money. I think that is what he was getting at. We have to follow the money so it gets to the right place. Would he like to comment on how critical it is to follow the money so we get it to the right place?

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, when we are in a position of servitude, as we are, we need to be accountable to those who have put us here.

Every taxpayer should know where their money is going, and right now we are not seeing that. It is a shell game. It is being moved around. Other people are getting it, and it is not going to the right places. It is being taken from the wrong people and given to the wrong people. It needs to go back to the taxpayer, and we need to get a new government in power.

Privilege

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is how this actually rolled out. The member entered the House and made the comment himself that he had said no to the NDP request to have all leaders of the House of Commons get the security clearance. He was very proud to say that he had said no. Then, in his answer to the question of my colleague, he said that my colleague had said no first. No, he did not, and that is not the way it worked out.

After the member said no to the NDP, we heard another motion, brought forward by his own political party, stating that the Liberals should release the names. There is a short answer to this. If the leader were to get the security clearance that every other leader in the House of Commons has, then he could get the names. However, he has chosen not to do that.

What is it that Canadians do not know about the history or the background of the leader of the Conservative Party that is causing him to not get the clearance? Did he do something illegal? Is that the reason he is not getting the clearance?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member for Louis-Saint-Laurent on a point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I am not very proud of what the member for Winnipeg North just said.

[*Translation*]

The parliamentary secretary is impugning the motives of the hon. Leader of the Opposition who, may I remind you, has been here for almost 20 years and was a minister of the Crown. He does not need any lessons in ethics from anyone. We can trust his judgment. The parliamentary secretary implied that the Leader of the Opposition has a dark past. He does not. Shame on the member for Winnipeg North.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is a matter of debate. I am going to ask the parliamentary secretary to finish his question so that the hon. member who made the speech can answer it.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I will withdraw the word “illegal”, but I do believe Canadians have a right to know why the leader of the Conservative Party is not getting that security clearance. There has to be some real justification. Does the member believe that the leader of the Conservative Party should be doing what the RCMP and so many others are recommending?

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, my colleague started off by saying that there was a short answer to this. Here is a short answer: release the names. Here is another short answer: call an election.

• (1720)

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, in his speech, the member was talking about people at the

top knowing what was going on. I am wondering if he could expand on that a little.

We know that the previous minister was involved in appointing the board chair. We also know that other board members were appointed. There is the existing minister. The government has done nothing. We know there were senior officials who would sit in on board meetings and who were privy to the actions being taken by the board.

I am wondering if the member could speak to the seriousness of people at the top seeing what was going on and doing nothing, as well as the massive amounts of conflicts of interest and corruption.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, I am so out of the water when I hear of a culture of dishonour. As Canadians, we always want to strive and be part of something better and a culture of honour. Whether it is watching sports teams, like hockey or football teams, or in our politics, we should be striving for honour and we are not seeing that. What we are seeing is, “This is acceptable; I can get away with it and there will be no recourse.” While they are at it, they are filling their bags and pockets full of money. It is disappointing. Canadians are unhappy.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I go to debate, because of what just transpired not too long ago, I want to remind members to please be careful and be judicious with the words that they use, especially to describe specific members in the House of Commons, because it does cause disorder and then it causes points of order to be raised. I think that every member in this House is an honourable member. That is how they got to be here. There are words that are being used, adjectives, that cause disorder, and I would hope that members will prevent that from happening. They can choose a better way to do their debates.

This is not directed to anybody in particular, because this happens with many members in the House on all sides. Again, I want members to be respectful of each other. We can have healthy debates without making personal attacks or using words that cause disorder.

The hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest.

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not take a moment to congratulate my province's premier-designate, Susan Holt, who was elected Monday night.

Ms. Holt has the distinction of being New Brunswick's first woman premier, although we must acknowledge that voters did not elect her because she is a woman. She is a person of some achievement, who I hope will keep my province moving forward.

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Ms. Holt is inheriting a province on a strong economic and fiscal foundation, and provided she governs as the centrist she campaigned as, she could be formidable by building on New Brunswick's recent achievements. Already, she has demonstrated some skill by opposing the federal carbon tax and more skilfully downplaying any association with the federal Liberals. It was as if the Prime Minister did not exist for the last 32 days in New Brunswick. It was a wise move, given that voters as well as Liberal members of Parliament are set to skewer their very disliked federal leader.

I would also like to thank Premier Blaine Higgs and the MLAs who have served under his leadership since 2018. I can say without a doubt that New Brunswick today has never been in a stronger position in my lifetime, both in terms of quality of life as well as opportunity compared to the rest of Canada. It is a great place to call home. Our economy is growing, work is available without going west and, today, other Canadians recognize our advantages by moving down east in record numbers. It is not bad at all.

Ms. Holt is now the steward of this prosperity and advantage. I hope that New Brunswick remains a successful province, and I am ready to work with the new provincial government on shared priorities so that my province is always heard in Parliament and within the federal government by its decision-makers.

Moving now to the matter at hand, here is why there has been gridlock in Parliament. The Liberals have paralyzed the House of Commons. The Prime Minister and cabinet have chosen to ignore a lawful order from Parliament to table documents requested by the House of Commons. This, briefly, is the chronicle of events.

The Prime Minister and cabinet chose a group of well-connected elites to dish out \$1 billion of taxpayer money through the Sustainable Development Technology Canada program. These chosen elites then gave the money to companies they either owned or had a financial interest in. When these acts of blatant conflict and corruption were reported to cabinet, the Liberals tried to cover it up. Mandarins and ministers were aware of taxpayer funds being misappropriated through SDTC, but instead of stopping this scam, the program administrators somehow funnelled even more taxpayer funds for ineligible projects from other federal departments. It was all approved by different ministers appointed by the Prime Minister.

Thankfully, Canada's Auditor General examined the program and exposed the conflicts, the cover-ups and Liberal corruption. My colleague, the hon member for South Shore—St. Margarets, initiated a parliamentary investigation into the corruption, which resulted in an order from the House of Commons that the government hand over all documents, unredacted. Unfortunately, this Liberal government will not follow the law by providing those documents to Parliament.

It is a long-established right, which is entrenched in our Constitution, bestowed on members of the House to send for and receive documents they deem necessary. Parliament's law clerk has confirmed and reinforced this fact to the committee I chair, public accounts, which he did this week.

The Liberal government's disregard of Parliament's order strikes at the very heart of our democratic institutions. This is about in-

tegrity, transparency and accountability of a government that supposedly serves Canadians. These values, which are fundamental to any functioning democracy, have been badly eroded over the course of the past nine years by this Prime Minister and Liberal cabinet.

• (1725)

This is not a matter of partisanship. It is a matter of principle. It is a matter of trust, trust that Canadians placed in this now tired government in 2015, nine long years ago, when voters were promised an era of transparency and openness. We will remember the lofty rhetoric that dissolved almost overnight. I want to remind everyone here, especially those in the benches opposite, that in 2015 the Liberals presented Canadians with a platform of change. They campaigned on the promise to be the most transparent and accountable government in Canadian history. We are faced with a reality that is entirely different, that is far removed from that province and has manifested itself into a taxpayer's nightmare.

What we have seen time and time again is a government that has failed to live up to its own promises. We have seen a government that has been mired in scandal after scandal, a government that has betrayed the trust of all Canadians. The green slush fund, otherwise known as the SDTC scandal, is the most egregious example of this betrayal. According to the Auditor General's report, SDTC was responsible for awarding nearly \$390 million in taxpayers' money to projects where board members had direct financial interest. These nine board members, approved by the Prime Minister and the cabinet, were involved in 186 conflicts of interest. This was not accidental mismanagement. It was systematic corruption orchestrated by those in positions of power to benefit themselves and their associates.

One egregious example is that of Andrée-Lise Méthot, who was appointed to the SDTC board in 2016. Méthot runs a venture capital firm, Cycle Capital, which received \$114 million in grants from SDTC during her tenure on the board, funds that directly benefited her personal investments. The value of Cycle Capital tripled during this period, thanks in no small part to the tax dollars funded through the SDTC program. How convenient it must be to sit on government-appointed boards and approve millions of dollars to one's own company. This blatant self-dealing is emblematic of a broader culture of cronyism that has infected this tired Liberal government.

