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CANADA

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# House of Commons Debates

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Wednesday, November 20, 2024

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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayer*

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• (1400)

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### JOHN HORGAN

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to John Horgan, British Columbia's former premier and Canada's ambassador to Germany, who passed away far too soon, on November 12.

John from Langford, as he was affectionately known, was a great Canadian and fierce fighter for our province. He believed and lived the belief that we can build a strong economy and do the best for the most vulnerable, and that the two are inextricably linked. That is what we loved about John. Even as a federal Liberal I admired his pragmatism, his passion and his ability to cross traditional boundaries of politics to build a coalition of British Columbians that dared to build a better future. Our province is better off having had John Horgan as our premier.

To his wife, Ellie, and his children, I send on behalf of all of us in the House our sincere condolences. I thank them for sharing John with us.

May John rest in peace. May his memory live long and prosper.

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[*Translation*]

### FORESTRY INDUSTRY

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I really fear for our forestry workers, who are dedicated to their profession.

Many have already lost their jobs, and now another 1,400 forestry workers in Lac-Saint-Jean and on the north shore are directly threatened because of a federal decree that the Minister of Environment wants to impose. What is the member for Jonquière doing about this? Nothing. He has not asked a single question in the House to defend workers, nor has he taken any concrete action. All he has done is take part in round table discussions that lead nowhere. Worse still, he voted twice to keep this government in place, clearing the way for it to impose this destructive decree.

It is clear that the Bloc Québécois and the Liberals are forming a coalition against the regions and against the forestry sector. The Bloc Québécois is no longer a party of the regions. We must say no to this hypocrisy and bring back common sense.

It is time for an election.

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• (1405)

### LILIANNE POULIN

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on July 24, Sherbrooke lost one of its bright lights with the passing of a beloved resident at the age of 94.

Lilianne Poulin was extremely active on Sherbrooke's political scene. As a seasoned volunteer, Ms. Poulin followed wherever her convictions and deep faith in democracy led her. She cared about the well-being of her community and worked tirelessly to convince people to get involved in politics if they wanted to effect change. Her interest in politics led her to take on a wide range of duties during numerous election campaigns.

At age 90, she was forced to curb her political involvement due to health issues, but she remained passionate about politics to the end.

I want to express my deepest condolences to Ms. Poulin's loved ones and thank them for sharing this extraordinary woman with the Sherbrooke community.

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### CENTRE COMMUNAUTAIRE DE LOISIRS JEAN-NOËL TRUDEL

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Centre communautaire de loisirs Jean-Noël Trudel, a community recreation centre in Bas-du-Cap, is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year.

*Statements by Members*

The centre welcomes more than 2,500 people a week, offering a multitude of services to the community, including sponsorship programs, activities for disadvantaged youth, day camps, sports and cultural activities, and the list goes on.

The centre owes its popularity and success to its passionate and dedicated staff. The centre's heart and soul is its executive director, Gaétan Laperrière. Since first being hired in 1989, he has worked as a group leader, an usher and a volleyball manager, and later served as program manager and general manager in 2008.

It is largely thanks to the dedication of Gaétan and his team that the Centre Jean-Noël Trudel can provide so many quality services to the people in the area.

Congratulations to Gaétan and his team. I wish everyone at the Centre Jean-Noël Trudel a happy 40th anniversary and continued success.

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[English]

**SRI LANKA**

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Canada's Sri Lankan diaspora, including both Sinhalese Canadians and Tamil Canadians, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Sri Lanka's President, Anura Kumara Dissanayake, and his progressive party, the National People's Power, on their historic majority in the parliamentary elections. This victory represents a mandate to implement the promised economic and constitutional reforms, including addressing long-standing demands, such as returning state-acquired lands in the north to their rightful owners.

The Sinhalese in the south, the Tamils in Jaffna in the north and all ethnic minorities, including Muslims and Malayaha Tamils, have expressed new-found trust in the government. I urge Canada to seize this opportunity to reset its approach, shifting away from influence of diaspora groups and a divisive agenda and focusing instead on fostering respectful and strengthened bilateral relations.

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**GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of NDP-Liberals, Canadian children have never been worse off. Yesterday, Campaign 2000 published its national report card, and under the Prime Minister, child poverty jumped 2.5% between 2021 and 2022, the largest annual increase on record for the second straight year in a row. With the cost of food up 35% since the government took office, it is no wonder nearly one in five children, totalling 1.4 million, is living in poverty.

Here is some breaking news: Canada has failed to improve its ranking on the climate change performance index. Sadly, Canada still ranks 62 out of 67, as other countries boast a better environmental record without punishing their people with the carbon tax.

A Conservative government will bring fiscal responsibility and accountability back to Ottawa, scrap the tax and put affordable food on the tables of middle-class Canadians. Let us bring it home.

• (1410)

**ERIC LIDELL**

**Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, here is an epic story to inspire us all. It is about compassion, passion and integrity immortalized in the movie *Chariots of Fire*, with an important Canadian connection. One hundred years ago at the 1924 Paris Olympics, Scottish sprinter Eric Liddell, son of missionaries, refused to run on a Sunday to compete in his signature race, the 100-metre sprint. Instead he ran the 200-metre and 400-metre events, winning bronze and gold, the gold in world record time. Liddell exemplified the very best of athletics, and his faith and sport gave him a platform to help others.

A year after winning Olympic glory, he returned to China as a missionary, teacher and mentor. When war approached, he sent his wife, Florence, and daughters back to Canada. He never saw them again. Liddell died in a Japanese internment camp, aged 43. We join his family in Canada to celebrate his life. His legacy endures.

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**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if we want to know what the future of Canada's clean-energy economy looks like, we need look no further than my riding of Sudbury. Sudbury is a success story in combining environmental stewardship with economic development. Canada's mining industry creates close to 700,000 direct and indirect jobs, and we are just getting started. Mining contributes \$161 billion to Canada's economy. That is close to 8% of the country's GDP.

At this time of global uncertainty, developing a reliable supply chain for critical minerals is vital to Canada's economic growth, peace and security. Critical minerals and mining are at the centre of the clean-energy transition. With over 300 mining supply, technology and innovation businesses, Sudbury, I am proud to say, is at the heart of this effort.

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**RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE**

**Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today is National Child Day and also Day on the Hill for Ronald McDonald House Charities Canada. Ronald McDonald House helps families struggling with life's toughest and most unexpected moments: caring for a sick child. Last year its 16 houses and 19 family homes provided comfort and care to over 18,000 families across Canada when their child received treatment.

Ronald McDonald House is joined today by Lindsay Williamson, a dedicated mother and advocate for her son, Mason, who was born with a rare genetic disease. It has been a lifeline for their family that has provided a place of comfort, rest and normalcy amidst the chaos of multiple hospital visits. As Lindsay has said, “Strong families are essential building blocks for strong communities.” I could not agree more.

Let us welcome Ronald McDonald Houses from across Canada and help them to deliver the care and comfort so families can also heal.

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#### LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

**Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians know foreign interference poses a grave threat to our democracy. That is why many are concerned about the Leader of the Opposition's refusal to obtain his security clearance. While the RCMP has uncovered foreign criminal activity in Canada, the Conservative leader prefers to close his eyes and repeat empty slogans in the House. We should all be concerned about such blatant disregard for the safety of Canadians. Every other party leader of the House has acted with vigilance by obtaining their security clearance to stay fully informed.

I would like to suggest that rather than obsess about maintaining tight control over his caucus, as reported in today's *Globe and Mail*, the Leader of the Opposition expend his energy on immediately applying for a security clearance. National security has to remain every member's priority.

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#### VICTIMS' RIGHTS

**Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government is putting Paul Bernardo ahead of victims. First, there was the transfer to medium security, in the dead of night, to a jail with cushy conditions, including a hockey rink that doubles as a tennis court. No advance notice was given to victims. The latest issue is that the victims, including the French family and the Mahaffy family, are now being told that they cannot attend Bernardo's hearing next week in person.

To present their victim impact statement in person is a right that every victim should have. The Parole Board's reason is security, but it will not say what security is at issue. Correctional Service Canada has an army of officers available to assist, but it chose to hide and to obfuscate. Why is that? I believe it is because they want to hide the truly lax conditions of Bernardo's incarceration. They bend over backward for Paul Bernardo while ignoring the basic rights of the victims' families.

The French and Mahaffy families and all victims have been through enough. Why is the government revictimizing them?

\* \* \*

• (1415)

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadian political news right now makes binge-worthy

#### Statements by Members

political dramas on Netflix look tame. Here is the plot: There are allegations of fraud, arson, destruction of records, grounded private jets, missing witnesses and unfulfilled contracts.

The scandals with the just recently former minister of employment are stacking up. He claimed to be indigenous, even though he was not, but he certainly wanted to be because he netted millions in contracts that were supposed to go to indigenous-owned businesses. It has been revealed that there were connections between that former minister and an international drug-smuggling ring, and claims that the so-called Randy, who he kept denying he was, netted millions in government contracts.

That minister may be out, but here are the brass tacks of the situation: It is time for Canadians to put the morally questionable and corrupt government on notice. It is time for a carbon tax election, so Canadians can elect a common-sense Conservative government to restore order and accountability and bring home a country that does the work Canadians expect.

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#### HOUSING

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians elect MPs to represent their communities in Ottawa, not to serve the party leaders' interests, but the Conservative leader does not seem to care. After more than 18 Conservative MPs advocated for the housing accelerator fund to support their communities, the opposition leader imposed gag orders, silencing his MPs from pushing for federal funding because he wants to slash housing initiatives across the country.

Surrey residents cannot afford the Conservative leader's reckless plan to cut our \$95-million agreement, which would unlock 16,500 new homes over the next decade. It is time for Conservative MPs to stand up to their leader and fight his cuts to their communities so we can solve the housing crisis.

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#### WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the B.C. provincial cabinet has been announced, and the vast majority of its leadership is made up of women. In fact, more than half of B.C. MLAs overall are women, which is a first.

### Oral Questions

Research shows that, when groups come together with a broad amount of diversity, decisions are more effective and a better fit for everyone. As my friend Karen reminds me, when something is more accessible, it is more accessible for everyone.

Research tells us that women are asked less than half as often as men to run for politics and that they need to be asked multiple times to consider it. I hope all of us in the House remember to get out there and ask many times for the amazing women of our communities to run for all political roles. With more inclusive leadership, we can create better solutions, better communities and a better Canada.

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[Translation]

#### NATIONAL CHILD DAY

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today is National Child Day. This is an important opportunity to remember that children are the future of our society and deserve the utmost care and protection. Unfortunately, too many children still live in precarious conditions with unequal access to education, quality health care, nutritious food and a healthy environment. Poverty, abuse and a lack of resources are an everyday reality for many children in Quebec and Canada. It is our duty to ensure that they have a better future.

The Bloc Québécois wants to take this opportunity to remind the federal government that it promised to invest \$1 billion in the school food program but has yet to transfer even one penny to Quebec. On this day, let us recommit to defending the rights of children and creating a fairer environment for them.

\* \* \*

• (1420)

[English]

#### ETHICS

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us play a little game of true or false regarding the former minister of employment, the member for Edmonton Centre.

True or false, the former minister deceived Canadians and his caucus colleagues about his indigenous heritage. That is true.

True or false, the former minister from Edmonton's business deceptively advertised itself as indigenous-owned. That is true.

True or false, the former minister's ethically challenged business fraudulently applied for and received government contracts meant for actual indigenous businesses. That is true.

True or false, the former minister from Edmonton's firm shares a mailing address with persons named in several cocaine busts. That is true.

True or false, despite claims of multiple Randys, there is only one Randy at the former minister's business firm. That is true.

True or false, the former minister from Edmonton breached ethics rules by contacting his business while sitting at the cabinet table. That is true.

True or false, the Prime Minister has one set of rules for actually indigenous MPs in his cabinet and a different set of rules for non-indigenous but indigenous-claiming multiple Randy personality disorder MPs in his cabinet. That is true.

True or false, the Prime Minister should have fired that guy a long time ago. That is true.

\* \* \*

#### THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

**Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, thanks to some excellent work by Radio-Canada reporter Christian Noel, we learned this week that Conservative MPs are being muzzled by their leader. The article states, "The man who promised during his leadership run to make Canada 'the freest country in the world' maintains tight control over the actions of his caucus members." One Conservative told CBC, "Everybody is being watched. What we say, what we do, who we talk to. We're told not to fraternize with MPs from the other parties. And that's not normal."

The Conservative leader will not even let his members advocate for the housing accelerator fund in their ridings, which is money for housing for the people who voted them into office. I know that in my riding of Hamilton Mountain, the housing accelerator fund means \$93 million for 9,000 new homes over the next decade. Affordable housing providers, such as Indwell, Victoria Park Community Homes and Good Shepherd, say the fund is critical to their work.

It is time for the Conservatives to stop parroting their leader's slogans and start standing up for their constituents.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

#### ETHICS

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has doubled the debt, doubled housing costs, doubled gun crime, doubled food bank use and, up until a few moments ago, had a minister with a double identity.

The Prime Minister knew that the minister in question was directing his business from inside cabinet and that he had falsely claimed to be indigenous, yet the Prime Minister stood by him and kept him in cabinet.

Why is the Prime Minister so determined to protect his former minister's corruption?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Edmonton Centre has stepped down from cabinet to focus on clearing these allegations.

*Oral Questions*

Meanwhile, when the Leader of the Opposition talks about the challenges facing Canadians, he does not offer any solutions besides cuts and austerity. He wants to cut the dental care program. He wants to cut the pharmacare program for medication and contraception. He wants to cut day care spaces. He is offering cuts when Canadians need investments and growth.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the former Liberal attorney general, who was appointed by this Prime Minister and was the first indigenous person to hold the position, said it was shameful for a Liberal minister to claim to be indigenous when he is not.

Let us look how differently these two individuals were treated. Why did the Prime Minister fire a real indigenous woman for telling the truth, but support a fake indigenous minister who told falsehoods?

• (1425)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for a leader who claims to be concerned about people who tell the truth, it is interesting to see that he is muzzling his caucus and not letting members express their concerns about investments in their communities. We found out today that he is not allowing his own members to speak freely.

We are here in the House to be strong voices for our communities, but he wants his members to be his voice in their communities. That is not how it works. Conservative members should say what they really think.

[*English*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, in nine years, has doubled housing costs, doubled the debt, doubled gun crime, doubled food bank use and, up until a minute ago, had a minister with a double identity.

The Prime Minister knew the former minister was directing his business illegally from inside cabinet. He knew the former minister had claimed there was another Randy when there was no other Randy. He knew the former minister had falsely claimed to be indigenous in order to take money away from real indigenous people, yet he stood by him up until yesterday.

Why is it that he always stands up for corruption on his own side?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Edmonton Centre has stepped down from cabinet to focus on clearing these allegations.

The Leader of the Opposition talks about the importance of speaking up. The reality is that his MPs are no longer voices for their communities; they are his voice in their communities. That is not how this place is supposed to work.

We are focused on making sure that we are investing in Canadians and supporting them with the kinds of supports for housing, dental care and child care they need, while all he offers are cuts and austerity.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on muzzling caucus members, this is the guy who fired the

first indigenous attorney general because she refused to defend his corruption.

She said, “A Prime Minister committed to true reconciliation would have removed Randy (and the other Randy) from Cabinet long ago. Instead we get to watch white people play ancestry wheel of fortune. So shameful and extremely destructive!”

Why is it that he fired a real indigenous minister for telling the truth while trying to keep in place a fake indigenous minister who told falsehoods?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, telling the truth would be MPs continuing to stand up to advocate for their communities, but the Leader of the Opposition has asked them not to be their community's voices here in Ottawa but instead to be his voice in their communities. That is supposedly the party of freedom and freedom of speech, but he is muzzling his MPs. He is not letting them talk to the media. He is not letting them talk to committees. The reality is he is afraid of what they might say about him because there is no call to be muzzling MPs this way.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is from a Prime Minister who has 20 caucus members who have signed a letter saying they are ready to fire him. Why would they not? This is a guy who has doubled housing costs, doubled gun crime, doubled food bank use, doubled the national debt and kept in place a minister with a double identity. Even his own caucus members know he is not worth the cost, crime or corruption. If he is not afraid of anything, why does he not call a carbon tax election like Canadians want?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition just made, very clearly, the point that the MPs on this side of the House are free to share their opinions publicly, even when they are ones I disagree with. Absolutely—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

• (1430)

**The Speaker:** Order. Colleagues, the more time we spend here with the Chair interrupting the process so that we get order in the House, the fewer questions and answers we will be able to have in question period, so I ask that members please control themselves today.

The right hon. Prime Minister, from the top.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, in the minds of Conservatives, we just saw a big gotcha moment where I admitted that Liberal MPs are free to speak their minds and voice their opinions, even when we have disagreements. That was astonishing to the members of the Conservative Party because they are not allowed to do that. They are not allowed to speak to the media. They are not allowed to speak their minds. They are not allowed to be voices for their communities. They are not allowed to stand up for investments in their cities on housing. That is the real scandal in this place.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

*Oral Questions*

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, every day, the House of Commons shows Quebec just why we really need to get the hell out of here. Until that time comes, we keep having to repeat ourselves, so let us repeat ourselves a bit more. All four parties in the House supported Bill C-282 on supply management. It was one of the few points of consensus ever reached and, incidentally, was reached at an outdoor gathering. Two senators are blocking the bill.

Does the Prime Minister think that the Senate is worth more than the votes of all Quebec's elected members?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Bloc Québécois pointed out, we gave our unanimous support in the House to protecting supply management.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, it was almost unanimous. We were on that side. The reality is that the Senate is doing its job and is looking at the bill. We will not accept any bill that minimizes or eliminates the House's obligation to protect supply management in any future trade agreement. We have been very clear on that. No matter what the Senate does, the will of the House is clear.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, democracy has spoken. Approximately 50 Conservative MPs voted against supply management. That said, to try and clean up this mess, I will be going to the Senate this afternoon to meet with senators in person, and I will be going there again tomorrow. Clearly, this is not how we usually do business.