Instead of focusing on innovation, the green slush fund became a piggy bank for well-connected Liberal insiders who used their influence to enrich themselves at the expense of hard-working Canadian taxpayers. The corruption did not stop with Méthot. Another board member, Stephen Kukucha, was also involved in conflicts of interest. A former political staffer to a Liberal environment minister, Kukucha used his position on the SDTC board to funnel \$5 million to companies in which he had financial interests. Like Méthot, Kukucha saw nothing wrong with enriching himself through his government connections.

When questioned, he actually dismissed the \$5-million payout as “a small amount of money”, but that small amount of money is a staggering sum for Canadian families who have seen their federal taxes rise to pay for government largesse. It represents the taxes paid by countless families struggling to make ends meet. For these Liberal insiders, it is just another example of how the system has been rigged in their favour and against everyday Canadians.

This scandal demonstrates a government that has completely lost its way, a government that has become more interested in serving the interests of a select few than in serving the people of Canada. However, this scandal is about more than just the misuse of tax dollars. It is about the erosion of trust. It is about the erosion of the very principles of good governance that we are all elected to uphold and to hold accountable. The scandals that have plagued the government, from the SNC-Lavalin affair to the WE Charity scandal, from the misuse of public funds in green energy projects to the Prime Minister's own ethical violations, have revealed that Canadians have a Prime Minister who is no longer capable of acting honestly for our country.

• (1730)

The green slush fund scandal is one of the most troubling examples of the government's failure to live up to its promise. Not only is it about the hundreds of millions of dollars in misspent and misallocated money, but it is also now about a government that is not prepared to follow an order of the House.

SDTC was established with the goal of fostering innovation in the Canadian economy. For many years before the Liberal government, it was well managed. It was a program in which projects would be funded on merit. What was a lifeline for innovators became a Liberal vehicle for corruption and cronyism.

According to the Auditor General's report, a staggering 390 million tax dollars was allocated to projects in which board members were in a direct conflict of interest. That hard-earned taxpayer money went to projects where decision-makers stood to benefit personally. This is not just a failure of oversight but also a violation of trust. It is a betrayal of the very principles of transparency and accountability to taxpayers.

This scandal, sadly, is not an isolated incident for the government. Earlier, I alluded to a broader pattern of corruption and ethical lapses that have plagued the government since it took office. We all remember the SNC-Lavalin affair, in which the Prime Minister himself was found to have violated ethics laws by attempting to interfere in a criminal case to benefit a corporation that was connected to the Liberals. We all remember the WE Charity scandal, in which millions in tax dollars was funnelled to an organization with

Privilege

close ties to the Prime Minister's family. Who could forget the numerous ethical breaches involved in the firing of Vice-Admiral Mark Norman?

These scandals are not just the result of poor decision-making or bad management; they are the result of a culture of corruption that has taken root within the government. It is a culture in which well-connected insiders are rewarded while ordinary, everyday Canadians are left behind to pick up the bill. Rules apply to everyone else but not to those in positions of power and authority.

What is even more troubling is the government's response to these scandals. Instead of taking responsibility, instead of acknowledging its mistakes and working to fix them, which would be the honourable route, it has chosen to obfuscate, deny and hide the truth. When Parliament ordered the production of documents related to this green slush fund scandal, the government responded by heavily redacting those documents, making it impossible for Parliament to fulfill its duty of holding it accountable. There is no other reason for us to be here than to approve funds it requests and then to hold it accountable for the spending of those dollars. What we are seeing from the Liberals is not the behaviour of a government that values transparency but that of a government with something to hide.

The cost of this corruption is not just financial; the true cost of this scandal goes far beyond tax dollars. Canadians have lost faith in the government. Who can blame them? They see their hard-earned tax dollars being misused and mismanaged and a government that refuses to admit wrongdoing. It sets a precedent that breeds further corruption and incompetence throughout the bureaucracy.

It is a time when millions of Canadians are struggling to make ends meet. Food bank usage has reached a point where we see that families can no longer afford to eat without donations or assistance. Seniors are being forced to make difficult choices just to keep food on the table. Meanwhile, the government has been handing out hundreds of millions of dollars to its well-connected friends.

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It is an insult to every Canadian who works hard, pays their taxes, plays by the rules and expects in return that those in power, those in government, will be honest. Instead of this, tax money went to projects that were tainted by conflicts of interest and projects that did not qualify for funding without underhanded tactics to give well-connected Liberals an edge over others. This is the true cost of their corruption. It is the cost borne by the Canadian taxpayers, who are being asked to shoulder the burden of higher federal taxes each and every day because the government has lost its way, lost its ability to manage and lost its ability to be straight with Canadians.

● (1735)

As a member of His Majesty's loyal opposition, I have a solemn duty, as do all members on this side of the House, to hold the government to account. Our system of government is based on the principle of responsible government, where the executive is answerable to the legislature, that is, Parliament, and by extension, through members of Parliament, to the people of Canada. This is not just a theoretical concept; it is a fundamental principle of our democracy that we must defend at all costs. However, time and time again, the government has shown contempt for Parliament and the democratic process that we are supposed to keep in check.

The refusal to provide unredacted documents to the House and the Liberals' repeated attempts to cover up the truth by protecting former officials and staff members are part of a pattern of behaviour that is deeply concerning. When the Speaker of the House rules that documents must be provided, it is not a suggestion; it is an order. It is the will of the House and it must be respected. The government's decision to redact the documents is a clear violation of our collective parliamentary privileges, and it is an affront to the democratic principles that underpin our system of government.

The question we must ask ourselves is this: What is the government trying to hide? Why is it so determined to keep these documents out of the hands of Parliament and parliamentarians? If there is nothing to hide, why not provide the documents in full and allow the truth to come to light? Sunshine, of course, is the best disinfectant.

In the years since this scandal was first exposed, I suspect two things have happened. First, an army of bureaucrats and government staff members have combed through the thousands of documents we are looking to get our hands on. Second, the Liberals have collectively agreed among themselves that the true cost of this scandal is not \$390 million, but a much larger figure that they want to keep to themselves at all costs.

This is also a political nightmare for the Liberals because it could well mean the annihilation of members of Parliament in the government at election time. A government deputy minister said that this scandal is worse than the Chrétien-Martin sponsorship scandal, and we all know that that scandal, the ad scam scandal, ended the Martin and Chrétien governments. SDTC is so devastating that it would do great harm to the Prime Minister, cabinet and the Liberal Party if the books were opened and revealed to the public.

The green slush fund scandal is not just about the misuse of tax dollars. As I said before, it is about the principle that no one, not even the Prime Minister, is above the law. It is about the principle

that those who are entrusted with the stewardship of public funds must be held to the highest standards of accountability and transparency. The refusal of the government to provide the documents requested by Parliament is a clear violation. It is an attempt to subvert Parliament to shield those responsible for this corruption from accountability. Let me be clear: Parliament must not allow this to happen.

When all three main opposition parties are in agreement, it is a signal that trust has been broken across the country. In the upcoming election, Canadians will have the opportunity to choose a different path. I stand today to say that Conservatives will bring forward a government that Canadians can trust, a government that will be responsible stewards of their tax dollars and will always act in the best interests of the people who elected us to serve them. If we are given that opportunity, we will ensure that those in positions of power are held accountable for their actions. This means real consequences for ethical violation and conflicts of interest. We will also ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and responsibly. This means ending the culture of cronyism that has taken hold in the Liberal bench, means ensuring that public contracts and grants are awarded based on merit and means a better day and turning the page on the corrupt government.

● (1740)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am concerned that in speech after speech, we hear a great deal of misinformation being spread.

Let me give an example. The member said that the government has paralyzed the House of Commons. The motion itself says that we should take the issue to the procedure and House affairs committee. Every member who has spoken knows that.

The only reason we are still debating it today is because Conservative after Conservative chooses to stand up, even though it is their motion. It is a Conservative motion that it go to committee. The Conservatives feel that it should continue to be debated endlessly. As a result, we are not able to debate government agenda items that deal with citizenship, victims of sexual assault, online harms and so much more.

How can members opposite justify their actions when they are filibustering their very own motion?