Will the Prime Minister be meeting with these senators himself?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have often met with senators and will continue to do so. I want to be absolutely unequivocal and very clear about this: We will always protect supply management, whatever the opinion of the august senators.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau:** I was being ironic, Mr. Speaker. We will defend the integrity of our supply management system, even when negotiating a new free trade agreement.

\* \* \*

• (1435)

[*English*]

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, do you know what families are telling me? They are telling me their cell phone bills and their Internet bills are so high that they have to cut back on monthly costs, like swimming lessons for their kids.

The Liberals are hurting Canadians by taxing essentials, and king cut and the Conservatives are going to make things even worse. They want to cut the benefit for children, the child benefit. That could lose families \$600 a month.

Will the Liberals stop taxing essentials like cell phone and Internet bills right now?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the NDP wants to join us in making life more affordable for Canadians, all they have to do is put an end to the obstruction of the work of Parliament that the Conservatives are leading on. Parliament is supposed to do the work of Canadians in making their lives better, but with the Conservative Party's obstruction, there are bills being slowed down, measures around dental care, around indigenous services and school food. These are things we need to unblock in this House, and if the NDP will help us stop the obstructionism of the Conservatives, we can deliver for Canadians.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister can help people by stopping taxing the essentials.

[*Translation*]

Every time Bell or Rogers increases their cellphone bill, the GST they pay goes up. The GST should never have been applied to essentials.

The Liberals are failing Canadians. It is time to fix that. Will the Prime Minister give people a break by cancelling the GST on essentials, yes or no?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the NDP wants to join with us in making life more affordable for Canadians, all it has to do is help us end the Conservatives' filibuster in Parliament.

Parliament is supposed to be working on behalf of Canadians to lower the cost of living, but the Conservative Party's filibuster and the NDP's inaction on this issue are delaying critical legislation from passing, including funding for dental care, school meals, housing, indigenous services and so much more. The NDP has to work with us. We need to stop the Conservatives from blocking the help that Canadians need.

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[*English*]

**IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has now admitted that the immigration system is broken after nine years of his government. He blames "bad actors", so let us put our detective hat on and find out who those bad actors were. Who was the head of the federal government that increased permits for temporary foreign workers by 154%? Who was the head of the federal government that issued 211% more permits for international students and a population growth plan that boosted growth by 300%? Can we identify who that bad actor was?



*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, following a pandemic that had devastated our economy in a short-term way, Canadians needed, and businesses needed, extra support and so asked for more temporary foreign workers, asked for more international students, and we gave them. Our economy grew. Our economy got back faster than the United States and got back faster than many other countries of the world.

We are now in a different situation where we have had to step up and reduce immigration numbers to make sure our housing issues can catch up. This is what a responsible government does. It puts forward solutions that are right in the moment and corrects them when they are no longer needed.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think we have found the bad actor yet. The Prime Minister blames it on labour market needs, but the biggest growth happened in non-labour market immigration. For example, he boosted permits for international students by 211% and refugees by 726%, which has nothing to do with filling job vacancies. When it comes to temporary foreign workers, he allowed more to go to places with already high unemployment.

Once again, who was the bad actor who made these terrible decisions?

• (1440)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, these little performances that the Leader of the Opposition—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** The right hon. Prime Minister, from the top.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, these little performances that the Leader of the Opposition puts on are not fooling anyone. The only thing he is interested in is his own interests, his own quest for power. He is asking his MPs to not be strong voices for their communities, including in communities that are relying on the investments in their housing so they can respond to growing populations and housing pressures caused by increasing population. These are the things we are busy solving, but he would rather muzzle his MPs in order to look good when he is doing his little show.

\* \* \*

**HOUSING**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is not helping us find the bad actor. It is like there has been someone else running the country for the last nine years while the system has come crumbling down. He claims that he cares about housing, but on that subject, maybe we will ask him this question: Who was the head of the government that was warned by its public service three years ago that increasing population growth by 300% would cause the massive housing shortages we see today?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Again, Mr. Speaker, with the little performances. What the Leader of the Opposition would rather not admit is that when he was Stephen Harper's failed housing minister, he created a total of six affordable housing units across the country. He was part of a government that completely pulled back from any investments in housing. Yes, as a

government we have had to step up and make record investments, but even as we are making record investments to accelerate the construction of housing in Conservative ridings across the country, he is preventing his Conservative MPs from standing up for their communities to solve this housing crisis.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when I was housing minister, we had one home built for every 1.5 people added to the population, which meant we were adding houses faster than we needed to and we were providing affordable homes at half the cost of today. Last year, the Liberals added one home for every five new people, the biggest housing deficit in history. So, once again, who was the bad actor running the government that was warned by its officials that all of this out-of-control population increase would cause a housing shortage?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government in which the Leader of the Opposition was the failed housing minister deliberately chose to get out of the business of housing, which meant we needed to step up with a national housing strategy in 2017, and with record investments, not just to create more housing but to change the way housing is built in communities across this country. That is money put into the pockets of municipalities to invest, to densify and to accelerate permitting, money that he is promising to take away and that his MPs are trying to speak out to defend.

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**IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when I was the housing minister, housing was half the cost. When I was the jobs minister, I actually cut down the number of temporary foreign workers to make sure that Canadians got the jobs.

However, the bad actor he is referring to is the same head of government who allowed 211% more study permits for people who were not supposed to be working. He allowed 154% more temporary foreign workers while Canadians were looking for jobs and 726% more refugees. If he wants to know who the bad actor is who broke the immigration system, why does he not do what he loves to do the most? He should look in the mirror.

*Oral Questions*

● (1445)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the irony of this is that the Leader of the Opposition likes to rhyme off facts and figures, but he will not even take a briefing that will allow him to understand the security threats facing this country. For some strange reason that he will not admit to, he has refused to get a security clearance. He has refused to take the briefings necessary to keep Canadians safe. Therefore, any time he chooses to rhyme off facts and figures, we know that he is not actually caring about Canadians; he is caring about himself.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, now we know the difference. We want to axe the tax; he wants to axe the facts.

[Translation]

After nine years, it is clear that the immigration system is completely broken, but the Prime Minister likes to blame bad actors for the problem.

Will he look at who was the head of the government that increased population growth by 300%, that issued 211% more permits for international students, and that increased the number of refugees by 700%?

If he wants bad actors, why does he not do what he loves doing the most, which is looking in the mirror?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada enjoyed the fastest economic recovery among our peers after the pandemic. This was partly because we decided to welcome people to address the labour shortage we were experiencing across the country.

Now we are in a different situation. We are fixing the problem and adjusting our immigration targets, adjusting the number of temporary workers coming in and adjusting the number of international students.

Those are things a responsible government must do to ensure appropriate growth for our country.

\* \* \*

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, what will Quebeckers say if the government fails to protect supply management? What will they say about the Senate? What will they say about the government? What will they say about the Prime Minister's leadership and this inconsistency? While the United States is about to become more protectionist than ever, Canada is about to give up its agriculture.

Are Canada and its Senate the worst negotiators in history or will they defend supply management?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have always been very clear. As a government, we will protect supply management in any present or future free trade negotiations.

As such, we support the Bloc Québécois's bill to protect supply management. In the event that the bill fails in the Senate and if we

do not manage to pass it here because the Conservatives will vote against it, we will be there to protect supply management, even if we have to take government action to do so.

We are here to protect supply management, period.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we are going to protect it with legislation.

It is ironic that while the Senate of Canada or certain senators of Canada want to sacrifice Quebec, it is the Bloc Québécois that is working for all farmers in Quebec and Canada.

Do people understand that this is not about the Bloc Québécois? This is about the quality of the food we eat. It is about fair and predictable pricing. It is about the environmental impact of farming practices.

I invite the Prime Minister to accompany me to my meeting with senators this afternoon.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the Bloc Québécois leader's choice to go meet with senators.

We regularly work with senators to get good legislation and good bills passed for Canadians.

As I said, we will protect supply management. We completely agree with our Bloc Québécois colleagues on the importance of protecting supply management and our farmers.

That is why we acted accordingly. That is why we are committed as a government to never undermine supply management in any future free trade negotiation.

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[English]

**CARBON PRICING**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was just off on another bonanza of high-flying, high-carbon, high-taxing hypocrisy, this time on a trip to Brazil. He dripped with condescension for Canadians who are struggling to pay their bills. He said, "It is really, really easy, when you are in a short-term survive, I gotta be able to pay the rent this month, I've gotta be able to buy groceries for my kids, to say, OK, let's put climate change as a slightly lower priority." This is the Prime Minister who burns 100 tonnes of jet fuel and releases 100 tonnes of greenhouse gases.

When will he stop the high-tax hypocrisy?

● (1450)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are facing global challenges right now. As much as the Leader of the Opposition would love to bury his head in the sand, global inflation and climate change, which is impacting everyone around the world, require us to be working together.

*Oral Questions*

Standing up for peace and justice on the world stage, standing up for women's rights or standing up for opportunities for the middle class requires us to work together, something the Leader of the Opposition cannot do. He cannot even work with his own MPs. He has to muzzle them. He is not letting them be voices of their communities in Ottawa. Those are the real colours of the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** A quarter of his caucus members want to fire him, Mr. Speaker, and we know why. Food prices have risen 36% faster in Canada than in the U.S., a gap that opened up as the carbon tax came into force. The Prime Minister just goes on trying to tell Canadians that their mentality is off. He says, "There's a sense that affordability is in direct contrast with our moral responsibility to protect the planet", trying to shame Canadians for opposing his ineffective, job-killing, inflationary carbon tax.

Will he stop lecturing Canadians and call a carbon tax election?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I invite Canadians to actually watch the remarks I made down south, where I was talking exactly about the importance of putting affordability first for Canadians, even as we are fighting against climate change.

The Leader of the Opposition can invent things that he thinks I might have said. That is not what I said. What I pointed out was that even as we are fighting climate change, even as we are creating incentives to grow our economy in cleaner, greener ways, we are putting more money back in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadians with the Canada carbon rebate, a fact that he's busy gaslighting Canadians against.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** I am going to ask all colleagues, including the hon. member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, to please not take the floor unless recognized by the Chair.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has gaslit Canadians so much that Environment Canada has to do a recalculation of the carbon emissions that have come from the lamp. He is the Prime Minister who tells Canadians they should not believe their eyes when the Parliamentary Budget Officer's data shows that 100% of middle-class people pay more in carbon tax than they get back in rebates, that they should not believe their eyes when they see that grocery prices are rising 36% faster in Canada than in the U.S.

Instead of trying to gaslight Canadians, why not call a carbon tax election?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the Leader of the Opposition is just not telling the truth. The reality is that the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that eight out of 10 Canadians get more money back from the price on pollution than it actually costs them in paying that price on pollution. The cost of inaction on climate change is astronomical. That is exactly what he is proposing.

The Leader of the Opposition should stop misleading Canadians and actually understand that we cannot fight for affordability and we cannot fight against climate change unless we are investing in Canadians.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** I know that certain comments cause a disturbance in the House, but I will ask all members to be careful about the language they use.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, his quadrupling carbon tax is all financial pain and no environmental gain. Today we learned that, after nine years under the Prime Minister, Canada now ranks 62nd out of 67 countries for the climate change performance index. The Prime Minister says that Canadians starving or lined up at food banks should congratulate themselves on the fact that his tax has made us 62nd. He says we are 62nd, and he pumps his fist into the air.

Why does the Prime Minister make Canadians pay such high taxes to achieve such terrible results?

• (1455)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again the Leader of the Opposition is entirely misrepresenting the facts for his own gain, for his own interest. That is really all he cares about. If he cared about Canadians, he would not be standing against dental care. He would not be standing against more spaces in child care. He would not be standing against putting more money in Canadians' pockets with a price on pollution that is bending our emissions down faster than those of our other G7 neighbours. At the same time, it is helping with affordability for eight out of 10 Canadians in areas in which it lands. The Canada carbon rebate is an affordability measure that is protecting future generations, and he is standing against it.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, child poverty has increased for a second year in a row, and parents are struggling more than ever to buy essentials, such as baby formula and diapers. The Liberals have let families down. Meanwhile, the Conservatives want to cut child care and cut the national school food program. That will cost families thousands more dollars every single year.

On World Children's Day, will the Prime Minister lower costs for families by following the NDP's plan to cut the GST on essentials?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate my NDP colleague's bringing up the school food program and her support for it. If she really wanted to support it, she would help us stop the obstructionism by the Conservative Party that is preventing us from moving forward on delivering concretely for Canadians the way they need.

Canadians need help and investments, and Conservatives did not have enough in blocking and voting against school foods, voting against and blocking dental care, and voting against and blocking pharmacare, so they are now blocking any capacity in the House to deliver for Canadians. The NDP needs to work with us and stop this obstruction.

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**NORTHERN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, 11 of the 25 communities I represent have experienced boil water advisories this year. That is almost half. Even the UN special rapporteur slammed the government for ignoring its obligation to ensure clean drinking water. The Liberals have failed. Nunavut children, families and whole communities should not have to worry about drinking water.

When will the Liberal government finally invest in Nunavut so everyone can have the clean drinking water they deserve?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, *qujannamiik* to my colleague. I agree: We need to move forward on protecting clean water and on delivering. That is why we are asking the NDP to stop slow-walking the clean water bill and to work with us to get it through the House so we can actually deliver the water Canadians need from coast to coast to coast, including in Nunavut.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order.

I am going to ask the hon. member for Hamilton Centre to not take the floor unless he is recognized by the Chair.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Alfred-Pellan.

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**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, foreign interference is a real threat to democracies around the world. Bad actors like Russia, China and India are using questionable tactics to sow discord and advance their own agendas in countries like Canada. Still, there is deafening silence from the Leader of the Opposition.

Could the Prime Minister explain why the Conservative leader should be taking national security seriously?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Alfred-Pellan for his work. Canadians send each and every one of us to the House, in part to ensure their safety. However, the Leader of the Opposition does not care much about national security. He refuses to get the security clearance he would need to protect Canadians from foreign interference. He is

going to cut resources from the police and the border, and he wants to put guns back on our streets.

Canadians deserve a government that protects them and that does not put their safety at risk with dangerous cuts.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

[*English*]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, inflation is again on the rise, with three of the Bank of Canada's four measures now above target. The finance minister admitted about a year ago that deficits cause inflation. She made this commitment in her budget, "the 2023-24 deficit at or below \$40.1 billion". Since then, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that number has been blown away.

Will the Prime Minister tell us, here and now, how much last year's deficit was?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we just heard it once again from the Conservative leader. The foundation to his entire economic argument is that delivering programs to help Canadians in times of need somehow makes everything worse for everyone. He is proposing cuts to dental care, cuts to child care, cuts to the school food program, cuts to money responding to the housing crisis in municipalities. His only answer to Canadians hurting is to cut services to them while he exploits their fears for his own personal gain.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister misheard. It was the Minister of Finance who said that deficits cause inflation.

The Prime Minister also said that every dollar of deficit contributes to inflation. That is why they made the commitment, he and his finance minister, to "Maintaining the 2023-24 deficit at or below \$40.1 billion".

Last year's books have been closed for six months now. He certainly has all the data. How much was last year's deficit?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know the Leader of the Opposition is keen to see our fall economic statement, which will talk about measures that are there to help affordability, to support Canadians, to be there to invest in them. He is looking forward to seeing all these great measures we are putting forward to support Canadians in their time of need, because he cannot wait to vote against them. He cannot wait to slash services and programs that are helping Canadians. He cannot wait to stand in the way of us helping Canadians through this difficult time by putting the best balance sheet in the G7 in service of Canadians who need a little more support. He has voted against supports for Canadians. He is going to continue to do so.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is the Prime Minister who admitted that deficit spending adds to inflation. Maybe that is why there has been a record increase in child poverty this year, with one in five kids now in poverty, and two million people lined up at food banks. This is not my world view; he has now admitted that deficits contribute to inflation. That is why he promised that the deficit would not go above \$40.1 billion last year. He has had six months since that fiscal year ended. Does he even know what the deficit was in his own government?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, obviously the Leader of the Opposition is keen to hear our fall economic statement, but the reality is, he is only looking forward to it because he wants to vote against it. He is going to vote against measures that support Canadians: measures to be there for Canadian families who are struggling, to invest in things like school food, to invest in more support for dental care for vulnerable people, and to invest in jobs and growth creation right across the country. These are the things he has consistently stood against because he believes in cuts, austerity and a trickle-down that gives benefits to the wealthiest, but nothing for everybody else.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has brought nothing but costs for everybody else. He has a food program with no food. He has a pharma program with no pills. He has a gun buyback program that has not brought in a single gun, despite spending \$67 million. He has a housing program that his minister admits does not build houses.

However, none of those things were the question. It was about his inflationary deficits that he admits drive up the cost of everything. Canadians are watching and wondering if the guy in charge of this half-trillion-dollar enterprise called the Government of Canada knows anything about the numbers. Once again, does he even know the deficit for last year?

• (1505)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, he is eager to hear our fall economic update and we will share it with him in due course. In the meantime, the House has work to do on passing legislation that would support school food programs, moving forward on delivering dental care for more Canadians who cannot afford it, expanding child care spaces and putting money in people's pockets at a time when it is needed. Instead, he is crossing his arms and forcing his MPs, because we know he forces his MPs to do whatever he wants, to block the passage of bills in the House because he does not want to see Canadi-

ans helped right now; he wants to see Canadians hurt because he only cares about himself.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, François Legault announced that he would be deploying the Sûreté du Québec, or SQ, to patrol Canada's borders. The SQ will have to do the federal government's job for it because no one in Quebec believes that Ottawa is prepared to manage a potential wave of migration. This is what things have come to, but it is not as though the SQ is looking for work. It has to patrol the borders because, once again, the federal government is not doing its job. Once again, the federal government is passively waiting for a crisis to occur, when Donald Trump has promised to deport millions of people.

Why is the Prime Minister still unable to plan ahead?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as a government, we will always be there to defend the rule of law and the integrity of our borders. We have a plan to increase staff, police and vehicles at our borders. We will work with our provincial partners across the country. We will make sure that Canadians can continue to have confidence in their sovereignty, in the integrity of our immigration system and in our borders. That is a responsibility that we take very seriously, and we have shown our ability to overcome challenges over the past few years.

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, they certainly have shown that over the past few years.

Quebeckers do not believe this Prime Minister can deal with a wave of migration caused by Donald Trump. They saw how he dealt with the borders during the pandemic. They saw how he dealt with Roxham Road. They saw how he took to Twitter to invite the whole world to come to Quebec, then shirked his responsibilities when our intake capacity reached its limit. That is why Quebec has no choice but to send the SQ to the borders.

Quebec is sending the SQ to the borders. Does the Prime Minister realize what is happening?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the excellent, professional work the SQ does to protect every part of Quebec. It will continue to do so in partnership with federal agencies such as the RCMP and the CBSA.

*Oral Questions*

I have long acknowledged the generosity of Quebeckers, who have done more than their share to welcome people from all over the country. That is why we are in the process of compensating them. That is also why I am still waiting for Mr. Legault's temporary immigration plan. We need to work together to resolve the immigration situation.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec has reached a breaking point because of the decisions made by this bad actor, the Prime Minister of Canada. The last time Trump won the White House, the Prime Minister posted a “welcome to Canada” tweet. By opening the intake centre at Roxham Road, he invited in tens of thousands of people who had no housing, no jobs and no health care.

Will he do the exact opposite this time, to avoid creating another crisis for Quebeckers?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, ensuring the integrity of our immigration system and our borders has always been a primary responsibility of this government. Yes, the world has faced difficult situations. That is why we have put the necessary measures in place to protect our principles and values and the integrity of our system. We will continue to ensure that we deploy the necessary personnel. Unlike the Conservatives, who reduced the number of border officers and made cuts to the RCMP when they were in power, we are continuing to invest in keeping Canadians safe.

\* \* \*

• (1510)

**HOUSING**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Roxham Road was not a problem when the Conservatives were in government. There were more law enforcement officers at the borders and less bureaucracy in the offices. He is doing the exact opposite. That is why we have a broken system after nine years.

It is exactly the same thing with housing. He has doubled the cost of housing to the point where one-third of young Canadians are considering leaving the country. His solution is to give billions of dollars to the bureaucrats and public servants who are blocking construction.

Why will he not eliminate the GST to reduce the cost of housing by \$50,000?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the member is attacking the mayors of municipalities across the country, who are working with the federal government to accelerate housing construction, cut red tape and increase densification.

This program is working. I know it is, because at least 18 members of his own caucus have advocated for municipalities in their ridings to get this money to accelerate housing construction.

Unfortunately, the Conservative leader is preventing his members from speaking on behalf of their communities and advancing the interests of their constituents.

[English]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the Prime Minister has doubled housing costs. In fact, 80% of people in Canada now believe, for the first time ever, that home ownership is just for the very rich. The cities that have received money from his so-called housing accelerator have had the worst results. In Vancouver, housing starts are down 18%. In Toronto, they are down 21%. In Ottawa, they are down 14%. In Guelph, they are down 65%.

Why does the Prime Minister not follow our common-sense plan to cut out the bureaucratic middlemen and gatekeepers, and instead use the savings to axe the sales tax and build the homes?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on housing, the Leader of the Opposition's own MPs have been asking us, for example, about the \$31 million we are sending to Kelowna in the riding of Kelowna—Lake Country, a Conservative riding. This is money that is going to make a real difference in their communities.

However, the Leader of the Opposition is preventing his MPs from standing up and advocating for their communities. This place is supposed to be a place where members are the voices of their communities here in Ottawa. Instead, he is sending them to be his voice in their communities. That is not how it works.

**Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians elect MPs to be their voice in Ottawa. Despite more than 18 Conservative MPs advocating for their communities to receive money through our government's housing accelerator fund, the Conservative leader imposed a gag order preventing them from pushing for this essential funding.

Can the Prime Minister explain to the House—

**The Speaker:** Order.

Colleagues, the member is close to the Chair and I cannot hear the question. I am going to ask the hon. member to start his question from the top. Let us not waste more time on any more interventions from the Chair so we can get through question period expeditiously.

The hon. member for Brampton Centre, from the top, please.

**Mr. Shafqat Ali:** Mr. Speaker, the reality is Conservatives cannot stand the truth. Canadians elect MPs to be their voice in Ottawa. Despite more than 18 Conservative MPs advocating for their communities to receive money through our government's accelerator fund, their leader imposed a gag order preventing them from pushing for this essential funding.

Can the Prime Minister explain to the House what the Conservative leader's cuts to this program would mean?

*Oral Questions*

• (1515)

**The Speaker:** I ask the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton to please keep his counsel until he is recognized by the Chair to speak.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Brampton Centre, like most of us in this House, understands how important it is to be a community voice here in Ottawa and not Ottawa's voice in the community. I say most of us in this House, but apparently not those in the Conservative Party of Canada, because the Conservative leader has decided to prevent his own members of Parliament, in communities across the country, from speaking up for their communities. He is muzzling his MPs, forcing them to be the leader's voice in their communities instead.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we want to put money directly into the pockets of home buyers.

The Prime Minister doubled the cost of housing across Canada and tripled rent in Montreal, after nine years of paying tons of money to local bureaucracies to prevent construction. Nearly one-third of the cost of a home here in Canada is taxes. By eliminating the taxes, we can build more housing for less.

Will the Prime Minister agree to my plan to remove the GST on new builds?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am listening to the Conservative leader criticize our housing accelerator fund, but at least 18 of his members have directly contradicted him by asking the federal government to invest in their communities to accelerate housing construction, increase densification and eliminate red tape.

Conservative members know how important it is to invest in housing, but the Conservative leader is preventing them from speaking and is offering only cuts and austerity, which will not help anyone.

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**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, by passing Bill C-83, the Prime Minister allowed Paul Bernardo to leave a maximum-security prison for a medium-security one.

Now we find out that the Liberal government has decided to bar the families of Paul Bernardo's victims from testifying in person at the parole hearings that could release this monster back onto our streets.

Why is the Prime Minister and his government stopping the victims from speaking out against Paul Bernardo's release?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the opposition leader knows full well that this decision was made not by the government, but by an independent agency. That does not stop him from instrumentalizing people who have suffered terribly just to score some political points.

If he actually cared about national security, he would not have been part of a government that made cuts to security personnel and police, he would not be planning to put more guns in our streets and he would have chosen to receive a security briefing to keep Canadians safe.

[*English*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister decided to pass hug-a-thug Bill C-83, which allowed Paul Bernardo to leave maximum security for more luxury and freedom in a medium-security penitentiary. Now we learn that the Liberal government is blocking the family members of Paul Bernardo's victims from testifying in person at his parole hearing, where his release will be considered.

Under subsection 6(1) of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the minister could intervene to allow the victims to speak up. Why does he keep protecting Bernardo from the victims rather than the other way around?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition knows full well that these are decisions taken by the arm's-length Parole Board and that the minister is engaged on this issue, but that will not prevent him from instrumentalizing the grief and anguish of families who are victims of crime for his own narrow personal gain.

If he actually cared about public safety and national security, he would not have proposed a cut from police services and border agencies, he would not be proposing to put more guns on our streets and he certainly would have accepted the national security briefings that would allow him to keep his own party safe.

\* \* \*

• (1520)

**FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is National Child Day, and families in my riding are receiving their Canada child benefit cheques. This program has supported over six million children. However, families are worried that the Conservative leader will cut this support. The Conservative leader raves about wanting to cut housing projects, child care, pharmacare and much more. Can the Prime Minister please explain to the House how dangerous these cuts would be?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler for her advocacy.

*Points of Order*

Today, millions of families across the country are receiving their Canada child benefit cheques to help with everyday expenses. As a reminder, the Conservatives voted against the CCB. At the same time, the Conservative leader now threatens to cut those cheques along with vital programs like dental care.

He is gaslighting Canadians, claiming his Conservative cuts will somehow make life better for Canadians receiving those programs right now. It is time for him to admit the truth: His real priority is only cutting services and not supporting families.

\* \* \*

**OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today, people in B.C. are reeling from a bomb cyclone. Just weeks after another atmospheric river, their homes are damaged and power is out. The climate crisis is here, but the Liberals keep letting Canadians down. Instead of acting, they are handing out billions of dollars to rich oil and gas CEOs. The Conservatives cannot even agree if climate change is real; they will cut the supports that communities need to stay safe.

Why are the Liberals tossing handouts to some of the biggest polluters while everyday Canadians bear the brunt of the climate crisis?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we made a commitment as part of the G20 to cut inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, and we did that two years ahead of all other G20 partners. At the same time, we put a cap on emissions from the oil and gas sector that is going to continue to protect us. At the same time, we brought in a price on pollution that puts more money back in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadians while cutting emissions and inspiring and encouraging innovation. Unfortunately, the NDP has not been clear even on something as simple as the price on pollution. On this side of the aisle, we stand up for protecting Canadians from climate change.

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**ELECTORAL REFORM**

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister recently admitted his biggest regret was breaking his promise on electoral reform and claimed he did not know how he could have done things differently. Well, he could have supported a citizens' assembly on electoral reform instead of blocking the most basic initiative to have everyday Canadians, informed by experts, explore better options. Not only did Green, Bloc and NDP MPs all vote in favour, but 39 MPs from his own party did too.

He could still do things differently right now and call a citizens' assembly. Will he do it?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can understand my colleague's despair, as he sits across from the Conservatives, who have ceased to be their communities' voices here in Ottawa and instead are choosing to be their leader's voice in their communities. Each of us in this place has the responsibility to advocate for our communities and to speak up, being chosen by members of our communities to defend their interests, and Conservatives have forgotten that. They are now the Leader of the Opposi-

tion's voice in their communities, not saying anything that he has not stamped and approved, and are frightened they are going to see consequences if they dare to step out of line. That is not democracy.

\* \* \*

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of Judith Suminwa Tuluka, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** I would like to add that she is the first female prime minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

[*English*]

I also wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Andrew Furey, the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**POINTS OF ORDER**

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think everyone in the House recognizes that members' statements are an important opportunity for members to pay tribute to people in their ridings, constituents and organizations, but also to highlight events or situations of concern.

This week, on several occasions, some extremely sensitive subjects were presented during members' statements. At times, it was impossible for us to concentrate on delivering our statements properly because the background noise was literally deafening.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to keep a close eye on this. No one member's statement is more important than another's. All members' statements should be received with the same level of silence and respect by the House. It is up to you, with all due respect, to ensure that there is silence when members are giving their statements. I ask you to pay attention to this, because this week has been particularly difficult.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for Drummond. He raises a very good point.



*Points of Order*

Once again, it requires the full co-operation of all members of all political parties to demonstrate respect for one another. We have to listen and let members give their statements in the House. The same goes for points of order.

[*English*]

## USE OF PROPS IN THE HOUSE

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to thank the Speaker for his ruling yesterday, as well as to provide some input into how we believe the ruling should be interpreted and enforced, based on previous rulings and practice.

As the Speaker indicated yesterday, “the Chair seeks the co-operation of all members to be judicious in choosing to wear buttons or pins and to be equally judicious in choosing to raise their concern with the Chair”. We do have some additional guidance on the matter from previous Speakers. In particular I would like to draw the attention of members to a ruling made on May 15, 2014, which states:

The general rule, of course, is that pins and paraphernalia are not to be worn if it causes disruption to the House. I am a bit concerned about the point of order being raised now because these pins have been worn for at least a week or 10 days, as has been my observation, to this point in time. Therefore, I am having some difficulty accepting any suggestion that it is causing disruption, because if it was, points of order would obviously have been raised earlier in this process.

I would like to point out that many of us have been wearing the pins for many, many months now without comment. I would also like to state that this point is critical and should inform how we move forward.

First, it is disingenuous and beyond belief for members to wake up one day and decide that the wearing of pins has been accepted and that while it has been in use for months it is now somehow causing disruption. If something is disruptive, it is disruptive.

Second, while I do appreciate that disorder and disruption have always been and will continue to be the standard by which pins and indeed broader behaviour are judged, we do need to be guided by the Deputy Speaker's intervention in 2014 when he said explicitly, “I am having some difficulty accepting any suggestion that it is causing disruption”. Disruption in and of itself should not mean that a pin is out of order. It is vital that we do not normalize in the chamber a scenario where the loudest and most disruptive voices can use their own disruption to try to force the Chair's hand.

Third, we should be guided by the fundamental principle of freedom of speech, the protection of which is one of the prime responsibilities of the Speaker. As *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* states at page 317:

It is the responsibility of the Speaker to act as the guardian of the rights and privileges of Members and of the House as an institution.

Freedom of speech may be the most important of the privileges accorded to Members of Parliament.

Yesterday during my intervention, while trying to communicate how I have expressed my freedom of speech, wearing red dress buttons to signify the ongoing genocide of indigenous women, orange shirt buttons to signify the genocide that occurred in residential schools, and now the watermelon button to signify the genocide that has been recognized by the United Nations, I was stopped before I was able to speak.

Members must be able to continue to express solidarity with constituents and individuals across Canada. This right must never be infringed upon.

• (1530)

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member from Winnipeg Centre for that substantive addition to the ruling yesterday. I will, of course, consider carefully what the member raised.

There are two more points of order, the first being from the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, who rose to his feet earlier.

## ALLEGATIONS REGARDING IMPARTIALITY OF THE SPEAKER

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order that actually comes out of question period from yesterday.

It is well established and agreed on by everybody in the chamber that the reputation of the Speaker is an impartial reputation, and when I say “the Speaker”, I mean the chair occupant; that might be yourself, the Deputy Speaker, one of the Assistant Speakers from time to time or even somebody who sits there for a few moments to substitute when a Speaker has to depart. The point is that the impartiality of the position is absolutely critical.

In fact a former Speaker who used to sit in the chair, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle and currently the House leader for the Conservatives, once said, in a ruling on September 24, 2014, that:

Another of our time-honoured traditions is that of respect for the office of Speaker. O'Brien and Bosc, at page 313, states that:

“Reflections on the character or actions of the Speaker—an allegation of bias, for example—could be taken by the House as breeches of privilege and punished accordingly.”

There is actually more than what the Speaker at the time indicated. If members go to page 313 and look at the heading about impartiality, the immediate next paragraph starts off by saying, “On two occasions, newspaper editorials were found to contain libellous reflections on the Speaker and were declared by the House in one instance to be a contempt of its privileges and in the other a gross breach of its privileges.”

I bring this to your attention, Mr. Speaker, because following your rulings and some actions you had to take yesterday after question period, the member for Calgary Nose Hill issued a tweet that said, “Watch the Speaker (a Liberal MP) kick me out of the House of Commons and silence me for speaking the truth.” She goes on to say, “Liberal censorship is alive and well in Canada.”

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, therefore as demonstrated by the tweet and by the agreement from the Conservatives that is coming from across the way, the Speaker's chair, not you although in this particular case filled by you, but the role of whoever happens to be sitting in the chair, is not being treated in an impartial and non-partisan way.

*Routine Proceedings*

I am bringing this to your attention not to protect your honour and your integrity as an individual, Mr. Speaker; I think you can do that well enough on your own, but I bring it to your attention because I am worried that a dangerous precedent is being set, where attacking the occupant of the chair becomes the norm. As I indicated through my research and what I had provided to you, Mr. Speaker, there has already been a well-established practice of determining that comments like the ones I cited are a breach of the privilege of the Speaker and of the House as a whole.

I would kindly ask you, Mr. Speaker, to reflect upon what I have offered to you today and come back to the House to let us know whether that kind of action will continue to be allowed in the future, whether we are setting a new precedent, or whether you will be starting to clamp down on the issue. I am greatly worried about the impartiality of the Chair. If we continue to allow the practice to occur, years from now Speakers will continue to be subject to it.

I will end my comments with where I started, which is that one of the most important things of our democracy, of our chamber and of the way this place functions is that the people who sit in the chair and the people who work at the table are completely impartial and do not bring a political agenda to their role. They sit there and do their job as servants of the other MPs of the House.

I would kindly ask that you reflect upon that, Mr. Speaker, and come back to the House and provide us with some guidance as to how we should be dealing with these situations moving forward.

● (1535)

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if it is your intention to have a formal ruling in response to that point of order, I would like to reserve the right to come back and issue more formal remarks.

However, I would point out that nothing that the member for Kingston and the Islands just referenced would rise to the level of libellous. The section that he quoted from the procedure and practice handbook says that was libellous statements have been seen as a contempt of the House or a breach of its privileges. I would point out that it is a true statement that the member was kicked out, but there is nothing libellous in that; that is what happened yesterday.

You, Mr. Speaker, are a member of the Liberal Party and a Liberal MP; that is a true statement. Nothing in what was just read out would in any way rise to the level of a libellous remark unless the member is suddenly realizing that being associated with the Liberal Party is in itself libellous, which I certainly would not disagree with, but I am sure some people would.

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent on a point of order.

[*English*]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, I think we have seen in the last minute a lot of time for people to express their points of order, so I would like to have the same opportunity to express the point I want to raise.

[*Translation*]

Something very important came up during question period, namely a report that was tabled during the night. I say during the night because it was 1 a.m. in Ottawa when it was tabled at COP29, the conference I am attending virtually as a Canadian delegate.

The report looks at the performance of 67 countries around the world in terms of how effectively they are fighting climate change. It is entitled “Climate Change Performance Index 2025: Results”. I am not saying the title in English to be funny but because only the English version was available at 1:30 a.m. when I read it and printed it out.

As shown in the table on page 7, we can clearly see that, after nine years of this Liberal government, Canada ranks 62nd out of 67 countries. I am seeking unanimous consent to table this document, and I would point out that if the House unfortunately refuses, the House will be insulting COP29.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to table this document?