Mr. John Williamson: Madam Speaker, all the government has to do, to get on with its business that it claims is so important, is to release the documents as Parliament ordered, unredacted, as per the law clerk who said it is obliged to do.

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That would end this and that would ensure the government is able to get ahead of its priorities. However, the government is not willing to do that, and that is why we are debating this, to ensure the rights of parliamentarians are upheld and the government does exactly what it is required to do, producing the documents, unredacted.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know that the member for New Brunswick Southwest has done a great job as chair of the public accounts committee on these hearings and is more knowledgeable about the situation than most members in this place.

However, I would like to ask him a question, because I think the members had an update. I believe nine government departments have provided unredacted documents, 19 government departments have provided redacted documents and two government departments have refused.

Now if it is okay for nine government departments to produce unredacted documents, why is it not okay for the other 19 government departments to produce unredacted documents? Is it because of what is in them, or is it just because the hypocrisy of the government knows no end?

• (1745)

Mr. John Williamson: Madam Speaker, the member, the soon-to-be minister, has answered his own question.

In some cases, we have unredacted documents. These departments have followed through on the order from Parliament, which is here to hold the government accountable. However, in many other departments, the documents have come back redacted, indicating there is something to hide, something that must be explosive.

The Auditor General just delivered a letter to the public accounts committee yesterday, indicating that on the study she did into SDTC, while it was narrow in scope, she believed the findings could be mirrored elsewhere throughout that program, meaning the waste and the corruption is greater and deeper than we first realized.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member has acknowledged that they are filibustering it, because they want the government to produce unredacted documents. We have provided thousands and thousands of sheets of paper. The motion they are talking about is to take those papers, get them unredacted and hand them over to the RCMP. Now, the RCMP, the Auditor General of Canada and the former deputy law clerk have said they do not support this tactic.

The Conservative Party is playing a game. It is as simple as that. The member knows that. Why should the Liberal government take the Conservative side over what the RCMP, the Auditor General and the former deputy law clerk are saying? Why would we believe the Conservative Party, and play their silly game?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. The hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest.

Mr. John Williamson: Madam Speaker, it is because the government has an order from the Parliament, passed by a majority of

members of the House, not just Conservatives, for the government to produce the papers.

Time and time again, whether it is the Winnipeg lab documents or this case, the government is more interested in covering up secrets than in coming clean with Canadians. The filibuster here is on the government side. Release the papers unredacted as Parliament has demanded you do.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I cannot release anything.

The hon. member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou has the floor.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree with my colleague that the government should not be handing over redacted documents. However, when the Harper government was in power, from 2006 to 2015, certain significant events occurred that should not be forgotten.

For instance, there were lobbying cases. Accusations were levelled at certain members of the Conservative government. The Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics also criticized the government for the way it was managing its professional ethics regulations. There were reports. The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner examined several cases involving Conservative government members, including some named in a report indicating possible rule violations.

Does my colleague think that the Conservative government would do better than the Liberal government?

Mr. John Williamson: Madam Speaker, that is a good question. When we formed the government, there were some questions, but our government worked with Parliament to produce the documents. I am talking about the documents concerning Afghanistan that caused a kerfuffle. In the end, we found a way to allow the opposition parties to have access to those documents. This government is not prepared to do the same now and that is why we are here today.

• (1750)

[*English*]

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague has been in the House for many years. One of the things he mentioned first in his speech was the Vice-Admiral Norman controversy. Right out of the gate when the Liberals were elected, they created the first controversy right out of their first meeting.

The important part of the issue is the money. Following the money is really of critical importance so that people believe that there is transparency and responsibility for their money.

I would like to ask my longtime colleague in the House, based on his experience, what his response is to how important it is to follow the money.

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Mr. John Williamson: Madam Speaker, I think that is why the issue has seized the House. Not only is it a question of hundreds of millions of dollars being misspent, hundreds of ethical violations, conflicts of interest and now a cover-up, but on top of that, which is bad enough as it is a steaming mess, today there is a government that is not even willing to submit itself to Parliament, which it is required to do.

We authorize members of Parliament in the House to spend the money, but we also exert our authority to see how those dollars have been spent and to ensure value for taxpayers. The government wants to hide that. It is in breach of an order of Parliament, and we are going to hold it accountable.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a quick question for my colleague. Which issue does he think is more serious? Is it the contents of the SDTC documents, because we want to know what is in them, and we want them sent to the RCMP so charges can be laid, or is it the fact that the government is not respecting the will of Parliament?

I think that is very serious. It is a major affront to democracy. I do not know how Parliament can continue to continue moving forward. I am sorry, it must be the influence of the House. If the government does not comply with an order, what does that mean for its credibility? Which is more serious, after all? Is it the affront to democracy or the contents of the documents? If the latter is the more serious issue, that is even worse. That is scary.

Mr. John Williamson: Madam Speaker, I completely agree. This is about holding the government to account for its decisions. As I said before, the Conservative Party is not alone in demanding this. The Bloc Québécois, the NDP and the Conservative Party are unanimous on this issue. The government must answer to Parliament and produce these documents.

[*English*]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I am happy, on behalf of the people of Lakeland, to join the debate started by common-sense Conservatives because of the Liberals' repeated pattern of entitled and immoral abuse of Canadian tax dollars under the guise of programs ostensibly about issues that all Canadians care about. After nine years, the Liberals' corruption is just not worth the cost. The entire House of Commons asked for the Liberals to release documents about their major scandal but like always, the Liberals cover it up.

The Liberals presented the Sustainable Development Technology Canada fund, known accurately now as their personal green slush fund, as vital for investments to address climate change but it lacks transparency, fails to produce any results and, as always with these guys, serves the interests of Liberal insiders instead of Canadians. That is the Liberals' clear pattern: funnel other people's money into their friends' companies and pockets; sometimes get caught; evade, delay and obfuscate; and then finally, use every tool they have and all of their power to cover it all up and blame everyone else.

People might be inclined to dismiss this topic as just the way things are. They may say it is politics, that they are all the same, or that this is some political process or navel-gazing exercise where

politicians talk to hear themselves speak about some obscure, out-of-touch process or parliamentary issue that does not really matter to everyday Canadians. However, that just is not true. It is, in fact, the uniquely Liberal pattern of mismanagement, wasteful spending and obvious ethical breaches apparently endorsed by the Liberals' coalition partners in the NDP and Bloc, since they do keep voting to prop them up and keep them in power, even though those so-called opposition parties do have the ability to stop it.

The government must release the \$400-million slush fund scheme records that show Liberal appointees funnelled Canadian tax dollars into their companies and their cronies' companies. The scale is simultaneously shocking and, horrifyingly, not surprising. We have nearly half of the billion-dollar slush fund of misused tax money with 186 conflicts of interest. What is wild here is that despite warnings about the conflicts of interest the head of the slush fund had, the Liberals put her in that key role anyway.

Another board member was the founder and CEO of a company called Cycle Capital. It so happens that the environment minister has personal shares in Cycle Capital and worked as a strategic adviser for it for over a decade. During that CEO's time on the slush fund, companies in which Cycle Capital invests received more than \$100 million of tax dollars from the scheme. The Liberals took the head of Cycle Capital from the slush fund to the Liberals' Canada Infrastructure Bank, where she voted to give \$170 million to her own company. We can talk about a conflict of interest. This is just one of many examples.

In my neck of the woods, and in my colleague's riding of South Shore—St. Margarets, we all know what they say of something that walks like a duck, swims like a duck and quacks like a duck. I am confident Canadians can see what is happening here for themselves.

Conservatives say if the Liberals have nothing to hide, then there is no reason to not release the documents. Since the Liberals are willing to stop all the work of the House of Commons, the people's place, to refuse to disclose the slush fund records, then they should just call a carbon tax election and let Canadians decide. Canadians deserve transparency and accountability. None of the government's money belongs to politicians, bureaucracies or government appointees. It belongs to Canadians. These are the kinds of things that people get fired for in the private sector. In governments that actually care about ethics and fiscal responsibility, elected people would resign or be fired.

However, it would be hard for the ethical offender-in-chief, the Prime Minister, to have the credibility to mete out consequences with his own cabinet caucus and officials because this behaviour always has a role model at the top, but complicit participation is just as wrong. Canadians deserve to know how billions of their dollars have been misused over nine years, who benefits from the cover-ups and how it will be made right.

This pattern is also clear in the Liberals' claims about \$120 billion for environmental programs. The intended outcomes often never materialize. For example, Lion Electric received millions from government, later declared bankruptcy and left nothing to show for the government's expenditure of Canadians' money, except failure, loss and broken promises. More than \$40 billion of Canadians' money was allocated for EV subsidies, for example, yet infrastructure to make them actually affordable and suitable for Canadians' real lives, in every region of this country, lag far behind.

- (1755)

Everything the Liberals claimed about the Stellantis subsidy has been proven false. It is billions of dollars over budget and years behind schedule, and this is before shovels are even in the ground. The Liberals said that it was supposed to create jobs for Canadians, but at least 1,500 jobs, the majority, will be filled by temporary foreign workers.

While the Liberals claim over and over again that these programs serve Canadians, the funds instead benefit companies or cronies with Liberal connections. The Liberals' fast-and-loose approach to tax dollars, feathering the nests of their fellow elites in either full complicity or through a lack of action on ethical violations, is the Liberal jam. The Liberals used to wax eloquent about the disinfecting nature of sunshine and sunny ways, but, after nine years, what they deliver is costly collusion and cover-up after cover-up.

The Auditor General repeatedly points out that there is a lack of clear goals and oversight. Programs are launched without plans or, for many of their so-called environmental initiatives, without any way to measure impacts or even emissions reductions. By omission or by design, the Liberals make it nearly impossible to assess progress or ensure responsible use and oversight of tax dollars. The Liberals obstruct efforts to hold the government accountable with vague responses, if a response is provided at all, and they withhold documents so Canadians cannot know whether their own public money is being wasted.

Just last year, I submitted an access to information request on the costs the federal government cites related to Canada's environmental targets. Documents show that the government held back information and deliberately strategized to deny the answers to me, and therefore all Canadians, with vague language and redirection to publicly available government and external non-government sources. In both instances, the replies did not include a single specific figure that was explicitly requested. Unfortunately, it is a fact that this reflects a pattern overall, which is the opposite, of course, of openness, transparency and accountability.

While the government claims to spend tax dollars on green projects, there is often actually no way to know if these projects even exist, never mind assessing the outcomes or results that all Canadians would care about. One of the most striking scandals in-

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volves government contracts to McKinsey & Company. After nine years, the Liberals gave them \$200 million of Canadian money. The Auditor General uncovered "frequent disregard for procurement" rules, including the failure to justify sole-sourced contracts for 18 of the 19 awards to the firm. The Liberals bypassed their own government's required procurement policy to do it.

It is a long, flagrant disregard for ethical and fiscal decision-making and a pattern of noncompliance. No wonder Canadians lose faith in governments, politicians and bureaucracy when the government refuses to show the value for the Canadian money that it spends. Government departments frequently failed to estimate the cost of McKinsey's services beforehand. Out of 33 contracts reviewed, cost estimates were only provided in three cases that had been given to McKinsey that actually included cost estimates to protect Canadians' money.

The truth is that, after nine years, these Liberals are not just the masters of a flawed procurement process. They also actively ignore and choose not to fix it, to the benefit of themselves and their buddies. Of course, the firm's former global director enjoys a close relationship with the Prime Minister and advised senior officials on economic policy, so it is obvious that McKinsey's influence on public policy was part of a broader network of favouritism. The Auditor General noted the rapid growth in McKinsey's contracts with the Liberals after nine years. Canadians can be forgiven for seeing this exactly as it is: elite, political insider favouritism with Canadians' money.

One \$33-million government contract to McKinsey for the government-caused, beleaguered and delayed Trans Mountain expansion was issued non-competitively and without a justification being clearly linked to one of the competitive procurement policy exceptions. Another example, of course, is the Canada Infrastructure Bank, which oversees more than \$30 billion in public-private infrastructure spending. More than half its board members have ties to the Liberal Party, including former Liberal candidates, donors, staff and board members.

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Common-sense Conservatives warned repeatedly about this boondoggle of mismanagement and no accountability, but the Liberals initially gave it 35 billion tax dollars, and after nine years, it has produced very little to show for all that money spent. Despite grand promises of transformational infrastructure projects, it must remain in early planning stages, stalled or not exist at all. It is not just about missed deadlines. It really shows systemic inefficiencies and abysmal project management, with Liberal insiders appointed to high-level positions.

- (1800)

These are choices made over and over. These are staggering numbers for most of us to even begin to comprehend. It is no wonder that Canadians question the impartiality and governance of the Liberals, their banks, their boards and their panels.

The government claims that billions are earmarked for infrastructure, but so much is all tied up with insiders. The Liberal government sent half a billion dollars to the Asian Infrastructure Bank. Its former head of global communications told the parliamentary committee that Canada has not received “a single thing of tangible value” from a quarter of a billion tax dollars. He said that he is unaware of the Liberal's demand for a return of that money. Unfortunately, this is also reflective of most of the government's apparent environmental initiatives.

However, all of this is really about a larger problem. The Liberal government's spending decisions are driven more by ideology and political optics than by the best interests of Canadians or, for many of these examples, the actual environmental impact. By focusing on headline grabbing and ribbon cutting rather than practical solutions and outcomes, the government has wasted billions of dollars of other people's money. The Liberals' own endless tax-and-spend, rat-trap cycle has made all the essentials too expensive for everyone, hollowed out the middle class and particularly harmed low-income and working poor Canadians. Really, it is disgusting. It is a gross Liberal pattern.

The Liberals' WE Charity scandal is one of the most infamous, with a \$900-million contract ostensibly for a student grant program. Of course, Liberal family members of the Prime Minister had long been paid to appear at events, and both the relatives of the then finance minister and senior government officials had close connections with WE. All of that benefited the Liberals and the charity. The Ethics Commissioner ruled that the then finance minister acted unethically and breached the Conflict of Interest Act when he failed to recuse himself from the decision. After Conservatives pushed the government relentlessly to release those documents, it ultimately cancelled the contract. However, this was not done before the Liberals hid the details; ultimately, they shut down Parliament to avoid accountability and left Canadians in the dark.

The Liberals tried yet another cover-up on the Winnipeg lab leak in 2021. There were reports that the RCMP had to intervene at that one-of-a-kind, top medical and virus lab. This was because of a security breach and speculation of espionage by China's Communist dictatorship at that Canadian lab. The Prime Minister fought tooth and nail to prevent any of the documents from coming up. As he is doing now, he defied a motion passed by elected MPs. All parties that had seen the documents, including a Liberal MP, said that this

was to cover up embarrassment, not to protect national security. Time and time again, the Liberals repeatedly prioritize political interests over genuine public benefit.

Withholding information from MPs, who are here because of and to serve the people, shows without a doubt the Liberals' total disregard for ethical governance. All these scandals do, and there are many more. This undermines public trust. These are ongoing issues of favouritism, lack of transparency and poor governance. Canadians clearly cannot afford or trust the Liberal government and its coalition partners, which is the serious consequence that happens when public money is funnelled by the Liberals to politically connected corporations and insiders. When any accountability and transparency is lacking, this leaves Canadians wondering where all their money has gone.

We can consider the scale and what this actually means. The nearly \$400 million blown by the Liberal slush fund alone would require the equivalent of 22,000 Canadian families to work an entire year just to cover the amount through their federal taxes. After nine years of the Liberals, costs are up and taxes are up; therefore, in reality, all those Canadian families are already working their butts off and cannot get ahead.

This conduct is not acceptable at any time. However, the same government's spending and carbon taxes have caused inflation and a historic cost of living crisis by driving up the prices of groceries, fuel, housing and heating. These are essentials, not luxuries, in Canada, especially with winter coming. When such things happen, better accountability and oversight of tax money is the very least that Canadians deserve.

A recurring theme is the government's absolute failure to deliver on promises of job creation and economic growth. It frequently promotes its green programs and infrastructure projects as job creators, but many of the jobs that are created are temporary or disappear once construction phases end. This has been especially problematic in growing sectors such as renewable energy, where employment opportunities are promised during government announcements at project launches but never materialize.