**Some hon. members:** No.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1540)

[*English*]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

\* \* \*

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

LIAISON

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 107(3), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Liaison Committee, entitled “Committee Activities and Expenditures: April 1, 2024 - August 31, 2024”. This report highlights the work and accomplishments of each committee of the House, as well as detailing the budgets that fund the activities approved by the committee.

*Routine Proceedings*

## PETITIONS

## WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition signed by the great people from the freedom-loving riding of Kanata—Carleton. They are calling on the Government of Canada to refrain from endorsing the so-called pandemic treaty drafted by the World Health Organization that has never had a single debate or vote in the House of Commons. This concern is that by agreeing to this legally binding treaty, Canada is signing away our own sovereignty and allowing UN bureaucrats who are unaccountable to Canadians the power to override our laws, rights and freedoms.

## TAXATION

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition here, if you would allow me. I would also like to present a petition signed by the people from Whitby, Ajax and Pickering—Uxbridge, who are devastated by the government's carbon tax, which is making their lives more expensive by increasing their costs for fuel, food and housing. Now this government plans to quadruple the tax that would only make lives more expensive. They are calling on the government to scrap all federal excise taxes on energy, the GST on oil and gas and the carbon tax.

## LEBANON

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from members of the Lebanese Canadian community in my riding of Scarborough Centre. They draw the attention of the House to the expansion of the conflict in the Middle East, which has killed tens of thousands of innocent Palestinians, into Lebanon, where Israeli military action has killed hundreds of people and injured and displaced thousands since September 23 alone.

Petitioners note what they consider endless visa restrictions for people trying to flee the war zone. They call on the government to implement a special visa program similar to what Canada provided for Ukrainians fleeing their war zone; temporary resident visas for the extended family of Canadian citizens and permanent residents who want to reach Canada; the safe evacuation of Canadian citizens and their extended families from Lebanon; and a transparent and fair process that gives priority to evacuating women, children and the elderly.

## ANIMAL WELFARE

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a true honour to rise to present a petition that has been signed by over 10,000 people, in fact, 10,187 people. Some are constituents, but they are from far and wide and include eminent researchers in animal issues from York research centre and from Queen's University. It is a very long petition, with many signatories, including the Humane Society International and the Montreal SPCA. It follows on a declaration by 39 scientists called the New York Declaration on Animal Consciousness.

The petitioners, and again, as I said, it is an eminent list, call on the Government of Canada to reconsider and reform our laws as they relate to animals. The petitioners point out that animals cur-

rently under our law are not considered sentient beings and are classified as property.

The researchers and scientists confirm that sentience is the ability to experience feelings and sensations and is an ethical basis for determining that animals deserve moral consideration. Thirty-two countries have formally recognized non-human animal sentience and they are cited in this petition, including the European Union, Switzerland, China, Chile, Australia, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The petitioners ask that Canada join this group of countries and reform our laws to recognize animals as sentient beings.

● (1545)

## SRI LANKA

**Mr. Shaun Chen (Scarborough North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petition e-4981, with 593 signatures, on behalf of Eelam Tamils from across Canada, with the support of the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to take legal action before the International Court of Justice against Sri Lanka under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. They note the atrocity crimes, including war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, committed against the Eelam Tamil people, citing reports by the United Nations Secretary-General's panel of experts on accountability in Sri Lanka and internal review panel on United Nations action in Sri Lanka. The petitioners are deeply committed to a world that is free of genocide, and they believe accountability is essential in preventing genocide and ensuring "never again".

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I present petition e-5058, with 636 signatories, on behalf of Eelam Tamils from coast to coast to coast. The petition describes Canada as a diasporic home to the largest number of Eelam Tamils, a nation of people facing protracted genocide for over 75 years in Tamil Eelam, their occupied traditional homeland in Sri Lanka.

First, the petitioners call upon the House of Commons to initiate proceedings by Canada against Sri Lanka at the International Court of Justice to investigate Tamil genocide, both as an injured state party on behalf of its citizens of Eelam Tamil heritage and as a state party exercising obligations *erga omnes partes*.

Second, the petitioners call for an internationally administered referendum among the people in the occupied homeland and in the diaspora on the creation of an independent and sovereign state of Tamil Eelam.

*Routine Proceedings*

## NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY

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

The first is on the departure of radio and television journalists and, in particular, how we are continuing to see a disappearance of crucial local coverage in our communities.

The signatories of the petition are calling on the government to extend the Canadian journalism labour tax credit to include radio and TV. They are asking the government to support Canadian-owned media by dedicating 70% of federal advertising dollars to local radio, TV, print and digital media; and to eliminate tax deductions for advertising purposes on foreign-owned Internet-delivered media sites.

## DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from many Canadians who are calling to the government's attention the fact that the RCMP has reported the Government of India is interfering in Canada's elections and murdering, threatening and extorting Canadians on Canadian soil.

Petitioners are also bringing to the attention of the House that it is extremely troubling, what is being learned about what the Leader of the Opposition is doing with respect to his security clearance and not getting one.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I have never been heckled when giving a petition before, but I will continue.

The signatories of this petition, and my job is just to deliver it on their behalf, are calling on the leader of the Conservative Party to get his security clearance and take action to help stop foreign governments from interfering in Canada and targeting Canadians. I am happy to present it on their behalf.

## YOUTH CADET PROGRAMS

**Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition in the House today on behalf of residents of Durham region and across Canada who are concerned with Liberal government cuts to youth cadet programs. The Liberal government has cut funding to sea cadet, air cadet and army cadet programs, leaving first- and second-year recruits without proper dress uniforms. This is shameful and many Canadians are very concerned.

The petition calls upon the government to restore funding for all youth cadet programs so new cadet recruits can be issued proper dress uniforms, to consult with local youth cadet programs throughout Canada to assess other budgetary challenges, and to also commit to long-term, stable funding for youth cadets.

• (1550)

## THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have another petition on behalf of students across Canada who are concerned about the carbon tax and its impact on the future of our country. The petition states quite clearly that the carbon tax has contributed to the affordability crisis, which has left students and youth unable to live independently of their parents.

Therefore, these students and residents of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to remove the carbon tax to alleviate the ongoing affordability crisis that is causing students and the people of Canada to struggle.

## DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition to table that highlights foreign interference. It calls into question why the leader of the Conservative Party has chosen not to get the security clearance. It is rooted in concerns regarding everything from assassination to extortion and political interference.

It is a very serious petition, and the petitioners imply that the leader of the Conservative Party needs to get the security clearance necessary to become better informed about foreign interference.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I believe the rules require a petition to be addressed to the House or the government. The Leader of the Opposition will soon be Prime Minister. He is not Prime Minister yet. I wonder if it is in order for a petition to be addressed to a person who is not the Prime Minister, the government or the House.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, when the petition is tabled, the member will be able to read it. It is specifically given to the House of Commons to encourage the Leader of the Opposition to get his security clearance.

**The Deputy Speaker:** For further clarity, a petition can be addressed to any member of Parliament.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I can understand the sensitivity of it. All I am doing is conveying a petition that has been signed by many Canadians. They are genuinely concerned that the leader of the Conservative Party has not taken it upon himself to get the security clearance necessary to become better informed in protecting the interests of Canadians. It is a legitimate petition that I would encourage the member opposite to read.

## FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from Canadians who share their condolences with the member for Kingston and the Islands on being passed over for cabinet again. I am sorry, I am misreading it.

This is a petition in support of Bill C-257. It is a private member's bill I have tabled that seeks to protect the fundamental rights of Canadians by adding political belief and activity as prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act. This bill would combat political discrimination.

The petition calls on members of the House to support Bill C-257 and to defend the rights of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

## FALUN GONG

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my next petition is from folks who are deeply concerned about the ongoing persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in the People's Republic of China.

The petitioners share some of the history of that persecution and call on the House to strongly condemn this persecution, continue to take steps to combat that persecution, and express its solidarity with Falun Gong practitioners, who seek to simply engage in a peaceful, meditative practice and advance the principles of truthfulness, compassion and tolerance.

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will next table a petition from Canadians who are troubled by the radical and extreme proposals we continue to see for the expansion of Canada's euthanasia regime. The petitioners note, in particular, a call for euthanasia to be expanded to include babies from birth to one year of age who come into the world with severe deformities and very serious syndromes. This proposal for the legalized killing of infants is deeply concerning to many Canadians.

The petitioners say infanticide is always wrong and call on the House and the government to oppose any attempt to allow the killing of children in Canada.

## BURMA

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will present one final petition, regarding the situation in Burma. The petitioners draw to the attention of the House the horrific crimes of the military junta in Burma, with the continuing indiscriminate killing, torture, rape, imprisonment, displacement of civilians and air strikes targeting civilians and vital humanitarian supplies. They note that the state-owned Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise accounts for a majority of the funding the military receives that enables its ongoing campaigns against civilians, that Canada has an obligation to support the people of Myanmar, as it has outlined in the context of its responsibility to protect and its obligations to the Rohingya and other persecuted minorities.

Therefore, the petitioners want the Government of Canada to call for an immediate end to executions, atrocities and human rights abuses by the Burmese junta. They want to see humanitarian aid delivered in a cross-border way through opposition-controlled areas instead of through areas controlled by the military junta. They want to see technological and logistical support for communications infrastructure to help the opposition, the NUG and other opposition elements that are successfully defending themselves and the people against the junta.

The petitioners would like to see the government impose sanctions against the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise, including blocking direct and indirect oil and gas purchases that support the Burmese regime. They also want more collaboration with pro-democracy groups promoting the work of the NUG and reconciliation among the various communities in Burma that are working together to advance a free, pluralistic democracy. Petitioners are calling for tougher sanctions against the junta, cross-border aid and support for the democracy movement.

*Routine Proceedings*

I hope this petition will receive the support of all members. I commend it to the House.

I will leave it there.

\* \* \*

• (1555)

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following question will be answered today: No. 3046.

[Text]

Question No. 3046—**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:**

With regard to the use of drugs and banned practices intended to increase athletic performance: does Sport Canada acknowledge that, prior to the Commission of Inquiry into the Use of Drugs and Banned Practices Intended to Increase Athletic Performance, (i) drug use in sport extends back to the 19th century, (ii) coaches, doctors, scientists, trainers, and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) failed to address the use of performance enhancing drugs (PEDs) for decades, (iii) anabolic steroid use in sport extends back to at least the 1950s, (iv) coaches, doctors, scientists, and the IOC failed to address the use of anabolic steroids for over a decade, (v) athletes acquired knowledge about PEDs through the sport system,

(vi) some coaches, doctors, pharmacists, and sports federations were complicit in athlete steroid use, (vii) power imbalances existed in sport between authority figures (e.g., coach, doctor, trainer) and athletes, (viii) deference to authority and obedience existed in sport, (ix) in some cases, authority figures controlled workouts, diet, sleep, and those with whom an athlete could associate, (x) athletes who were approached by authority figures in sport to try steroids were often racialized and young, (xi) authority figures in sport did not approach parents and ask for their permission to give their child PEDs, (xii) athletes could be bullied, lied to, or persuaded to follow a steroid plan or risk losing their place in a club or on a team,

(xiii) authority figures in sport sometimes persuaded an athlete to use steroids by saying everyone else was using in competition, steroid use was levelling the playing field, steroid use was the only way to win, and the side-effects of steroid use were minimal, (xiv) in some cases, authority figures in sport were experimenting on athletes with a veterinary product, injectable and oral steroids, human growth hormone, with a combination of the previous two, with unknown short-term health impacts and unknown long-term health impacts, (xv) authority figures experimented on athletes who were often racialized and young,

(xvi) authority figures instructed athletes to stay silent about PED use, (xvii) authority figures instructed athletes to deny use of PEDs if they tested positive, (xviii) before the internet and cell phones, athletes lacked the knowledge and means on their own to access anabolic steroids, determine what doses and combinations to use, determine the doping regimen, and taper in order to test negative before a competition, (xix) before the internet and cell phones, male athletes lacked the knowledge and means on their own to urinate to empty their bladders of tainted urine and then insert needles into their bladders with clean urine so that they could test negative for steroid use,

*Routine Proceedings*

(xx) before the internet and cell phones, female athletes lacked the knowledge and means on their own to create a fake bladder, fill it with clean urine, and insert it inside themselves so that they could test negative for steroid use, (xxi) in some cases, authority figures instructed and groomed younger athletes to inject senior athletes with steroids between the toes, (xxii) athletes became part of a sport culture or club that normalized illegal drug abuse, (xxiii) a “pact of ignorance” and “conspiracy of silence” surrounded drug use among sport organizations?

**Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Sport Canada acknowledges the history of the use of drugs and banned practices intended to increase athletic performance throughout the sport system and the resulting health impacts, and acknowledges the maltreatment of athletes associated with these practices. The Commission of Inquiry into the Use of Drugs and Banned Practices Intended to Increase Athletic Performance held public hearings in 1989 for the purpose of inquiring about athletes' use of drugs, especially anabolic steroids, and of studying the effects of these drugs on the performance of users and the consequent potential to harm their health. The conclusions and recommendations of this commission were an important first step toward addressing these issues.

For additional information, including on the historical doping practices within Canada, please refer to the 1990 report on the Commission of Inquiry Into the Use of Drugs and Banned Practice Intended to Increase Athletic Performance: <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.699756/publication.html>.

\* \* \*

[English]

**QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to questions Nos. 3039 to 3045 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

**Question No. 3039—Mr. Peter Julian:**

With regard to federal funding to non-governmental organizations, broken down by department, agency and fiscal year since January 1, 2006: (a) has (i) the Canadian Independent Medical Clinics Association, (ii) Advocates for Choice in Healthcare, (iii) Innovative Medicines Canada, (iv) the Canadian Health Policy Institute, (v) the Montreal Economic Institute, received federal funding; and (b) how much federal funding, if any, was received by each organization listed in (a)?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 3040—Mr. Jeremy Patzer:**

With regard to the government's \$700 million loan to Air Transat announced in 2021: (a) what is the loan repayment schedule for the (i) principal owed, (ii) interest owed; (b) did the government exercise the right to purchase 13 million shares, and, if so, (i) on what date were they purchased, (ii) what was the cost per share; and (c) what have been the results of the annual job monitoring done on Air Transat for each year since the loan was issued, overall and for each job requirement that was a part of the condition of the government loan?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 3041—Mr. Jeremy Patzer:**

With regard to government dealings with Telesat, since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the details of all loans, grants, or other financial contributions that the gov-

ernment has provided to Telesat, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) type of contribution (loan, non-repayable grant, etc.), (iv) repayment terms, if applicable, (v) amount repaid to date, (vi) purpose, (vii) total houses connected to broadband resulting from the contribution; (b) what are the details of all contracts the government has with Telesat, or its subsidiaries, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) vendor, (iv) description of goods or services provided, (v) manner in which the contract was awarded (sole-sourced or competitive bid); (c) for each contract in (b) involving consulting services, what was the topic consulted on and what is the summary of any reports or recommendations provided to the government as part of the consulting contract; and (d) did any of the financial contributions in (a) include executive compensation restrictions and, if so, which contributions and what were the restrictions?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 3042—Mr. Michael Barrett:**

With regard to all types of standby pay for Government of Canada employees since January 1, 2016, broken down by year: (a) what is the total cost of standby pay, broken down by department, agency, or other government entity; (b) how many employees had annual standby payments over \$5,000 in each given year, broken down by department, agency, or other government entity; and (c) what was the single highest annual standby payment for an individual employee in each given year, broken down by department, agency, or other government entity?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 3043—Mr. Adam Chambers:**

With regard to transcriptions or transcripts procured by the government since January 1, 2023, and broken down by department or agency: (a) what is the (i) date of the proceeding or event, (ii) location of the proceeding or event, (iii) description or summary of the proceeding or event, (iv) main participants speaking at the proceeding or event, (v) subject matter of the proceeding or event, for each transcription prepared in this period; (b) what was the cost of each transcription in (a); (c) who requested each transcription in (a) be prepared; and (d) what was the total amount spent on transcriptions or transcripts, broken down by year?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 3044—Mr. Sameer Zuberi:**

With regard to the Firearms Buyback Program: what are the details of all contracts related to the program entered into by the government, including any relevant government entity, such as the RCMP, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) vendor, (iv) description of the goods or services, (v) manner in which the contract was awarded (sole-sourced or competitive bid)?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 3045—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:**

With regard to performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs) in international sport and in Canada up to 1990: (a) what specific actions did Sport Canada (SC) take to combat the use of PEDs after (i) the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) establishment of the Medical Commission in 1967, (ii) the Council of Europe's resolution on drug abuse in sport in 1967, (iii) testing for stimulants and narcotics at the 1968 Grenoble Olympic Games and Mexico City Olympic Games, (iv) the first large-scale drug testing at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games, (v) the International Association of Athletics Federations' (IAAF) and IOC Medical Commission's ban on the use of anabolic steroids in 1974, (vi) a positive test by a Canadian at the 1975 Pan American Games in Mexico City, (vii) the Sport Medicine Council of Canada's establishment in 1978, (viii) two disqualifications of Canadians at the 1983 Pan American Games in Caracas, (ix) the acceptance of the European Anti-Doping Charter of the Council of Europe's Committee of Sports Ministers in 1984;

(b) what specific actions did SC take to combat the use of PEDs after anti-doping legislation was enacted in (i) Belgium and France (1965), (ii) Ireland (1966), (iii) Italy and Turkey (1971), (iv) Greece (1976), (v) Portugal (1979); (c) in what year did Canada introduce an anti-doping policy; (d) why were only 15% of specimens at the 1976 Montreal Olympics tested for anabolic steroids; (e) in what year were PEDs first identified in any Canadian sport, and what (i) was the specific sport, (ii) were all the drugs reported to be used at that time; (f) what actions have been taken by SC on PEDs from its first action through to 1990, and on what date was each action taken; (g) what specific actions did SC take to address steroid use in sport after the editor of Track and Field News called anabolic steroids the “break-fast of champions” in 1969; (h) what specific action did SC take in 1976 to prevent the use of PEDs at the Montreal Olympics and Toronto Paralympics;