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• (1805)

In addition, who can forget the Liberals' tree planting failure? In 2019, the Liberals promised to plant two billion trees, but as of last year there were deals to plant only 374 million trees by 2031, which is less than 19% of their stated goal. NRCan reports that only 56 million trees have been planted to date; that is not even 3% of the Liberals' promise.

Meanwhile, traditional sectors like oil and gas, where hundreds of thousands of Canadians work and that remain vital to Canada's economy, have been subjected to uncertainty, extra-heavy regulation, prohibitions, unfair treatment and carbon taxes. Canada has lost hundreds of thousands of jobs because the costly coalition wages an ideological war on energy workers.

The Liberals' scandals and mismanagement are not isolated incidents. It is their long-established grift. From the mishandling of programs to insider deals, it is clear that public resources are being misused and Canadians are being shortchanged. After nine years of the NDP-Liberals' anti-energy, anti-private-sector policies, more than \$5.6 trillion of investments in jobs, businesses, projects, talent and technology have gone from Canada to the U.S., a unique reversal since the Liberals were elected in 2015. It has gotten worse every year.

There is no doubt that the Liberal government, backed by the coalition, are the most ethically compromised government in Canadian history. The PM has been convicted of two ethics violations, and so have four senior Liberal MPs, the most of any government in Canadian history. At the same time, the Liberals have made it so that two-thirds of lower-income families struggle to eat, to heat their home and to house themselves, due to the government-caused cost of living crisis. It is just unacceptable that tax dollars are wasted, period. Especially now, Canadians deserve a government that puts their interests first, manages their tax dollars responsibly and delivers real results.

The Liberals' actions, their being their willingness to stop everything to cover up, are obviously a deliberate attempt to shield their own corruption from public scrutiny. The Auditor General already uncovered instances where slush fund officials directed tax money to their own companies. The Ethics Commissioner ruled that the fund's chair, personally appointed by the Prime Minister, broke the law. It is not just common-sense Conservatives saying that; it is common sense.

Elected leadership must prioritize ethics, transparency, accountability and effective governance. Environmental policy should be about stewardship, conservation, mitigation and adaptation, and it should benefit all Canadians, not just the well-connected few in certain regions. Enough is enough. Parliament must do its job, since the Prime Minister and the Liberals will not.

The Liberals must comply with Parliament's demand and release the green slush fund documents because the demand comes from the representatives of the majority of Canadians. That is whom we are here to represent, whom we work for and whom we are to serve. When the majority of members of Parliament in the House of Commons make a demand, those are the people for whom they are making that request.

However, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up and crime is up, and I think Canadians think that time is up for the Liberal government. If the Liberals have nothing to hide, they should call a carbon tax election to let Canadians decide to end wasteful spending, restore accountability and bring home transparency so common-sense Conservatives can axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. It is time.

• (1810)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of the Conservatives said yesterday that it is about behaviour from the past. I heard the member talk about a list of issues that many other Conservatives have actually raised time and time again.

Having said that, I was looking at a publication that talks about 70 abuses of power and corruption and uses a lot of negative words about Stephen Harper. In fact he is the only former prime minister in the history of Canada who was deemed to be in contempt of Parliament. Who was his great defender? It was the current leader of the Conservative Party. In fact, he was the parliamentary secretary to the then prime minister when the latter was in contempt. Now the leader of the Conservative Party is refusing to get a security clearance so he can see the 11 names.

When will the Conservative Party stop with the games and start dealing with the issues that Canadians want us to be dealing with? When will they allow their motion to pass, by stopping all the talk about it and actually having a vote on it?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, first of all, I have no idea when these Liberals are actually going to get into 2024. We will all keep waiting, because they keep talking about 15 years ago. The majority of Conservatives on this side have been elected since 2015, so I guess the member can keep yelling about whatever he is talking about over there.

In terms of the names he mentioned, of the MPs involved in foreign interference, Conservatives have put forward a motion to call upon the Prime Minister to release the names of the members of Parliament who have knowingly or wittingly collaborated with foreign interference. We understand there are 11 MPs. Here are some solutions for the government: Release those names, and release these slush fund documents so we can all get on with our jobs here.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, it would be funny if it were not so sad. I would like to talk about something that my colleague said in her speech.

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She said that the government has failed to keep one of its many promises on the environment, and that is to plant two billion trees. That was a key election promise, but the Liberals have planted maybe 2% or 3% of that amount. She also said that, in the meantime, the government has neglected the oil industry or subjected it to uncertainty.

How can she say such a thing in the House?

According to a study by the International Monetary Fund, in 2022, Canada directly and indirectly invested \$50 billion in the oil industry. If the Liberal government has failed on environmental issues over the past nine years, then I can say that people in my riding, particularly those who are concerned about the fight against climate change, are absolutely terrified, and I am choosing my words carefully here, at the idea of the Conservatives taking power.

• (1815)

[English]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, I completely, 100% agree with the member's comment that the government made a promise with regard to tree planting that it is completely failing to meet. It might be an interesting point of fact that of all the private sectors in the Canadian economy, the sector that plants the most trees without government funding or initiatives is the oil and gas sector, right across Canada. People who live and work around this development would be aware of many of these things.

This goes to the government's whole problem on these environmental issues. It is the same thing with its justification of a carbon tax, which is a tax plan, not an environmental plan. The truth is that Liberals do not even measure emissions reductions. They are not even able to do that.

My question for the Bloc is this: If the Bloc is actually going to function as an opposition party, why would the member be standing up in this debate talking about these issues instead of about the motion that is on the floor of the House of Commons, which is demanding the Liberals release the documents or call a carbon tax election?

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, we condemn Liberal scandals. That is why we are supporting the motion. We want to get the information that is so vital for SDTC. As we know, in the WE Charity scandal and the SNC-Lavalin scandal, NDP MPs played a key role in getting to the bottom of those. We condemn those scandals but we also condemn the incredible corruption of the Harper years. The Conservatives, when they were in power, when we look at the size and scope of their scandals, were even worse than the Liberals.

Just to mention a few, there was the ETS scandal, worth \$400 million; the G8 scandal, \$1 billion; the Phoenix pay scandal, \$2.2 billion; and the anti-terrorism funding scandal, \$3.1 billion. These were massive amounts, unacceptable uses of taxpayers' money and never condemned by Conservatives, ever. In fact, they covered them up during their majority government and refused to have parliamentarians look into each of these various scandals.

Another one has broken today in Saskatchewan, with the conservative Saskatchewan Party. Gary Grewal stole three-quarters of a million dollars and was rendered guilty by the Saskatchewan ethics

commissioner. I have been asking Conservative MPs simply to stand up and condemn that theft. Will the member stand up and condemn the theft of three-quarters of a million dollars by a conservative Saskatchewan Party MLA in Saskatchewan?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, once again, these progressives are just so regressive and stuck in their angry past, are they not? If the member actually wants to be an opposition party member, and do more than just wax on and on about how he is concerned about all these issues or corruptions or scandals or the things they advocate on every single day, why on earth do the New Democrats keep voting with the Liberals over and over to prop them up and keep them in power? That is the real question here, is it not?

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I believe we are now on day 11 of the debate on this motion, which could be moved to committee and voted on. The only thing holding that up is more Conservative speakers.

The last time I spoke to the motion, I shared how much money we are spending by having one speaker talk after another. I have an update on those numbers if anyone is curious. As of yesterday, we have had 66 Conservative members speak to the motion. If we only account for the cost of operating the House of Commons for just those 66 members, which is 33 hours of speeches, it is over \$2.3 million. As of yesterday, there is the opportunity for 53 more Conservatives to continue wasting money to speak to the motion.

How much more money do the Conservatives want to spend continuing to speak about the same motion? We could vote on it right now if they just stopped speaking.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, the Conservatives want to see the documents, and they want the \$400 million that the Liberals wasted in their insider circle-jerk slush fund scheme. What the member is actually saying is that he is perfectly fine with this corruption. He is perfectly fine with this scandal and wants to raise all these other issues instead of focusing on the topic at hand.

In his answer, the member is very clear that he is perfectly fine with this corruption scandal and is not going to do anything about it. People deserve better representation than that.

• (1820)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, speaking of corruption, I am wondering if the member can indicate why the Conservative leader continues to refuse to get security clearance? She made reference to 11 MPs. All the leader needs to do is exactly what the leader of the New Democratic Party, the leader of the Bloc, the leader of the Green Party and the Prime Minister have done: They have clearance.

Others are suggesting that the Conservative leader needs to get clearance. Why not?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister and the Liberals have complete control over this. They can release the names.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was very interested in my colleague's speech, particularly the fact that the Auditor General has only sampled about half of the transactions and found that 82% were conflicted by corrupt Liberals. How bad could the 10,000 pages the government has redacted be that it is hiding them? How much more corruption is there beyond the \$400 million?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for all of his work and all of the other Conservatives who have done yeoman's work on this issue to fight for transparency for Canadians.

That is the scary question. It is shown in the lengths that the Liberals are willing to go to hide, exactly as he said, 10,000 pages of covered-up, blacked-out information. It is apparently the most important information for finding out where Canadians' money has gone. However, this is their pattern. The Liberals are going to Liberal; they will corrupt then cover up. That is what they do. Once again, I thank common-sense Conservatives.

We can see all the tyrant tendencies of people who do not want MPs to speak on behalf of their people. The Conservatives will keep doing this, and the Liberals should release the documents.

ACCESS TO PARLIAMENT HILL

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am rising to provide my response to the question of privilege that was raised by the Conservative deputy leader the week before last, which was before the constituency break.

As the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader said, while members of Parliament have a fundamental right to access the parliamentary precinct free of obstruction, that freedom does not extend to members of the public who are looking to confront, be aggressive to or bully other people on Parliament Hill. It is for that reason that peaceful gatherings on the Hill need prior approval to take place. When those gatherings are political protests, approval is needed in the event that there is a counterprotest. We have seen this multiple times. It makes good sense if the goal is to balance peaceful expression of views, prevention of incidents and a de-escalation of conflict. Of course, if one's goal is not de-escalation, it makes sense that they would not like this, which brings me to the specific incident in question.

I have reviewed the member's intervention. At no point in time does she even try to show how her privilege or access to the Hill was compromised. It simply was not. That alone would be grounds to dismiss her case.

I have also reviewed the clip that she posted to social media of the incident. It seems to me that the video shows an individual approaching an authorized gathering on Parliament Hill with the express purpose of disrupting it, all while being filmed, in an attempt to provoke a reaction from the hard-working, dedicated PPS agent on the scene.

The video in question is watermarked with the extremist tag "Dacey Media", the exact same watermark that appears on videos

Privilege

of attempts to provoke the NDP leader on Parliament Hill a few weeks ago. The individual who was retweeted by the deputy leader of the Conservatives in that same thread, which was of course promoted and retweeted by her, also states extremist rhetoric of hate, such as, "We're like 2 centimetres away from an Islamic regime here". That was from the same extremist who has Americans messaging her about coming to liberate Canada. It is unfortunate, but not a surprise, to see Conservatives promoting racist, far-right accounts.

This comes nowhere near passing the bar that is required for this matter to be considered a question of privilege. I will say that a far more legitimate—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby, who is responding to a question of privilege. I will not have interruptions to that. The hon. member can react afterward.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

• (1825)

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, this is a response to a question of privilege. It is very unusual to see that reaction.

I will say that a far more legitimate question of privilege could have been raised with regard to the actions of Conservative Party members in Parliament in support of extremists a few years ago during the far-right trucker convoy. Members will recall that this convoy shut down downtown Ottawa for weeks, which of course had the direct impact of restricting access to Parliament Hill. Downtown residents were continually harassed. Seniors were denied medication. People with disabilities were denied groceries. Businesses were forced to shut down. Members of Parliament had to walk a gauntlet of far-right extremist hate in order to represent their constituents by coming to this chamber. Far from raising concerns about privilege then, the Conservative Party leader served the truckers coffee and doughnuts, calling it a "freedom convoy", though tens of thousands of Ottawa residents had their freedoms denied as a result of this takeover of downtown Ottawa.

I would mention as well that, since this time, we have seen a number of incidents that are disturbing in their flirtation with the far right. The leader of the official opposition has used the male supremacist "men going their own way" hashtag to attract far-right misogynistic viewers. He accepted an endorsement from far-right conspiracy theorist Alex Jones; has visited protesters affiliated with Diagonol, a militia-like extremist organization; and refused to punish backbenchers who met with members of the extremist AfD party, a party known for Islamophobic and anti-immigrant views.

I could—

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Michael Barrett: This is not relevant.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

When someone is replying to a question of privilege, there is no limitation to what that person can say. There is no limitation on relevance.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby has the floor.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I am just wrapping up. I could go on, but I will leave it at that.

The official opposition deputy leader's matter of privilege is without any merit whatsoever, period.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, the member, while he was speaking, spoke about racism. Will he denounce the tweet from the member for Timmins—James Bay that was clearly anti-Semitic?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is a matter of debate. I do not think we will proceed with that right now.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, as the Chair indicated, there is no limit on the relevance or the scope of a member raising a question of privilege. I would like to bring to the Chair's attention the matter that the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo raised with respect to the environment that has been created by the anti-Semitism that has been espoused by the member for Timmins—James Bay.

In this place, we have members who come from all different faith backgrounds and represent Canadians who come from all those faith backgrounds. It is incredibly concerning that we have an environment that has been created that could be considered by members in this House as hostile to them based on their religious beliefs.

For myself, as a proud Zionist, I am very concerned about this type of anti-Semitism—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): This is turning into a debate. We heard what the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby had to say. It will be taken into consideration by the Chair. If the hon. member has another question of privilege to bring, it is up to him to bring that question of privilege.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the use of insults by the Conservative Party was directed to you, Madam Speaker, in a Speaker's ruling earlier today. The Speaker is coming back to this House, because of the spewing of insults from the Conservative Party. I would suggest that those insults be shut down.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I absolutely agree that those insults should be shut down by everyone, from every side.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes can conclude in about 10 seconds.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, you previously indicated that there is no limit on the scope of that. Your previous ruling was that a member not be interrupted during their question of privilege.

That same courtesy was not extended to me while expressing my concern about the anti-Semitism espoused by the member for Timmins—James Bay and, of course, the member for Kamloops—

Thompson—Cariboo, looking for a House officer from the NDP to condemn that anti-Semitism, which he of course refused and failed to do.

• (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is duly noted. The Chair will come back to the House if necessary on the issue.

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.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I am back tonight to continue to advocate for solutions on one of the issues that is most pressing in my community, and that is continued rising homelessness.

Now, how bad are things right now? Back in 2018, we had just over 300 people living unsheltered across Waterloo region. That point-and-count study was repeated in 2021. The number more than tripled—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would invite members to exit the chamber so that Adjournment Proceedings can continue without noise.

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, we more than tripled the number of folks living unsheltered in just those three years. There is another point-and-count study happening right now, and folks, support workers across Waterloo Region, expect that number to be significantly higher, as do I.

How did it get so bad? We need to be talking about that in this place, so we can focus on real solutions. One reason it has become so bad is that, over the last number of decades, governments of multiple parties have dramatically cut funding for more affordable housing to be built.

In fact, it was as of 1995 that the funding was cut significantly. This has led to the point where, in Ontario, 93% of all affordable homes were built before 1995. It also means that, across the country, our stock of social housing is now at the bottom of the G7, at around 3.5%. Not only have we stopped building the affordable housing we need, but governments have also allowed for the erosion of the existing supply of affordable housing.

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Research from the Canadian Housing Evidence Collaborative shows that, in my community, for every one new unit of affordable housing getting built, we are losing 39. Worse still, we are seeing the financialization of housing as housing is being commodified. We are seeing more and more large corporate landlords buying up and profiteering from homes that used to be affordable, raising rents and evicting folks. Of course, we also have governments that are not investing enough to prevent and reduce homelessness.

This is something that the Parliamentary Budget Officer has looked at very specifically, giving numbers for parliamentarians to consider. To get just a 50% reduction in chronic homelessness across the country, we need to see the federal government increase its funding to seven times what it currently is. The PBO estimates that this would require an additional \$3.5 billion a year.