(i) what specific actions did SC take to address steroid use in sport after the first edition of The Underground Steroid Handbook appeared in 1981, and what action, if any, did SC take to address the use of human growth hormone in sport, which was included in the handbook, before randomized, double-blind, controlled trials were published; (j) what specific actions did SC take to address steroid use in sport after the Sport Medicine Council of Canada surveyed 1,500 athletes, coaches, and medical and para-medical practitioners about doping in 1982 and found that “fewer than five percent of athletes” stated they used or had previously used PEDs; (k) what specific actions did SC take to address steroid use in sport after the publication of “The Practical Use of Anabolic Steroids with Athletes” in 1982; (l) in what year did testing for PEDs begin at the Canada Summer Games, how did SC decide what sports to test, what specific sports were tested at each Games since testing began until 1990, and what PEDs were tested for at each Games since testing began until 1990;

(m) in what year did testing for PEDs begin at the Canada Winter Games, how did SC decide which sports to test, what specific sports were tested at each Games since testing began until 1990, and what PEDs were tested for at each Games since testing began until 1990; (n) in what year did the Canadian Olympic Committee first act to address PEDs, what specific actions did it take, and, for each action, on what date was it taken; (o) in what year did the Canadian Paralympic Committee first act to address PEDs, what specific actions did it take, and, for each action, on what date was it taken; (p) in what year did each national sport organization in Canada (i) begin testing for PEDs at competitions, (ii) begin announced testing for PEDs between competitions, (iii) begin unannounced testing for PEDs between competitions; (q) in five-year increments from 1970 to 1990, how many athletes were found to have used PEDs in Canada, broken down by sport, and what specific PEDs were being used, broken down by sport;

(r) in five-year increments from 1970 to 1990, and for each identified PED, was the drug approved for veterinary use in Canada, what clinical trials did the drug pass for use in humans, was the drug approved for human use in Canada, for what specific medical use was the drug approved in Canada, what specific medical dosages were approved in Canada, was off-label use of the drug approved in Canada, what side-effects, if any, did the drug have, and what long-term impacts, if any, might the drug have had; (s) what are the details of all Olympic and Paralympic team physicians from 1968 to 1988, including, for each, (i) the dates they served, (ii) who, if anybody, raised concerns about PED use among athletes to SC and the date of the report to SC; (t) what investigation, if any, has SC undertaken to look at health impacts of anabolic steroids when (i) doses used were much higher than the recommended doses, (ii) there was simultaneous use of oral and injectable steroids, (iii) they were possibly used with human growth hormone;

(u) what investigation, if any, has SC undertaken to look at morbidity and mortality of athletes who used PEDs during the 1970s and 1980s; (v) in five-year increments from 1970 to 1990, if an athlete was sanctioned in any way for use of a PED, what investigation, if any, was undertaken of any (i) coaches, (ii) medical personnel, (iii) other members of an athlete’s team, and what are the details of the investigation process; (w) in five-year increments from 1970 to 1990, how many athletes, broken down by sport, were sanctioned for any kind of drug infraction, and, for each identified infraction, were any (i) coaches, (ii) medical personnel, (iii) other members of an athlete’s team, sanctioned; and (x) in five-year increments from 1970 to 1990, how many (i) coaches, (ii) medical personnel, (iii) other members of an athlete’s team, were sanctioned?

(Return tabled)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all the remaining questions be allowed to stand at this time, please.

### Privilege

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

### MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

[English]

### PRIVILEGE

#### REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from November 19 consideration of the motion, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, I rise in the House to deal with this privilege motion. For those watching, just to help us understand where we are, the House, with a majority of MPs, passed a motion in June. It demanded that all documents related to Sustainable Development Technology Canada, otherwise known as the Liberal billion-dollar green slush fund, be tabled with the law clerk of the House of Commons and be transferred to the RCMP for investigation.

It gave the government, the Liberals, 30 days to do this. They did not comply. As a result, on the first day back in the fall, the opposition House leader raised a question of privilege. The Speaker agreed that members’ privileges had been breached and that the government had ignored an order of the House. The government decided, yet again, to ignore a majority of MPs of the House, representing a majority of Canadians. Why did the Liberals ignore this?

It is true that they have tabled 29,000 pages of documents, as the government House leader said yesterday; most of them are what is called redacted. What that means is that they are censored, 29,000 pages of black ink. There was so much black ink that the government had to commission the printing presses at the Toronto Star to black out all the secrets they are trying to hide about Liberal insiders who funnelled \$400 million of taxpayer money to companies they had a financial interest in.

*Privilege*

We have been extensively asking questions in the House and in committee, and the government and Liberal members have been trying to cover it up. They continue to do so. In fact, yesterday, I asked a question in the House about the interest of the radical Liberal environment minister in profiting from the Liberal green slush fund.

I asked that question, as did my other colleagues on other Liberal scandals, and the Liberal MP who occupies the Chair in question period thought that the language we were using offended Liberals. I can tell everyone that Canadians are offended by the corruption and by the obstruction of justice by the government.

For six months since that order, the government has refused to table the unredacted and uncensored documents, the 29,000 pages of hidden Liberal secrets. It must be really bad. I asked questions about the particular individual who sits in cabinet, the Liberal Minister of Environment.

Prior to his election in 2019, the Minister of Environment was an in-house lobbyist for a venture capital company in Quebec called Cycle Capital. In the four years prior to his election in 2019, he lobbied the federal government; the Prime Minister's Office; the Prime Minister's principal secretary, Gerald Butts; the industry department; the industry minister's office; and many other government departments. He did this 47 times.

What was his reward for that? The owner of Cycle Capital gave him shares in the company. How do we know that? We know that because the Minister of Environment declares on his ethics reports that he owns shares in Cycle Capital. The owner of Cycle Capital was appointed to the board of the Liberal green slush fund by former Liberal industry minister Navdeep Bains.

We remember Navdeep Bains. He is the one from industry who left government early and is now an executive at Rogers Communications, the most expensive cellphone company in the world. He was in charge of reducing cellphone bills while minister of industry, and his reward for seeing cellphone bills escalate was a nice, cushy, fat corporate job at Rogers. If that is not an ethical challenge for people, the Minister of Environment's ownership of these shares as a reward for his lobbying for Cycle Capital is. The owner of Cycle Capital was on the board in 2016.

• (1600)

During the Minister of Environment's career prior to politics, when he lobbied the government, companies owned by Cycle Capital received over \$100 million from the Liberal green slush fund. They received money from the BDC. They received money from EDC in what is called fund of funds. They were investors in these funds. The Minister of Environment was rewarded with these shares. He has refused all invitations by parliamentary committees to come and explain himself.

I raised the question yet again in the House, which offended many Liberals. I can tell members what offends Canadians. It is the graft and corruption that goes on with the Liberal government. The government seems to accept it and think it is just fine. The Liberals think it is okay to give \$400 million of green slush fund money to people appointed to the board by the government, and they voted to

give that money to companies they own. That is okay for them. They can just cover it up.

The privilege motion was agreed to by the Speaker on September 26. We are about to be in December, and then into next year. It would be a nice Christmas present for Canadians for the Prime Minister to come clean, stop censoring the documents and release the documents. He will not do that. However, he stands in the House, as he did today, complaining that the important work of the ineffective programs the Liberals are proud of, such as the housing decelerator program, is being held up because Conservatives continue to press for honesty, for integrity, for the government to not put itself above the House of Commons and for it to obey the order of the House. It refuses to do so.

From September to December, it will have been four or five months in which the House has debated this. It will go on. The way to stop this is for the government to actually obey the order of the House, the Conservatives, the Bloc and the NDP. The majority of members of Parliament voted for the release of these documents. It has not received much media coverage. We had \$16 glasses of orange juice receive much more media coverage than this. The mainstream media are not covering this, although online media are covering it.

Shockingly, yesterday, The Globe and Mail wrote an editorial on this. I will quote what it said. I will not read the whole thing, because I know that Liberal members read it intently and then quietly kept their heads down in question period, hoping no one would notice. Here is what The Globe and Mail said is the actual cause of what is going on here in the House. It said, "But the actual cause is the Trudeau government's contemptuous refusal—

• (1605)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The member referred to the Prime Minister by his name. I know the member is reading a quote and it is always difficult, so I just want to get the hon. member to back up.

The hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Mr. Speaker, here is what The Globe and Mail said: "But the actual cause is the [Liberal] government's contemptuous refusal to hand over an unredacted set of documents that the House ordered it to produce in a motion passed in June."

It went on to say, "The House has already lost more than a fifth of the 122 sitting days scheduled in 2024. If this goes on to the end of the year, Canadians could see half of Parliament's sitting days erased", and I will add that this is because of the intransigence and the cover-up of the Liberals.

It goes on to say:



*Privilege*

There are a few ways this could end. But there is only one right way, and that is for the Liberal government to respect the will of the House and hand over the documents. Anything else would be a disgraceful blow to Parliament's ability to hold government to account.

It goes on to say:

...it's not hard to suspect that, were the reference to the RCMP not in order, the Liberals would find other excuses not to hand over the documents that might well embarrass them...even if the [PROC] committee ruled the government had committed a violation, the upshot would still be that the Liberals were able to thumb their noses at the House's right to demand the production of government documents.

It must be really bad. We know about the financial interests of the radical Liberal environment minister. Since that radical Liberal environment minister joined cabinet, the company that he owns shares in has received another \$17 million from taxpayers. The value of Cycle Capital has gone up 600% since he started to lobby his friends in the PMO to get money into the company that he owns shares of. I would have thought a person with strong ethics, on becoming Minister of Environment, would have sold the shares in an environmental venture capital firm to ensure no actual, or appearance of, conflict, but as we know, from the two Randys onward, that is not much of a concern.

Early on, we heard lots of excuses from the government house leader in a vain attempt to say only the police can ask for documents or turn over documents. Of course, that was disposed of quickly by most members of the House who said that any company that discovers inappropriate action is free to turn over its documents to the police for investigation, which is what we are doing here.

However, the Prime Minister's department, called the Privy Council Office, said for departments to use the Privacy Act to exempt and censor the documents. However, the Privacy Act actually says that, for a body that can order the production of documents, such as Parliament, the Privacy Act cannot be used as an excuse to exempt information. If a body that has the power to demand documents has that power, the Privacy Act does not apply, yet the Prime Minister's office uses that as an excuse to direct every government department to do differently.

Just in case anyone is saying that this is kind of arcane, there is an act that created this organization: the Canada Foundation for Sustainable Development Technology Act. Section 7 of the Conflict of Interest Act says, "No public office holder shall, in the exercise of an official power, duty or function, give preferential treatment to any person or organization based on the identity of the person or organization that represents the first-mentioned person or organization." An example of a "public office holder" is somebody who has been appointed by the government to the board, while being on the board is an example of the "exercise of an official power". What that means in "lawyerese" is that, if someone sits on the board of SDTC, they cannot profit by being on that board.

What did the Auditor General find out? The Auditor General did an audit for five years of SDTC. She did a sample of only about half the transactions, 226 transactions, that the board approved, and the Auditor General found that 186 of the 226 transactions, in other words 82% of all those transactions, were conflicted. That was not a mistake. That was not bad lawyerly advice. That was people coming in and out and voting for each other's stuff.

● (1610)

That is a culture of conflict of interest driven by a chair who was appointed by Navdeep Bains, over the objection of the then CEO because the chair's company was already doing business with SDTC. The chair said not to worry, that they can manage the conflicts. Well, the way they managed conflicts was to take 82%, or \$400 million, and stuff it into their own pockets. One of the beneficiaries of that was the accelerated value of those shares of Cycle Capital owned by the Liberal environment minister. Perhaps that is the reason the government will not release the unredacted documents. Perhaps they show the extent to which that minister is involved in this corruption and the unethical breaches of acts of Parliament.

The minister at the time, Mr. Bains, has appeared before committee. His deputy at the time, a fellow named Knubley, appeared this week. For those who remember *Hogan's Heroes*, there was a character called Sergeant Schultz. Sergeant Schultz always said, "I know nothing" when confronted by Hogan on things. Well, former minister Bains could not remember anything about SDTC, even though he appointed all of these people, and even though one month after former minister Bains left cabinet and joined CIBC, one of the people who worked at SDTC went to work at CIBC. However, he does not remember anything.

The deputy minister, Mr. Knubley, could remember the résumé of Annette Verschuren, the Liberal-appointed chair, back to grade six. He could remember everything she had ever done. He could remember his ADM Noseworthy and everybody who sat in on every board meeting. They worked together since Meech Lake, for 40 years. He could remember everything in his career.

*Privilege*

Mr. Knuble said that ADM Noseworthy had been there to be his eyes and ears on what was going on and that not every deputy minister believes in that, but he did, so he had a person there all the time. I asked whether, when 82% of the time the board members were voting for money for their own companies, ADM Noseworthy, as his eyes and ears, had told him about it and if he had told the minister. Mr. Knuble answered that he did not remember. He did not remember having discussions with him on it. Then, he said that he did remember that the act needs to be changed and that he had specific ideas about how the act needs to be changed. I asked if the act needs to be changed to allow for conflicts of interest, since it does not allow for it now, and he said that he was not that familiar with the act.

These folks were covering up for the Liberals, and that comes straight from the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's Office. We have been unable to locate the director of appointments who approved all of these people. The minister of industry of the day, Navdeep Bains, claimed that they made him do it. It was the devil that made him do the PMO appointments and he was just a puppet. The Prime Minister said they have freedom, but apparently not. Navdeep Bains said he did not appoint anyone; he was just doing what the PMO told him to do. What we have here is a situation where absolutely nobody in the Liberal government is responsible yet again. This time it is for the \$400 million being stuffed into Liberal pockets and the 29,000 blacked out documents are probably hiding more corruption that we are unaware of.

This is not a one-off incident with the government. It is a corrupt government, and it has been a corrupt government. It is led by the Prime Minister at the top who has been twice found in ethics breaches by the Ethics Commissioner and Conflict of Interest Commissioner. We remember the Aga Khan incident and the Prime Minister's going for free vacations to billionaires' Caribbean islands on his private jet. He did not declare it, saying "Oh, sorry, I forgot. He is a friend of the family, so I am excused. I can get freebies from people I call friends of the family."

Do members remember the second one where the Prime Minister's family members got paid by the WE Charity while his minister of finance was sending taxpayer money to the WE Charity? The Prime Minister's mother was getting paid by them. His brother was getting paid by them, and the minister of finance's daughter was getting paid by them. They were found in breach of ethics rules. Of course, everybody remembers the blackface incident, and of course, the Prime Minister experienced that differently.

• (1615)

In 2019, there was also the SNC-Lavalin scandal, which resulted in the firing of the first first nation justice minister because she told truth to the fake feminist Prime Minister. He fired this female indigenous justice minister. We know about the sole-source contracts the minister of trade had for her companies and her own campaign manager. We know about the Minister of Public Safety appointing his sister-in-law as the ethics commissioner as a way to cover up their Essex stuff. Everybody is aware of arrive scam, that app that was supposed to cost \$60,000 but cost millions and millions of dollars.

The list goes on. I would be remiss if I were to not mention the other Randy, although which Randy, I am not sure. It is the now former employment minister, the other, other, Randy, Randall or Randy. It is very confusing. One of the Randys has now left cabinet to go and look for the other Randy. I think he will find the other Randy with the killer of O.J.'s wife. There is about the same credibility here.

What we have, wrought from the top, is a Prime Minister who leads by example and who does not believe in ethics, so why should any of his appointees? The result is that \$400 million that was shuffled to Liberal insiders.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when I take a look at the leader of the Conservative Party today, and the issues that we see, I see there is a multi-million dollar game being played. If we look at the time when Stephen Harper was the prime minister, when he was found in contempt of Parliament, his then parliamentary secretary is the now leader of the Conservative Party. If we advance that to today, we get to the leader of the Conservative Party believing he does not require a security clearance, unlike every other leader of the House of Commons.

If we read the CBC story that came out today, it says, "After two years of [the leader of the Conservative Party], many Conservative MPs say they are much less free now than they were before his arrival." It goes on to say, "The man who promised during his leadership run to make Canada 'the freest country in the world' maintains tight control over the actions of his caucus members." It says that it is almost as though the leader of the Conservative Party wants to dominate. The question to the member is—

**The Deputy Speaker:** We need to keep the questions going because there is only a certain amount of time for everybody to get their questions and comments in.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, is the member concerned at all that the leader of the Conservative Party is using his authority to potentially be borderline in contempt of Parliament because we are being denied the opportunity to pass legislation and deal with budgetary measures?

• (1620)

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Mr. Speaker, the only people holding up the House are the Liberals who are refusing and blocking the House order to release unredacted documents and turn them over to the police. Why will they not turn them over to the police? How many more Liberals are going to be caught and charged in this conspiracy to defraud the taxpayer of their money and funnel it to Liberal ridings?

The member for Winnipeg North knows very well that I am not often accused of being a person who has been silenced. Even the Speaker could not silence me yesterday.

*Privilege*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by my colleague from South Shore—St. Margarets. I agree in part with several of the things he said, especially with respect to the Liberal Party's inherent corruption and lack of transparency.

That being said, it is easy to talk about others. I would like him to talk about his own party. I will remind him of something. Does he know what former Conservative minister Tony Clement did? He was not just any minister. He was president of the Treasury Board at the time. He diverted \$50 million of public money to his own riding, which was criticized by the then auditor general. What is that called if not a lack of transparency, even inherent corruption within the Conservative Party?

I would like my colleague to explain what has changed since. How can Quebeckers trust that party, which has demonstrated its own lack of transparency and whose ministers have engaged in corruption?

[*English*]

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Mr. Speaker, I will tell colleagues what has happened: almost 10 years of a corrupt Liberal government. I need a spreadsheet to keep track of all the corruption.

I will give members another one. Liberal fisheries minister number six spent \$45 million of taxpayer money in her own riding on small-craft harbours this summer because she will be running against a Bloc MP and fears for her life. She is abusing taxpayer money for her own self-interest. That is yet another example of Liberals using taxpayer money for their own personal benefit, driven from the top by the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, thanks to NDP MPs, we got to the bottom of the SNC-Lavalin scandal and the WE Charity scandal. The NDP is supporting this motion to get to the bottom of the SDTC scandal.