The good news is that we can afford this. We can look to other programs the government currently funds. We can look at subsidies to the oil and gas industry, for example. There is \$18 billion there. We can look at the Trans Mountain pipeline; there is \$34 billion more there. We can look at the military, which is \$26 billion and going up to \$50 billion. All we need here is just \$3.5 billion for unsheltered folks. We can look to move dollars to those who need it the most.

My question tonight is this: Will the government do better by those living unsheltered and commit the funds we need to close this gap?

• (1835)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to thank my friend, whom I have known for a number of years now. I know his points come from a sincere place. He cares about his community; specifically, he cares about the issue of housing.

He began by talking about the 1990s and cuts that were made. He is right. Previous governments, Liberal and Conservative, let the country down when it comes to the issue of housing. The current government has sought to do something quite different by, really, being the first government really in a generation to understand that there is a federal role with respect to affordable housing.

The member also mentions the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Specifically, he mentions the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report. That is a very good thing because that report talks about the Reaching Home initiative, among other things. This is the signature program when it comes to the federal government's response to helping communities on the issue of homelessness.

What do we know about Reaching Home? As a result of it, 87,000 people who were on the street are no longer on the street now. That includes people in the member's community of Kitchener Centre. These are people who are housed now with supportive housing. What does that mean? It means having mental health support on site and support for physical health care, such as nurses, on site. Quite often, job training programs are provided on site or very close to the facility that is being funded. That is how we get things done. That is how we build homes to ensure people have a roof over their head.

The member talks about encampments. The current federal government put forward \$250 million in budget 2024 to support communities. Having encampments is a scourge. It is not acceptable. We have to respond. We have been clear that provinces need to match the funding in order to maximize the number of communities that can be supported.

I care about this. The government cares about this. I think all members of Parliament do. However, the record is clear that we are responding in a way that the Conservatives would never do. They talk about cuts. In fact, the Conservatives presented what they call a housing plan, which is a little more than something written on the back of a napkin that the Leader of the Opposition put forward in a private member's bill and that does not talk about homelessness at all.

There is more to do. We are committed to that kind of a vision of social justice, and we will get it done.

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, first of all, the parliamentary secretary makes important points, and I hope I made clear in my speech that it is not that the government is doing nothing. In fact it has increased funding to reduce homelessness across the country. The reality right now is this: The result is that over the last number of years, the number of folks living unsheltered has tripled. Therefore the results in my community mean that more folks are hurting and are living on the streets, and we have not seen the results of the funding.

My question to the member remains this: Does he recognize the reality that in Waterloo region, the number of folks living unsheltered has tripled, and will he advocate to step up the funds that have been put on the table to ensure that we get to a point where we achieve the goal we both want, which is to at least cut homelessness in half over the coming years?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Madam Speaker, I certainly recognize that in the member's community and in my community there is homelessness. Where it exists, it is unacceptable. We have a moral responsibility to respond, and yes, the government has made critical investments in that regard, but there is more to do.

I would point out, however, that the member's community is being supported, and we want to continue in that vein. I will point to specific examples, though, because he unfortunately failed to cite any. I think there is honesty on his side when he says he recognizes what the federal government is doing, but at 82 Wilson Avenue in Kitchener, \$2.4 million of support housed 48 people. Kitchener Housing received \$1 million for 500 units that were either built anew or repaired. Finally, the member is quite an advocate for co-op housing, and 50 people are living at the Beaver Creek Housing Co-operative in Waterloo as a result of a \$750,000—

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GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, carbon tax Carney and the heat pump hustle have come to town. We have learned about the lobbying efforts that carbon tax Carney has been undertaking to enrich himself, using his access as a special adviser to the government in the U.K.

What is interesting are the similarities to what happened after carbon tax Carney was named the de facto finance minister by the Prime Minister. When the Prime Minister lost confidence in his finance minister and brought in Carney, we saw the exact same kind of behaviour that we have seen from carbon tax Carney in the U.K. within hours of his being appointed to the role. The Prime Minister is shielding him from Canada's conflict of interest laws, notably, the same laws the Prime Minister was found guilty of breaking twice. The Prime Minister broke the law, twice, just like the public safety minister broke the law, just like the trade minister broke the law.

The Prime Minister is shielding Mark Carney from that law because, within hours of having been named to that position, what did he do? He thought he would start by doing what Liberals do, which is to help out their buddies, and gave a \$2.14-billion loan to his friend who runs Telesat. The Liberals got really upset when I talked about how there are market-based solutions that could be done much more cheaply than what they were proposing to do, but it was not about solving high-speed Internet; it was about enriching their friends.

What else did Mark Carney do in his first week on the job? He tried to get his hands on \$10 billion of pension money in a scheme for Brookfield, the company that he is chair of. In that same first week, what did carbon tax Carney also do? He decided he would let the Prime Minister know he needs to change mortgage rules so we can have longer and larger insured mortgages. Why would carbon tax Carney want to do that? Of course, it is because Brookfield is the second-largest private mortgage insurer in the country. This is what it does. It helps out Liberal insiders, all while Canadians struggle just to get by.

What is the upside for Canadians with the appointment of a de facto finance minister outside the bounds of the obligations that public office holders have, the ethical rules that the Liberals cannot seem to stay on the right side of? We know Carney is looking to succeed the Prime Minister, and obviously, the Liberal Prime Minister wants to displace the finance minister as a contender for that job.

When we boil it all away, we have another Liberal elite who wants to help his friends and Liberal insiders while Canadians are lined up at food banks in record numbers. Two million Canadians are using food banks every month and a third of those food bank users are children. According to Statistics Canada, 25% of Canadians do not know where their next meal is going to come from. That is the legacy of the Liberals who are so determined to help out their friends.

I am sure I will get a non sequitur answer from the parliamentary secretary, who will talk about anything other than the Liberals' failure to represent what Canadians need, which is an accountable government and an institution they can trust.

• (1840)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite is true to form. There is no one who is better at being able to stay focused on the issue of character assassination, and one does not even have to be an elected politician at times.

I find interesting how many times the member tried to get the message out about carbon tax so-and-so, listing off another individual. I know what it is, because I have also seen the email on it. The Conservative Party actually has a fundraising email that is virtually the same as what the member opposite is saying. That is just it; this is all about games, the Conservative Party and character assassination, consistently.

The Conservatives always talk about "Liberal-friendly". Take a look at the issue we have been debating for the last 12 days in the House of Commons. Instead of dealing with issues that Canadians are really concerned about, the Conservatives are more concerned about games. They are concerned about the Conservative Party, and that is it, but not about Canadians and the issues that Canadians have to face.

A good example of that is when the Conservatives talk about Liberal appointments, saying that Liberal people benefit, and they criticize Annette Verschuren. Annette was appointed as chair of SDTC, and the Conservatives constantly say she is a Liberal. However, this individual was an adviser to Stephen Harper, Brian Mulroney and Jim Flaherty, all Conservatives. She is also an individual who contributed thousands of dollars to the Conservative Party, yet the Conservatives will say that she is a Liberal insider.

It does not matter to them; the facts and reality are completely irrelevant. All they want to do is make people look as bad as possible, even if this spreads misinformation, and then try to generate cash through misleading emails to Canadians.

I would love to see the Conservatives' email bank. It has got to be a million plus in terms of the number of individuals. How do they get that data mine? Well, they learned stuff from the United States. This is the far right moving into the Conservative Party. It is the MAGA right, and they understand how they can milk the system. That is exactly what the Conservative Party, or the Conservative Reform Party, is all about.

However, when it comes to being responsible, forget that. The Leader of the Opposition refuses to get a security clearance so he could actually find out information about foreign interference. Instead, there are members across the way crying out, "tell us the names", even though they know that it is illegal for us to do so. They still say it. All they have to do is tell the leader of the Conservative Party to join with the leaders of the NDP, the Bloc and the Green Party, and the Prime Minister, and get the security clearance. If he does that, then he gets to see the 11 names.

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TAXATION

However, I bet that if he saw the 11 names, he would not share them, because it would be illegal for him to do so and he might have to go to jail. Therefore of course he is not going to do what his minions are telling him to do when they say, “share the names”. To me, that is irresponsible, and I have witnessed it first-hand for years.

• (1845)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, let us just zero in on that for a second.