The member talked about spreadsheets. We have a spreadsheet on the Harper regime, the most corrupt government in Canadian history, with scandal after scandal. We are not talking about tens of millions of dollars; we are talking about billions of dollars. I think it is important to remind the member of the ETS scandal of \$400 million; the G8 scandal, a billion-dollar boondoggle; the Phoenix pay scandal of \$2.2 billion, which was sadly continued by the Liberals; and the anti-terrorism funding of \$3.1 billion. That is over \$7 billion that the Conservatives, with their corrupt government, basically stole from Canadians. They never apologized and they shut down Parliament so we could never get to the bottom of it.

My question is simply this: Is there one Conservative MP who has the fortitude to stand up, apologize for the years of corruption under the Harper Conservatives and say, "I am sorry, Canadians. We'll never act that way again"?

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Mr. Speaker, the gall and hypocrisy of the member absolutely knows no bounds, because the most corrupt government in the history of this country is the NDP-Liberal government, for which he is the House leader. I just went through scan-

dal after scandal, and he voted for the government every time there was a budget or to protect it.

The New Democrats continue to vote and support the government. Their fake ripping up of their document meant nothing. They scotch-taped it back together and continue to vote every single day with the Liberals to keep this corrupt government in office.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, at the public accounts committee, we heard from the founder of Cycle Capital, who was a partner of the Liberal Minister of Environment. She claimed it was basically okay to scam money from the government because she and the minister only benefited a small amount.

I wonder if the member can say what level of corruption is acceptable such that the minister and his partner can steal from Canadians because it is only a small amount.

• (1625)

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Mr. Speaker, apparently the amount of money that is not significant enough to call a corruption problem was the at least \$400 million that went to Liberal slush fund appointees. It is incredible that the board director said this is what entrepreneurs do. Andrée-Lise Méthot admitted only two weeks ago at committee that our numbers were too high, as she only got \$10.7 million while on the board, as if somehow \$10.7 million excused her trough at the Liberal gravy train. For Andrée-Lise Méthot, at least, \$10.7 million was okay and not a conflict.

When I search through the SDTC act and the Conflict of Interest Act, I do not see a clause saying that up to \$10.7 million is okay and is not a conflict of interest. I do not see a clause that says if someone walks out of a room while their buddies vote to give them money, that is okay and they can still profit from it. I do not see the Conflict of Interest Act or the SDTC act giving the freedom to a chair to tell somebody to go out of the room while they vote to give them money.

*Privilege*

Liberal MPs at every single committee continue to defend that behaviour. The Liberal MP for Beaches—East York sits there saying there is nothing to see here; he does not see any problems. This is a person who aspired to be the premier of Ontario. Luckily, the Liberals did not pick him to do that. That is probably the reason he was not capable of leading the four-seat Ontario Liberal Party and instead sits here defending the Prime Minister, saying it is okay to steal \$400 million. By the way, he also decided to curse and swear in committee at other members of Parliament, being the class act that he is.

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, during the debate pursuant to Standing Order 66 on Motion No. 69 to concur in the twelfth report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Public Services and Procurement, and the hon. member for Spadina—Fort York, Democratic Institutions.

\* \* \*

**PRIVILEGE**

REFUSAL OF WITNESS TO RESPOND TO QUESTIONS FROM STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to respond to the question of privilege raised by the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford respecting the meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security for the study of Russian interference and disinformation campaigns in Canada on November 5, 2024.

The committee reported to the House on November 7, 2024, that the witness at the meeting in question refused to respond to questions posed by members of the committee. The committee expressed its view that the failure to respond to questions constituted contempt.

I want to be clear with the House that this particular witness was called before committee for a very serious reason. We believe that the evidence suggests that she has been involved in very odious behaviour on behalf of a foreign government. The government takes the issue of foreign interference very seriously.

I submit that this is a unique situation that requires some restraint on the part of the House in considering how we deal with this case. The witness is under indictment in the United States on very serious charges for which she has been advised by her legal counsel to not speak about the material facts of her activities, which are before the courts, for fear of self-incrimination. While the House does have the authority to compel responses from witnesses at committee, this matter is being considered before a court in another country that may not agree that witness testimony is protected under our privileges. It could therefore be used as evidence against her.

Our role as parliamentarians is to be thoughtful about the context in which we compel information from witnesses. I submit, due to the extremely unique situation we are in, that before the Speaker pronounces on whether this constitutes a prima facie question of privilege, a thoughtful and balanced study of this matter at the procedure and House affairs committee be undertaken. It would provide members and the Speaker with recommendations on the appropriate manner to handle situations of such a delicate nature.

I would like to quote my hon. colleague from the Bloc and thank her for her thoughtful intervention on this issue. The member indicated:

However, the Bloc Québécois finds that the reason provided by Ms. Chen to justify her systematic refusal to answer might require an analysis of whether the immunity relating to freedom of speech extended to Canadian defendants applies before a body having jurisdiction in another country, in this case the United States, considering that Ms. Chen is currently being investigated in a criminal matter in that country following allegations.

She continued:

What we can glean from her testimony, or at least from the little she provided as testimony, is that she was afraid that what she said before a House of Commons of Canada committee could be held against her in the United States. In that case, I think it is important to take that into account. We believe that the case should be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

We do not believe this matter should displace all other House business at this time. This is a unique set of circumstances where the witness is under an indictment in another country where testimony is not protected by the usual parliamentary privilege that exists in Canada and where the witness is at a real risk of self-incrimination. While we want to get to the bottom of the witness's actions, we believe that at this time it would be premature for the Speaker to find a prima facie breach of privilege and that a reasonable approach, given these circumstances, would be for PROC to undertake a study of its own volition to provide recommendations on how to deal with this unique situation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for that input. I am sure the Speaker will be coming back soon with a decision.

*Privilege*

● (1630)

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

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

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege and an honour to rise and speak on behalf of the great people of Vancouver Kingsway and to bring their voices, opinions and concerns to the floor of the seat of their national government.

Having had the privilege of representing these great constituents for a number of years now, I have a very good sense of what their expectations are of members of the House. I know that, regardless of their political hue, whether they are Conservatives, Liberals, New Democrats, Greens or some other partisan supporter, they expect the people they send to the House to act with honesty and integrity. They expect them to address their minds to the pressing issues of the day, the issues and policies that affect 40 million Canadians from coast to coast, who struggle each day to put food on the table, to put a roof over their heads, to support their families, to pursue their education, to pursue their dreams and to realize their potential.

Members may have noticed that New Democrats have not gotten up to give speeches very often on this matter. That is because, frankly, most of what I just said about what the people of Vancouver Kingsway expect has been violated in the House for the last six weeks. For the people watching and for my constituents, I will give a brief summary of what has been going on for the last six weeks to explain why we are here and what brought us to this moment in time.

We are debating issues that go right to the heart of a lack of integrity, a lack of honesty in government and a refusal of many members of the House to put their minds, skills and efforts to addressing the real issues affecting people. We are here because we have a sordid story of corruption, scandal and misspending, which is not surprising if one looks at the history of the Liberal Party and its governing of this country. It is horrible misspending, inexcusable misspending, of taxpayer dollars.

In this case, it concerns the Sustainable Development Technology Canada fund, which was established in 2001 and was afforded a little over \$1 billion in 2021 over a five-year period. Through an Auditor General report and spot audit of this fund, alarming facts came to the fore. Dozens of cases of conflicts of interest were identified, 90 in fact, totalling about 80 million taxpayer dollars. A question was raised about whether the people who were making decisions to allocate those funds, all appointed by the Liberal government, were giving them to companies that they themselves controlled or that they were connected with in some way, which is obviously a blatant conflict of interest, or at least an apparent conflict of interest.

About \$60 million was given to 10 projects that were not even eligible when the Auditor General took a closer look. Frequently, the projects that were approved and received millions of dollars of taxpayer funds overstated the environmental benefits that came to pass. In fact, over the past six years, SDTC has approved over 225

projects worth about \$836 million, and although the Auditor General only did a spot audit on a sampling of them, she found consistent and pervasive and repeated conflicts of interest, misspending and wasteful spending. The Auditor General put the blame squarely on the Liberal minister responsible for this fund and said there was a lack of oversight. Imagine that. This was a fund of almost a billion dollars, and there was a lack of oversight by the Liberal minister who was supposed to make sure that funds were spent in accordance with the authorization of Parliament. That did not happen.

● (1635)

The Ethics Commissioner is now investigating the former chair of the SDTC fund, Annette Verschuren. She approved two grants greater than \$200,000 to a private firm that she directed. She did not recuse herself. She actually participated in the decision of SDTC to approve those grants. I do not think we have to be a lawyer or particularly informed on ethics issues to know that we should not sit in judgment in a case where there is money that could go to our personal benefit if we are actually charged with protecting the public interest. That case is being investigated as we speak.

In this case, the NDP joins with all parliamentarians, particularly on the opposition side, who are horrified. Frankly, we condemn this kind of wasteful spending and absolutely scandalous corruption. The official opposition has put forth a motion demanding documents from the government so that we could get to the bottom of it, as is Parliament's right. The New Democrats also joined with the official opposition and, I believe, the Bloc Québécois when we supported that request and demanded production of documents to the House so that Parliament can exercise its constitutional and historical duty to scrutinize spending of the government and to hold government accountable.

The Liberals demurred. They did not want to do that. It resulted in a motion calling for the Speaker to find a violation of privilege in that refusal to produce those documents. The Speaker agreed with the request to have those documents produced here. Parliament is supreme. Parliament does have the right to have those documents produced. I think that transparency, accountability and respect for our constitutional obligations support the New Democrats and the opposition members in that quest.

This is where it gets a little bit funny. The government is prepared to produce documents to the House, but they want to redact them to some degree. This is a consistent and common theme of government, where they want to redact for certain reasons. Some are more legitimate than others, in my view. Sometimes it is to protect commercial information. Sometimes it is for national security. Sometimes it is to save their political bacon. I am not sure which is the case in this until we see the documents.

### *Privilege*

The official opposition, though, is not happy with that. They want all the documents, unredacted, to go directly to the RCMP. That is where it gets a little bit confusing, because the government has refused to do that, saying that while Parliament has the right to have documents produced to it, it is unprecedented to demand production of documents to a third party. There is also an issue of whether the police forces, in this case the RCMP, might have their investigation compromised by having documents produced to them in that way.

In any event, we have had a standstill for six weeks. Instead of working productively, I would say, like responsible parliamentarians, to resolve this issue and conform with the Speaker's direction to send those documents to PROC, which is a committee of Parliament, to work these out, the Conservative opposition has decided instead to bring the work of the House of Commons to a grinding halt for six weeks. For six weeks, the Conservatives have not allowed a single piece of the people's business to move forward in the House.

A former colleague of mine, Nathan Cullen, used to famously say that the currency of Parliament is time. We only have a certain amount of time to address the issues that are important to Canadians. Every hour counts, yet the Conservatives have decided it is more important to them to have not a single issue move forward in the House for six weeks, not on housing, not on inflation, not on international trade, not on foreign affairs, not on issues that affect every single Canadian in every community in this country. Not a single issue important to Canadians has been allowed to move forward while they filibuster and debate a motion in the House that could easily be ended.

In terms of cost, I am told that the filibuster the Conservatives are engaging in costs us \$70,000 an hour. That is about a million dollars per day. By my calculation, that means the Conservatives have cost the House about \$20 million over the last six weeks. In my view, that pales in comparison to the cost to Canadians of refusing and failing to deal with the real issues that they are facing, that my constituents are facing in particular.

● (1640)

I want to delve into a couple of those issues we could and should be dealing with. Some information came out recently, in the last week, showing that the price of groceries and the price of rent have gone up 20% and 21% respectively over the last three years. From September 2021 to September 2024, food has gone up 20% and rent has gone up 21%.

Figures came out the day before yesterday that showed, when comparing October of last year to October of this year, so just in the last 12 months, the price of rent has gone up 7.3% for Canadians; the cost of shelter, which includes mortgage interest and all other forms of paying for accommodation, has gone up 4.8%; and the price of food has gone up 2.7%. For three consecutive months, food inflation has exceeded the headline target of 2%. Remember, that is on top of the stratospheric increase of the cost of all these things that has already happened in the last three years.

People are struggling. People are cutting back on their grocery bills. It is not just working families, but middle-class families are

cutting back on their food. Parents are skipping meals so they have enough money to make sure their children can eat.

In my hometown of Vancouver, it is not uncommon for people to have to spend between \$2,000 and \$2,500 per month to rent a one-bedroom apartment. Two-bedroom apartments cost between \$3,800 and \$4,500 per month. These rents are absurd. People are being driven out of the communities they grew up in, businesses cannot find workers to staff their enterprises and people are having to move out of the cities they want to live in.

I have heard a lot in this place about Conservatives blaming the Liberals and their inattention to housing, and that is well placed. The Liberals have been in power for 10 years, and I can say it is absolutely the case that housing affordability has become worse in the last 10 years. I do not think there is a community in this country that would come forward and say housing affordability has become better in the last 10 years.

However, it also wrong just to blame it on the Liberals. This is a problem, at least where I live in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, that started well before this. The housing crisis did not start in 2015, so I pulled some statistics to see if my intuition was correct and will share what I found. I checked the Greater Vancouver Realtors, which has been watching statistics for many decades. It tracks the prices of varying forms of housing, in this case a single detached house, and it does that for the entire Lower Mainland, from Squamish in the north to White Rock in the south, where millions of people live. What it found is that the average price of a single detached house in the year 2000 was \$380,000. In 2004, it was \$600,000. In 2008, when the Harper government came to power, it was \$800,000. In 2012, it was \$1.2 million. In 2016, just when the Harper Conservatives left office, it was \$1.6 million. In 2020, it was \$2 million, and in 2024, it is \$2.25 million.

What does that mean? When the Harper Conservatives were in power between 2006 and 2015, the price of a house in Vancouver went from \$800,000 to \$1.6 million. It doubled. The greatest increase in housing cost that happened in the last 25 years occurred under the Harper government, under the Conservatives' watch. When they come here and say that the housing crisis is all the Liberals' fault, it is the Liberals' fault from 2015 on, but it did not start there.

● (1645)

That is the kind of issue the people of my riding have sent me here to deal with. They want to know how we can make sure that everybody has a secure, affordable and decent place to live. There are thousands of issues in politics, and they are all important, but some are foundational. Housing is one of them. Housing is not a luxury. It is a necessity. It anchors people in community. It makes it possible for people to access all of the civil rights and duties that they want, like to find a place to work, to send their children to school, to connect with neighbours and to build community. They all require a stable, secure, affordable home, and that is an illusion for far too many Canadians.

*Privilege*

People under the age of 30 in this country should be furious, because people under the age of 30 in this country cannot find a place to rent that is affordable, and the dream of home ownership is almost completely gone. That is a failure of policy that should be laid at the foot of every single federal government, of both Conservative and Liberal hue, going back several decades.

I just want to talk for a moment quickly about scandals. The funny thing is we are talking about Liberal scandals. It is a genuine Liberal scandal, but I was here when the Harper government actually self-destructed on its own after many scandals. I have heard Conservatives say they were not here at the time. The leader of the Conservative Party was here. He was in cabinet the whole time the scandals were happening.

The Conservatives say that was then and this is now. The best predictor of how the Conservatives will govern next time is how they governed last time. What happened then? They blew \$2 billion with the Phoenix pay scandal. They did not even ask anybody about it. They just decided to contract out and privatize human resources in the public service. It bungled. It did not work and they are still trying to clean up the mess today. It was \$2 billion wasted. That happened twice.

There were two times the Conservative government was found in contempt of Parliament. It was the first government in the history of Canada to be found in contempt. In the greatest irony of all, it was for refusing to produce documents. The Conservative government refused to produce documents in the Afghan detainee scandal and documents that underpinned their so-called tough-on-crime legislation. When this Parliament demanded, by majority vote, when Parliament was supreme, for the Harper government to produce documents, it refused.

We have Conservative after Conservative getting up, spouting respect for principle, demanding that Parliament is supreme and demanding the production documents. The Conservatives did not do it when they were last in government; they will not do it when they are in government again.

There was a \$400-million G8 scandal. We all remember the \$80,000 gazebo by former Minister Tony Clement, who, by the way, had to resign because of a sexting scandal after he was extorted because of that.

There were Conservative logos on government cheques when they were handing out taxpayer dollars in a cheap attempt to blur partisanship.

There were four Conservative senators suspended. The Mike Duffy affair happened, where the legal counsel to the former Prime Minister wrote a cheque for \$90,000 to pay the legal expenses of Senator Mike Duffy. I do not know who pays \$90,000 in legal expenses for people they barely know, but they did.

Two Conservatives had to resign for election cheating. There was Peter Penashue and Dean Del Mastro, who was taken away in handcuffs and jailed for cheating in elections. There was the robocall scandal and the in-and-out scandal. They lost \$3.1 billion of \$12.9 billion in funds allocated to public safety and anti-terrorism initiatives. It took the Treasury Board six months to try to track the money down.

That is the record of the Conservatives who are standing up here today, attempting to be the moral and ethical leaders of this country. I say to Canadians, if they want to look and see how the Conservatives will be next time, take a look at how they acted last time. They will find a record of corruption, dishonesty, lack of ethics and poor governance.

If Canadians really want to elect a party that would actually do the work of the people of this country, then they would vote a New Democratic government in for the first time in history. We would spend our time working on the real issues facing Canadians every day, not this kind of back-and-forth corruption that we see from the two old-time parties in this place.

• (1650)

**Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothsay, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I really do not disagree with a lot of the member's speech. We all come here week in and week out. The member said we have been here now for six weeks, basically wasting our time and the time of the Canadians watching, just continuing on with the debacle. What puzzles me is that the member of the NDP and his party are supporting what is going on, and they could very easily end it and stop the affront to democracy.