We of course have said that the briefing is a muzzle attempt by the Liberals, and that is exactly what the parliamentary secretary said. However, what he has also said is that people who reveal secret intelligence should go to jail. Well, they should come out with their hands up. It was reported in *The Globe and Mail* today that “federal officials provided intelligence about India to Washington Post”. That is the Liberal government breaking the Canadian Criminal Code.

The member is a parliamentary secretary for the government. Do we think for a second that he is going to get up and condemn the criminality in his own government? We have seen it all over the place, whether it is with the arrive scam or whether it is with the latest scandal where they are now breaching their own national security rules. It is “rules for thee but not rules for me”, which is what they say.

I am fascinated that the member is interested in getting on the Conservative Party mailing list, but maybe he should open up a book and learn a little something about what goes on in this place. Our job is to represent Canadians, not to represent Liberal elites like they have with carbon tax Carney, who has lined his pockets with the heat pump hustle and who is doing the same thing as a board member at Stripe. It claimed it was cutting credit card fees; well, that is what the fake finance minister said. Meanwhile, Carney is pocketing the cash at Stripe because it is not passing on the savings to consumers. It is all about Liberals helping themselves.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we cannot make this stuff up. Here is what an *iPolitics* article said: “[The leader of the Conservative Party]’s approach to national security is ‘complete nonsense’, says expert.” It states, “Conservative Leader...is ‘playing with Canadians’ by refusing to get a top-level security clearance and receive classified briefings on foreign interference, according to one national security expert.” We are talking about Wesley Wark. Wesley Wark was a security adviser not only for Liberal governments, but also Conservative governments.

On national security issues, the article goes on to say, “the Tory leader is knowingly misleading the public by claiming he doesn’t need the clearance because his chief of staff has received briefings.” How stupid is that, Madam Speaker? I would suggest what really needs to happen is the Conservative Party needs to wake up, do what is right and instruct the leader of the Conservative Party to get that security clearance so he can—

• (1850)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I got up in the House of Commons to speak about the capital gains increase and what it meant for Canadian farmers during question period. I thought I would take a few moments today just to explain to Liberals how farming actually works. I do not think they fully understand how it works over on that side, particularly when it comes to generational farm transfers throughout families.

We just finished harvest in Saskatchewan. Farmers plant the crop in the spring. There is a little work that goes on in the summer. Then in the fall, they take in the harvest. This happens year over year. That is the very simplified explanation of how farming works. The price of farmland in Saskatchewan in 1996 was about \$360 to \$390 an acre. In 2024, it is \$3,190 an acre.

We can look at how expensive it has gotten to buy farmland in this country, particularly in my home province of Saskatchewan. We also have the capital gains tax increase from 50% to 67%. The Grain Growers of Canada calculated, when factoring in all the variables, that this amounts to about a 30% tax increase on the sale of farmland.

Farmers do not have a defined benefit plan. They do not have a pension plan. Their retirement savings is the sale of their farm when they get to retirement age. The Liberal member who is going to reply to this is going to get up and say the Liberals increased the lifetime exemption to \$1.25 million. Yes, it is true they did that.

However, on top of that, when somebody sells their farm, once they clear that number, that is where that new tax rate kicks in. That is why the Grain Growers of Canada said it is about a 30% tax increase when it was 50%, and now it is at 67%. That is where that number comes from.

We can look at the valuation of farms and the way it has gone. I know people will say good for farmers that they can sell their land for that much money, and they can have a wonderful retirement. The reality is the cost to buy farmland, seed inputs, machinery, semi-trucks and everything that someone needs on their farm or on their ranch in order to make their business run has skyrocketed exorbitantly.

However, the value that farmers get for the crops they sell has been roughly the same over the years. There are fluctuations in the market because it is a global market. Prices go up and prices go down for what farmers can sell their crops for and what they can contract it for. However, the costs are always going up and up when it comes to the machinery they are purchasing.

Farmers have to pay off banks for the debts on their land. They have to pay off the debts on their machinery. They have to pay off the debts on their house. They have to pay all this stuff off with the money that they get from the sale of their farm. The government is now going to be taking 30% more off the top of that.

Adjournment Proceedings

How is a farmer expected to have a fulsome retirement when the government is taking 30% off the top with the new capital gains tax increase?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will begin by explaining the “why”: Why have we introduced these changes to capital gains in Canada?

The revenue generated from our changes to capital gains will help pay for many of the programs we have put in place. I am thinking, among others, of our national school food program, which aims to help vulnerable children who do not have enough to eat. This helps them learn.

To point out another reason, our government believes that hard-working Canadians who make a salary and get their revenue from labour should not have to pay a higher rate of taxation than Canadians who make money off of capital. I do not believe in having wide disparities in the way labour and capital are taxed. I believe, as our government believes, that income inequality needs to be addressed. This policy, as well as others, such as our luxury tax on boats and private jets, aims to do just that.

This morning, I had the opportunity to attend a round table hosted by Oxfam on the issue of tax fairness and how to address the growing gap between the wealthiest and poorest in our society. While I could spend much time explaining today's discussion or listing figures, I will note that under the current tax system, a nurse or schoolteacher could pay a higher tax rate than somebody cashing in their stock portfolio. I could talk about the Canadians affected by this change, who have an average income of \$1.4 million in any given year. I could detail how middle-class families, small businesses and farmers would be better off under our proposed changes. I have done all that before and I will do it again, but today I would like to talk about something a bit more personal.

I represent the riding of Outremont, which includes the neighbourhood of Outremont, but also Côte-des-Neiges, Mile End and the Plateau. These neighbourhoods represent the microcosm of Canada. We have strong linguistic duality, many ethnic and religious communities, and wide disparities in income and wealth. For average income, my riding is slightly above average, rounding out the top 100, but for median income, my community is ranked the 25th-poorest in the entire country out of 338 ridings and the fourth-poorest in all of Quebec. This is very visible on the ground for me. From the beautiful homes that line gorgeous Mount Royal, with amazing views and beautiful parks, to the old and sometimes dangerously unmaintained apartment buildings in Côte-des-Neiges, which is next to the rumbling of our urban highways, the distinction could not be more stark or more visible to me.

I would like to be very clear: I do not begrudge for a second those living in beautiful houses in Outremont, as I live in a beautiful house in Outremont. I also do not pity those living in the apartment blocks in Côte-des-Neiges. I was born in a one-bedroom apartment in Côte-des-Neiges and had such a beautiful childhood in that neighbourhood. However, I believe that everybody deserves a fair chance and deserves an opportunity, one that might be just a bit easier than the one I had to fight and claw for.

That is where the federal government can and should play a role. That is what fighting for tax fairness is all about. All boats rise with the tide, so all Canadians, including Canadians who pay capital gains, benefit when we create opportunities for other Canadians.

• (1855)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, yes, all boats can rise with the tide, but they can all sink with it too.

Given what the Liberals are doing with the capital gains tax increase, let us look at what they have done for farmers in nine years.

The Liberals are raising taxes by 30% on farmers. That will not make farmers better off. They are hammering them with the carbon tax, which will be quadrupling very soon. Farmers will be paying tens of thousands of dollars every single year and will not get it back from the government's phony rebate program.

The Liberals have looked at trying to label beef as unhealthy. They were warned in advance and did not even bother to put in an application to get the BSE designation for Canada removed when they had the opportunity to do so a couple of years ago.

The fuel regulations the Liberals will be implementing will be detrimental to farmers. Farmers will be paying a higher tax rate because of the fuel regulations. We can also look at the way the Liberals have been posturing around fertilizer reductions and what they are trying to do with that.

The Liberals have done nothing but assault Canadian farmers and Canadian producers, when they are the ones who are tasked with feeding the world. The track record—

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

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Madam Speaker, by ensuring that large investment profits are not taxed less than the paycheques of middle-class Canadians, we are not only ensuring greater tax fairness, we are also supporting our ability to invest in Canadians and in a growing economy that benefits all generations.

This is an important step in our government's plan to build a Canada that works better for everyone, where young people can get ahead, be fairly rewarded for their hard work and be able to buy or rent a home. It is a Canada where everyone has a fair chance to live a good life, right across in our beautiful country. That is exactly what our government is doing with this proposal.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1900)
[English]

adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been

(The House adjourned at 7 p.m.)

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