My question for the member is this: Why are he and his party letting the charade continue? I certainly expect that from the Conservative Party opposite but not from the New Democratic Party. Why is the member supporting the Conservatives on this?

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, the answer is simple: Both parties are wrong in this case. The Liberals should be producing the documents you have ordered and should not be redacting them. The New Democrats agree with our colleagues in the Conservative and Bloc parties when they say the government has to be forthright and produce the documents that will probably implicate it and be embarrassing for it. The documents will probably show that there has been terrible misspending.

The Liberals are wrong to withhold the documents from the House. They should be sitting down and negotiating an acceptable option. Frankly, that is on the government. The Liberals are the government. They are in control of the Order Paper and of proceedings. It is up to them to end the problem; it is not up to the fourth party in Parliament.

• (1655)

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening carefully to my colleague from the NDP's speech. He said a few things: that the housing crisis is the Liberals' fault, at least since 2015; that the SDTC spending by the Liberal government is horrible and inexcusable; and that the NDP is horrified by the wasteful spending and scandalous corruption.

*Privilege*

The member and his colleagues have voted time and again to keep the corrupt Liberal government in power. My question is really this: Will he, at least for himself, commit to standing by his words and at the very next opportunity vote non-confidence in the government so that at least he will stand up on his principles and try to bring down the government so we can have an election?

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that every opposition member elected to this place, especially in a minority Parliament, has a decision to make. They have to decide whether they are going to use their time and effort to attack, to destroy and to obtain nothing, or use their seat, voice and effort, roll up their sleeves and try to obtain benefits for Canadians. That is what I did and what the NDP did, with 25 MPs, by the way.

With 25 MPs, we secured dental care for nine million Canadians. We secured diabetes medication potentially for six million Canadians and contraception for 10 million Canadians. If we add that together, we are talking about 24 million Canadians who are going to get access to health care they do not have today. We got anti-scab legislation passed. We pushed the government to get 10 days of paid sick leave. We used our efforts to get these real, tangible results for Canadians. Frankly, the programs are still being implemented.

There is one thing I have asked the Conservatives repeatedly in the House and they will not answer: Will they cancel the dental care program that seniors right now are using to get their teeth fixed? Will they cancel the pharmacare program that is going to bring relief to people with diabetes?

The Conservatives want an election. Why would the New Democrats hasten a potential election that would hasten the Conservatives' getting rid of programs that are helping millions of Canadians? That is not what I was sent here to do. I was sent here to build services and make families' lives better, not worse.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have never seen anything like this. Parliament has been dealing solely with the question of privilege for the past month and a half, as my colleague pointed out in his speech.

I was under the impression that the Conservatives wanted to trap the government by making Parliament dysfunctional. However, the fact that this has been dragging on for so long seems to suit the government. This tired government has been around for a very long time and is afraid of confidence votes. There are no such votes these days. We are no longer debating any legislation, but the government seems to have run out of ideas.

How does my colleague see the next few weeks unfolding? Will this situation go on until Christmas? If that is the case, will we be able to vote on the estimates that we are just beginning to examine in committee? Before the House is able to vote on them, there will have to be opposition days. If we do not vote on the estimates, does that mean the government will fall and the election will be called at Christmas?

[*English*]

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, what a pleasure it is to work with my hon. colleague on the finance committee in a productive way.

Tomorrow we are going to be voting on amendments to the upcoming budget. We will be taking all of the evidence and input that we heard from the stakeholders who came to the finance committee over the last two months and making suggestions to the government to make the Canadian economic climate better and to help the businesses we need to succeed.

To answer the member's question, it is really up to the Conservatives and the Liberals. The Conservatives have decided to grind the House to a halt for six weeks. In fact a Conservative MP publicly stated the other day that one of the side benefits is that the Conservatives have paralyzed the Liberals' attempt to bring any legislation forward. That is a real indictment of their true purpose, to make sure nothing happens. It is irresponsible, and the Liberals are irresponsible in not providing the documents that Parliament has a right to see.

As long as both main parties are putting their own partisan interests ahead of the interests of people, of Canadians, we are going to continue the logjam. It is a shame. The responsibility lies on them. They are going to have to answer to the Canadian people for wasting Parliament's time and not getting anything done for Canadians, when the new Democrats and I think the Bloc at least want to work together to get laws passed and get policies in place that will help Canadians.

• (1700)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the core of the issue is that the matter be referred to the procedure and House affairs committee. That is the vote that needs to take place and that would get rid of the issue.

The reason it would go to the procedure and House affairs committee is that a great amount of concern has been raised by the RCMP, the Auditor General of Canada and other legal experts, who are saying that it would be inappropriate for us to hand unredacted documents directly to the RCMP. That was not necessarily known at the time the original motion was passed. Some people have suggested that it could even potentially be an abuse of power. This brings us back to the original motion. Let us get PROC to make a decision so that we, collectively as a House, do not do something that would potentially be against the charter rights of individuals.

Does the member believe that the Liberal government should be listening to the Conservatives on the issue or listening to the RCMP, the Auditor General of Canada and other legal experts who are telling us not to give the information directly to the RCMP?

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, it is a valid concern. I have read about the same concerns from police forces. It is unusual, in fact I think unprecedented, for Parliament to order documents to be delivered directly to a police force.



Having said that, I am not sure it is illegal and I am not even sure it is necessarily impossible to do. Our police forces and the RCMP are used to executing subpoenas. They are used to getting documents. They will work with the Crown to see what the documents can and cannot be used for, subject to constitutional and charter rights. The police are used to dealing with that all the time, so I am not necessarily as convinced as my hon. colleague is that it cannot be done. It should be explored.

The real question the Liberals have to answer is what they are doing about the SDTC waste of millions and millions of dollars. I have not seen any ministerial accountability for that yet. A minister of the Crown was finally removed from cabinet today, but that is totally separate from the matter at hand. I have not seen any ministerial responsibility answerable to the taxpayers for the egregious waste of millions of taxpayer dollars through the Sustainable Development Technology fund, and that is something I would like to hear from my hon. colleague.

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure to have the opportunity to rise in the House and to be recognized by the Chair. The circumstances, though, are unfortunate. We are talking about a \$400-million scandal, over 186 conflicts of interest and a lawful order from the majority of democratically elected members of Parliament, passed in the House, ordering the NDP-Liberals to hand over to the RCMP the documents pertaining to the scandal.

What they would like to do is turn the documents and the matter over to a committee. I find that wholly insufficient, and that is what I have heard from Canadians when I have talked to them, when they have called me and written to me about the matter. They want to know, when a crime is committed in their community, for example if someone steals \$100, \$1,000, \$10,000 or breaks into a home, whether they are supposed to call a committee or supposed to call the cops. The answer is, of course, to call the police.

It is \$400 million dollars that is involved, and it is interesting to note that this is what has been detected thus far, because the Auditor General reviewed only a sample in the SDTC matter. The actual malfeasance, misappropriation, theft and embezzlement that has gone on would be much, much higher than \$400 million. That is exactly what the police would find out, and that is exactly why the Liberals are refusing a lawful order of Parliament to hand the documents over.

Every day, there is a new scandal with the Liberals. Today we started the day talking about the Liberal member from Edmonton who had shady business dealings, his company being sued for fraud for hundreds of thousands of dollars; his company being investigated by the Edmonton Police Service for fraud; and he and his business partner fraudulently applying for government contracts designated for indigenous-owned businesses.

The former minister said he never claimed to be indigenous except when he was applying for the contracts, disenfranchising actual indigenous-owned businesses. He now says he got his previous claims about his heritage wrong. The Liberal former minister said he was not directing his company from the cabinet table, but now we know he was and that what he said was not true.

### *Privilege*

He said his company was not applying for any government contracts while he was a minister, but we know it did in fact apply for a contract with Elections Canada, and it was awarded that contract for tens of thousands of dollars. Why would a government department award a contract to someone who sits around the table and decides on the funding and fate of its organization? I wonder why, if it did not advantage the Liberal former minister and disadvantage every other small and medium-sized business.

The business he had, by the way, was a pandemic profiteering business, taking advantage of people who were scared during a time of scarcity and great concerns about their health. Today we learned that the Liberal member from Edmonton is not in cabinet anymore. He is stepping away from cabinet to spend time with the other Randys.

● (1705)

It is not because the Liberal Prime Minister recognized that any one of the incidents, including having someone fraudulently claim to be indigenous, having someone have a business that is being investigated by the police for fraud, or having a minister who is directing a company from the cabinet table, would be enough to get them fired from a job in the private sector. Any one of those things would be enough to get them fired from any self-respecting government that was determined to serve Canadians and not just serve themselves and Liberal insiders. No, none of that was enough. However, I will note that Canada's first indigenous attorney general was fired for speaking out against the Prime Minister and his interference in the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin. He kicked her out of caucus.

I wonder how many more days the former minister has in the Liberal caucus. The answer should be zero because his behaviour has been reprehensible. It is unbecoming not just of a minister of the Crown but of any parliamentarian. However, the Liberals stood up day after day and defended the indefensible. Some of them will stand up today and ask me questions after this speech. They defended the Liberal minister because it is not about helping Canadians when it comes to the Liberals. That is not their *raison d'être*.

*Privilege*

What is the Liberals' primary objective? It is to help well-connected insiders, just as in this green slush fund. They are refusing to hand over the documents to the law clerk to go to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The Liberals have to protect the insiders. Every time we raised it and identified that there are some serious bad-dies working at that organization, the Liberals tried to sweep it under the rug, saying they were taking a look at that. No, they were not. The minister would quite excitedly proclaim that they had restored governance, but they did not. They did such a bad job at remedying the corruption, which they fostered and allowed to fester, that they just folded it into a government department, away from prying eyes and accountability to Canadians and parliamentarians. They did this so that their board chair, their other GIC appointees and their well-connected friends could line their pockets while Canadians lined up at food banks.

That is the thing about the Liberals. They are only ever sorry when they get caught. They said they had it in hand all along, but they are never willing to go far enough to do the right thing for Canadians.

Just yesterday, the Prime Minister said of the disgraced Liberal member for Edmonton Centre that he was happy for him to continue in cabinet. Knowing what he knew about all of his false claims and all the alleged criminality at his business, the Prime Minister was happy for him to stay, just as the Liberals are happy for everyone who is involved in SDTC to avoid the prying eyes of the police.

What are they so afraid of? I think they are terrified that once RCMP officers get a look at what went on, it is going to be bigger than the \$400 million that was identified in the sample examined by the Auditor General's team, with more than 186 conflicts of interest. It is going to be worse. That is the culture that has been allowed, though, under the current NDP-Liberal government.

● (1710)

The Prime Minister himself has twice been found guilty of breaking the law while serving as Prime Minister. The now Public Safety Minister was found guilty of breaking the law, as was the trade minister. The former finance minister was found guilty of breaking the law while serving as finance minister. The current Speaker, former parliamentary secretary to the Liberal Prime Minister, was also found guilty of breaking the law. Why is this? It is because they used their positions to help their friends, well-connected insiders and themselves.

What did Canadians get with nine years of Liberals helping themselves and well-connected insiders? Our national debt has doubled. Home prices, rents and the needed down payment for a home have all doubled. Food bank use is now at a record high. When we talk about the struggles that Canadians have after nine years under the NDP-Liberals, child poverty is at its worst today. Now, 25% of Canadians, as reported by the Liberal government's own stats agency, are going to have to rely on food banks. That is interesting, because 25% is not the unemployment rate. This means that we have millions of Canadians who are working but have to go to the food bank.

In my conversations with operators and volunteers at food banks, I hear that they are having a real challenge in keeping up not just

with the food-side demand but also with the volunteers needed to operate the food banks. The people who are using their services, who are relying on food banks to feed themselves and their families, now have to go to the food bank between shifts or between jobs. After they finish their first job for the day, they have to go to the food bank and then go to their next job. Therefore, people are working two and sometimes three jobs, but they still cannot afford nutritious food for their families. Man, are these guys ever helping themselves out, making sure that it is sunny ways for Liberal insiders and their well-connected friends but cloudy skies for everybody else.

It really makes me wonder why the Liberals do what they do. They say that they have altruistic goals, such as wanting to do something about the environment. Are they going to reduce the carbon footprint, let us say, for the head of government? No, of course they are not. The Liberal Prime Minister is a high-carbon hypocrite, the likes of which we have never seen. Meanwhile, he is raising the carbon tax on everyday Canadians, with food price inflation in this country outstripping that of our peer nations; he is taxing the farmers who grow the food, the truckers who move it, the grocers who sell it and the people who buy it. We have higher taxes just for the crime of heating our own home.

Can we imagine that, in our climate, the government would punish heating one's home? The Liberals say this is a behaviour that needs to be changed. We know that the Deputy Prime Minister, a Liberal from Toronto, thinks that people out in P.E.I. are going to be taking the subway instead of driving their pickup truck. However, I have news for the Deputy Prime Minister. Whether it is Victoria-by-the-Sea, Prince Edward Island; Victoria, British Columbia; or Athens, Ontario, in my community, no one is getting on the Sky-Train, the subway or a streetcar. They are getting in a minivan to take their kids to hockey, getting in the pickup truck to drive to the job site, or getting in their car to get some groceries or pick up their mom to take her to a doctor's appointment. They are just trying to live their lives.

● (1715)

Meanwhile, it is jet-setting and high-carbon hypocrisy with the Liberals. Of course, they are backed up on every bit of the pain they foist on Canadians by their accomplices in the NDP, who have abandoned working Canadians. While the Liberals impose binding arbitration on workers, we have seen the NDP saying that they are still going to support the Liberals. They have abandoned the very people they purported to represent in order to get elected.

Let us just take the tally. It is not about helping the environment; it is about helping themselves, jet-setting around the world all the while. It is not about helping Canadians, who just want to get by. They want to afford a good home in a safe neighbourhood, to be able to feed themselves and their families nutritious foods and to have a comfortable retirement someday. We have seen that with the economic vandalism perpetrated on Canadians with the inflationary deficits and monumental waste they have engaged in with the support of the NDP. They have abandoned workers, Canadian families and the Canadian middle class. The dream of people who came to this country long before I was born, as well as those who have aspired to come to it since I was born, was that they would be able to do those things I said: work hard, earn a good paycheque, buy a home in a safe neighbourhood, feed themselves and be able to retire. They believed their kids would do better than they did.

I have good news. The picture painted after nine years under the NDP-Liberals sounds pretty gloomy. However, life was not like this before the NDP-Liberal government, and it is not going to be like this after. That is why our common-sense Conservative plan will restore that promise for Canadians. I am so excited about it; I am very optimistic and hopeful for the future of this country, for my five young children, for young children across this country and for people who dream of coming to this land.

We know the Liberals have broken so many things, including housing and our immigration system, but we can fix it. All it will take is a carbon tax election to restore the fairness, promise and affordability that Canadians were born with and that people around the world have aspired to enjoy.

The Liberals do not want to do the right thing and turn over these documents so that they can be transmitted to the RCMP. They are terrified of what will be revealed. However, it does not mean we are going to stop our important work of holding them to account and making sure that, when a government oversees, presides over and permits, thereby promoting, the kind of fraud and corruption we have seen in this green slush fund, we are not going to abide it. The Liberals want to turn it over to a committee; we want to turn it over to the police, which is the rightful place for it to go.

Canadians cannot count on the Liberals. They have done a lot of carping about wanting to get on with other things in the House, but this is what we are here to do. I have a really simple solution for the Liberals: They can turn the documents over to the RCMP, and we can get on to those other things.

• (1720)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not believe Conservative members truly understand the consequences of this multi-million dollar game of a filibuster that is being orchestrated by the leader of the Conservative Party. It is going to cost Canadians greatly. There is complete disregard. There is an interesting story today. I think members opposite need to listen to what Conservatives are saying about their own leader, including members of Parliament. I quote: "He's the one who decides everything. His main adviser is himself...The people around him are only there to realize the leader's vision."

### *Privilege*

I have been saying that for weeks now, that the leader of the Conservative Party and this whole multi-million dollar game are all about his personal self-interest.

When will Conservative members of Parliament stand up and speak their own minds as opposed to the mind of the leader of the Conservative Party and realize that what they are doing is borderline contempt of Parliament?

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Madam Speaker, for a guy whose government presided over more than \$400 million being pilfered from Canadian taxpayers, he seems pretty incensed about things unrelated to the subject matter that we have talked about. I will say a couple of things.

First of all, he did not quote any member of Parliament so I am not sure what kind of fantasy fiction he is spinning.

I scrummed with the media today. As a matter of fact, on this very scandal, as far as where it came from, this was initiated by common-sense Conservatives at the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. Guess what? I sit on that committee. The reason it is here today, I am so delighted to tell the parliamentary secretary, is that I had great help, partnership and collaboration with my Conservative colleagues in bringing this forward.

The second thing: on the cost of dealing with this in the House, the cost of not dealing with it is incredibly dangerous because Canadians cannot afford more of this scandal and fraud to be perpetrated without it being stopped. It ends here. This is the red line. We are not going to let them cross it.

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulo, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we have been debating this issue for a few weeks now. This is not the first time we have had to tighten the screws to obtain unredacted documents. It also happened at the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, which our committee chair refers to as "the mighty OGGO".

I believe my colleague has more experience in this Parliament than I do. My question is this. If there were an election tomorrow and the Conservative party won, would he have access to the unredacted documents? If so, would he show them to the rest of Parliament?

[*English*]

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, it is a great question from my hon. colleague. We have said that common-sense Conservatives, when in government, will restore accountability, just like we have said on matters of national security. Any elected parliamentarian who has been knowingly participating with a foreign state in surreptitious activity will be named. We will name them. We will not engage in the games like the Prime Minister.

*Privilege*

On this matter, a matter that is so serious and that deals with hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars and speaks to a much deeper rot and corruption in the Liberal government, of course, the documents will be transmitted, unredacted, to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police through the parliamentary law clerk. Why? It is because that is what the House ordered to have been done and that is exactly what Conservatives will do. Why? It is because it is the right thing to do.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is an easy way for the government to end the filibuster in the House. In fact, there is only one way to end the filibuster and that is for the government to hand over the documents. I quote yesterday's *Globe and Mail* editorial entitled "A Parliament that is dead on the inside."

It reads: "There are a few ways this could end. But there is only one right way, and that is for the Liberal government to respect the will of the House and hand over the documents. Anything else would be a disgraceful blow to Parliament's ability to hold governments to account."

Further, it says, "It's no way to run a country. Yes, there are other means to end the filibuster, and maybe at one point an opposition party will break out the defibrillator. But the Conservatives are not the bad guys in this scenario. Only the Liberal government, with its refusal to respect the will of the House, is responsible for Parliament's paralysis."

Will the member comment on that?

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, we have heard from the Liberals before about what they think about objective reporting. The Liberal Prime Minister famously said of the scandal involving himself when he interfered in the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin that the story in the *Globe* was false. Now we know what the Prime Minister said in that case was dishonest.

However, the question from my hon. colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills was an excellent one, because this could end today. The government simply needs to hand over the documents unredacted. The Prime Minister, his party and his Liberal MPs who are abiding by this paralysis of Parliament are the ones who are able to end this in an instant. They simply need to stand up and tell the Prime Minister to end the cover-up and turn over the documents. It is really simple to understand why they would do that. It is simple to understand why they would not, because they are terrified about what is going to be found out when the documents are turned over.

It is incredible the damage that this does to our democratic institutions when the Prime Minister of Canada is refusing lawful orders of the House of Commons for document production. It can set a very dangerous precedent. Frankly, he could just simply do the right thing, turn the documents over today and end this.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, let me provide a quote from an article written by Steven Chaplin. Steven Chaplin is the former senior legal counsel in the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel. He is a real expert. Here is what he had to say about this multi-million dollar game of the Conservative leader a couple of weeks ago:

It is time for the House of Commons to admit it was wrong, and to move on. There has now been three weeks of debate on a questionable matter of privilege based on the misuse of the House' power to order producing documents.

He goes on:

It is time for the House to admit its overreach before the matter inevitably finds its way to the courts which do have the ability to determine and limit the House's powers, often beyond what the House may like.

That was a quote from a newspaper article. I would encourage the members opposite to read it all. It was an expert who wrote that, but do not be confused by experts.

What words of wisdom does the member have to say about these particular quotes from an article by an expert?

• (1730)

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, just like the parliamentary secretary, the individual he quotes is wrong. That has been affirmed by the parliamentary law clerk. The law clerk for the House of Commons has testified that the House has the absolute unfettered power to order the production of these documents.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Frank Caputo:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the member for Winnipeg North just called my hon colleague a name. He should apologize. Not only that, it was completely inaccurate.

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

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, absolutely, I withdraw it.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Madam Speaker, it is quite clear that the Liberals have run out of arguments. They have been demonstrated to be wrong. What they are doing is not consistent with exactly what the law clerk for the House of Commons has said.

Since the member is not able to engage in a debate worthy of this place, I have nothing further to add.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague said that things were not this bad before the Liberals came into power and they will not be that bad if everyone who wants to get rid of the corrupt government comes out in person and votes in the next election for a Conservative government.

Would the member tell the assembled members what steps a new Conservative majority government would take in order to ensure that things are not like this anymore and everyone will be able to afford a home and afford food?

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Madam Speaker, I have a tremendous amount of respect for the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Quite simply, we are going to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. We are going to get rid of the carbon tax and, of course, take the GST off new home construction.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Madam Speaker, over the last several weeks, all of us have had the opportunity to think about why this place needs to function. This debate has been precipitated because the government has refused to respect the will of this place. This place needs to function as it was designed to function under the Standing Orders and under all the rules and privileges that we are afforded here in this place because, in a lot of ways, democracy can be an illusion if this place does not function.

We are each imbued with power of people. For me, it is close to 120,000 people; I represent that many people. I sometimes think in my head of a Saddledome filled several times over and the responsibility that I have to be the voice of that many people. The rules that we have in this place allow me to speak on their behalf and also prevent Canadians from feeling like they have to settle conflicts or differences or get action through violence. We have to ensure that so many things work here in order to keep our democracy functioning.

My colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills mentioned an article in *The Globe and Mail* this week. It was written by the editorial board. It is entitled “A Parliament that is dead on the inside”. In establishing its thesis, the article states as follows, “The House has, as established through the Constitution, the absolute power to order the production of government documents—in this case, documents related to the disgraced Sustainable Development Technology Canada agency.” The government has not complied with an order of the House. Therefore, the Speaker found a breach of members’ privileges. Now the way to end this, the way to respect the will of Parliament, is for the government to comply with the order, period.

I want to put why this place has to function in a slightly different context. I gave that why, perhaps not explicitly, in a speech that I gave last week at Royal Canadian Legion Branch 284, the Chapelhow legion. I would like to impart to colleagues today why this place has to function and why the government must comply with the House order.

Recently, one of our younger colleagues, the member for Battle River—Crowfoot, stood in the House to deliver a tribute to his father, who had passed away unexpectedly. He closed with a call to action, “my hope is that everyone can remember my dad, Jay, by living with the strength, generosity and faith he showed us.” In response and in a rare show of unity, all members of this place rose and gave him a standing ovation. My colleague’s hope and the reaction it evoked among us, a divided people often, exemplify a phenomenon I have often seen in moments of grief. Eulogies of remarkable people are never mere lists of accomplishments. Instead, they challenge us to ensure that their work to improve the human condition endures beyond their lives, uniting us to carry their mission forward.

More than a century ago, Canadian physician Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae wrote one of the most blunt and enduring calls to action ever contained in a remembrance. In 1915, his friend, Lieutenant Alexis Helmer, fell in combat during the Second Battle of Ypres. After his funeral and noticing the poppies springing up among graves of the fallen, McCrae wrote an elegy entitled *In Flanders Fields*:

### *Privilege*

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

● (1735)

In his poem, McCrae, who later died in the war, left a solemn charge to future generations: “You will face the same foe we did and you must engage with it, lest everything we, the war dead, have sacrificed for you be in vain. If you succeed, there shall still be beauty and we shall rest easy, but if you fail, there will be no rest for any of us in this life or the next.”

If McCrae’s mandate to us was clear, the enemy he called us to face was left undefined. One could interpret it as a call to defeat enemy soldiers, but this view seems overly narrow to me. McCrae’s words transcend literal war. They speak to a more insidious, pervasive threat.

In recent years, I have become increasingly concerned that Canadians spend too little time reflecting on McCrae’s lament’s true meaning, even on Remembrance Day. With division and unrest spreading through our communities, schools and places of worship, I fear many have grown complacent or naive about the foe McCrae identified.

Years of peace and prosperity have lulled Canadians into thinking the foe can neither take root here nor harm us. Some even see the foe as a friend, believing it worthy of protection rather than something to root out. These are lies that we, particularly in this place, are duty bound to reject if we are to complete McCrae’s task. However, what exactly is the enemy McCrae asked us to confront?

### *Privilege*

Through my time in public service, I have seen first-hand the worst that humanity can inflict upon itself. I have walked through homes reduced to blackened rubble, where the fresh stench of death and blood spatter were all that was left of families who once inhabited them. I have walked over mass graves. I have met survivors of genocide and sexual slavery, and listened as world leaders attempted to diminish the crimes committed against them. I have witnessed mothers whose starving children limply clung to them in refugee camps, displaced by warfare and disease. I know that all who serve in our military have seen far worse than I have.

I know our foe is real, pervasive and intent on our destruction, but I also know the horrors of war, though perhaps its most visible manifestation, do not constitute the foe itself.

If it is not war, then what is it? I believe the foe germinates in complacency and the false belief that Canada is immune to external threats. It spreads by erasing the hard-learned lessons of past conflicts and convincing us that others will defend our freedom, rendering us unprepared and unwilling to defend it ourselves. It fosters divisiveness and denies the existence of a Canadian identity. However, this assumption that the foe can be ignored or that Canada lacks something worth defending is fatally flawed. In that place of folly, of ingratitude, decadence, arrogance and naïveté, we meet McCrae's foe: the desire to subjugate others and strip away their freedoms.

It terrifies me that the foe so obviously lives on in Canada despite McCrae's cautionary words and the sacrifices made by so many who have fought to defend our nation in armed combat. That is because the foe, left unchecked, inevitably leads to the downfall of a free people like us in Canada. If we are truly to honour those who have fallen in defence of our nation, we must accept that opposing the foe is a battle each of us, particularly in this place, is currently engaged in. We must view remembrance as a lifelong charge, a sacred duty to prevent the foe from eroding Canadian freedoms, democratic institutions and our national unity.

Like mould spores, the foe lives on every surface of human nature, constantly probing for new hosts to infect. It seeks to divide us and strip us of our birthrights: freedom of speech, the choice of our own path, the right to worship without persecution and the ability to love without consequence. It attempts to deceive us, suggesting that to preserve these freedoms we must abandon our most fundamental responsibility: to do no harm to another.

● (1740)

We must be vigilant on these matters. The foe cannot be appeased and it will not de-escalate. Thus, we must resist the foe within our minds, in our relationships, in our workplaces and in civil society. This is a challenging task. The foe often disguises itself as a virtuous ideology that is wrong to challenge, masking its true intentions. It often attempts to convince us that the only way to protect our freedom is to take away or limit the freedom of others, and yet, hope lies in Canada's history.

When McCrae penned *In Flanders Fields*, Canadian soldiers were fighting for one of the first times as a unified force. During the First World War, soldiers of diverse backgrounds, including over 4,000 indigenous people, fought side by side under the Canadian banner for the goodness our nation represents. In that war, and

others that followed, men and women of all faiths fought alongside one another to liberate others from the foe. This unity, the miracle of people setting aside differences to protect the freedom found in our nation, is the foe's greatest fear. That miracle, thankfully, remains alive and well today.

We must thank those who have fought for Canada, but we also must renew our commitment to confront the foe here ourselves. How do we quarrel with the foe, as McCrae charged us to do? What must we do to hold it at bay? The foe responds to hard power, making it essential for our nation to be capable of self-defence and for military service to be respected. However, civilians too must bear the responsibility of keeping the foe in check.

We know the foe is deathly allergic to freedom and equality of opportunity, and so we can starve it of the fuel it needs. The foe's oxygen is religious hatred, rigid caste structures, petty jealousies, intellectual laziness, selfishness, political cowardice and autocracy. The foe cannot thrive in a nation in which anyone, of any background, belief or origin, can live without fear of persecution and prosper by the work of their hand.

Canada and other countries committed to traditions of freedom, democracy and justice, and the rule of law, are humanity's best and only defence against the foe. It is only within those nations where institutions exist that allow us to solve society-scale grievances through words and democratic action instead of with violence that humanity has been able to hold the foe at bay for any length of time.

We must remember that the foe confronts us every day in small moments, like when we choose to empathize rather than judge, when we bear witness to suffering rather than ignore it and when we temper anger with understanding, but also when we work to correct injustices. Fighting the foe means shedding ideologies that undermine our freedoms. It means thinking critically, challenging the status quo and forgiving when we can. A shared commitment to freedom and decency can transcend many divides, a reminder that the foe seeks to silence us, and it seeks to silence us here, but that we must protect open dialogue as a safeguard against our democracy.

Perhaps the most potent weapon against the foe is pride in Canada. Canada is the embodiment of freedom from the foe, a shining example of peaceful, democratic pluralism. We weaken the foe each time we feel pride for our country singing in our blood. Every time we sing the national anthem, every time we wave our flag, wear the poppy or thank a veteran, we strike a blow against it.

Proud of our nation we should be. Canada offers a promise of freedom and prosperity that tens of millions of people from around the world have migrated to experience. It is the promise Lieutenant-Colonel McCrae fought and died for and the promise he threw the torch to us to protect.

Today, the foe seeks to extinguish this pride and make us feel ashamed of the goodness that can be found in our shared Canadian traditions. The foe understands we will not fight to protect something if we do not value it. That is why it tempts us to cancel Canada Day celebrations and seeks to normalize shouts of death to Canada and the burning of Canadian flags in our streets.

● (1745)

That is why it wants us to view the Canadian military uniform as a symbol of oppression instead of the proud armour of liberators it always has been. That is why it seeks to have us erase our nation's history instead of celebrating the good while fixing the bad. It gives me hope that many Canadians of differing political viewpoints, religions and ethnic backgrounds are coming together to reject these lies and defend the institutions that protect our national identity of freedom. People united in freedom, as we can be here in this country, is the foe's undoing.

When we stand together as Canadians, united in our love for our nation, our freedoms, our democratic institutions, we, the true north, strong and free, truly honour those who have fought and died to protect Canada's promise. When we do this, we defeat the foe. To Lieutenant-Colonel McCrae and to all those who have served our nation across time, we are thankful for what they have done and we give our promise today: We remember, we will take up the quarrel with the foe and we will prevail. God keep our land glorious and free. O Canada, now and always we stand together proudly on guard for thee, lest we forget.

I believe this place has forgotten. I believe it has broken faith with those who died. If we do not protect the democratic institution that is Parliament, then we have broken faith. We have let the foe into this institution and it is insidious. We are supposed to think this is not a big deal. It is not a big deal that the government is not respecting the will of the House. We are supposed to believe that the Liberal government does not have a duty to comply with this, that we should just send this to a committee, that we should just let it go, that it is not a big deal.

At the end of the day, reading the Globe editorial from yesterday, and my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills read the quote at the end, the government is honour bound and duty bound to respect the will of Parliament. If the government does not do that, then our democratic institution is broken. This is a lie. How are we supposed to uphold the principles of democracy that allow our pluralism to thrive, that allow us to solve quarrels without violence, that allow us to uphold freedoms? If we cannot do that here, it is impossible across the country.

That is why we have parliamentary privilege. It is my privilege to stand in this place on behalf of over 100,000 Canadians. If the government is not complying with the will of Parliament, then that privilege has been violated. It is not just my privilege; it is the privilege of every single Canadian. That is the gravity of the situation here. This, to me, is a hill to die on.

### *Privilege*

There is a reason we are demanding that the government hand over these documents, and there is a reason we are asking our colleagues in the other opposition parties to hold the line. There is a greater principle at play here. That principle is whether or not we are going to allow McCrae's foe to seep into our business here, in our naïveté, in our comfort, our decadence and our arrogance, that what happens here does not matter.

Many people have said this place does not matter anymore, bureaucracy runs everything and there is no ministerial accountability. That may be, but for what I will do, and in the promise I make to people who serve in Canada's military, people who serve abroad, people of all walks of life who have decided to take up the quarrel with the foe, who have caught the torch from failing hands, I will not let that pass. Nor should anyone in this place, regardless of political strife, members of the government backbench particularly.

This is the time for political courage. Our democracy is under attack. It is no less than that. There is no amount of hyperbole in that statement. It is the time for political courage. It is the time to hold space and to honour those who have sacrificed to protect the democratic institution in which we are so privileged every day to speak.

● (1750)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, one of the greatest honours I have had in my lifetime was when I served in the Canadian Forces and I marched with World War II veterans. After the marches, we would often go to the legions. I would see these grown men in tears. They believed in Canada. They fought for our country, and many of their friends had died.

When I think of bringing that to the table and of the types of debates we have here on the floor of the House of Commons, I believe that they would believe that, yes, Parliament does have unfettered power. It is an incredible authority that we have as parliamentarians, but it does not give us the right to abuse that power.

I would highly recommend that the member read the Hill Times story from October 28, written by Steven Chaplin, and see how that might influence her. I, for one, believe in the freedoms that we often hear about. There are issues I have with the tactics the Conservative opposition party is using. I would think that she would share some of those.

*Privilege*

• (1755)

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner:** Madam Speaker, if future generations of people in this place, our successors, read this debate, I want them to look on this exchange with great gravity because the foe does try to make us think that we should be ceding our power and the privileges that we have in this place, which we are imbued with on their behalf. We should never do that.

What my colleague opposite suggested was that we should cede the power of Parliament and that the will of Parliament is not supreme. That is an ideology that must be rejected if we are to keep the democratic institutions of Canada alive and to respect and honour the sacrifices of those who have fought to defend them.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I want to say that I really enjoy listening to the speeches given by my hon. colleague from Calgary Nose Hill. She has a lot of experience. Do not worry, I am not about to sing any Francis Martin songs tonight.

Maybe I am being naive, but since the member does have experience, I came up with an idea that I would like to run by her. I would like her to tell me if it makes sense.

What the Conservative Party is trying to achieve through the question of privilege is to get the documents tabled. The Liberal Party, however, is unwilling to turn over the documents. Now, if the Conservative Party ended this question of privilege and immediately moved a motion of non-confidence in the government, since the NDP, the Bloc Québécois, and the Conservatives all want these documents, that could trigger an election and my colleague's party could end up in power. At that point, it could table the documents in the House.

Would it not be easier to do that? Would it not move things along a little faster? Maybe I am being a bit naive, but I wanted to put that idea out there this evening. Would it not be easier to move a motion of non-confidence in the government and then, if the Conservative Party takes power, table these documents?

[*English*]

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner:** Madam Speaker, this place has to work, and for it to work, the government must respect the will of Parliament. The way for the government to end this issue is to hand over the documents and respect the will of Parliament. We have to start taking these principles seriously if Canadians are to believe that their democracy works. It is as simple as that.

There are so many Canadians who feel disillusioned and powerless because they see members ceding their power and they see the government thumbing its nose at all of us. They saw the government sue the former Speaker of the House in a previous Parliament over a very similar issue. That has to stop. If Canada is to continue as a great nation among the great nations of the world, then this place has to work. The government has to respect the will of Parliament, and in this instance, it must hand over the documents.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague gave a thoughtful speech. She talked a lot about “the foe”, and I am not sure from where, in her view, the foe emanates, but I want to focus and get her opinion on the foe from

within. In this country, we have routinely seen the turnout for federal elections at about 60%. That seems to be the norm over successive elections. That means, and pardon my bad math, about half of Canadians do not even think their democracy is important enough to cast a ballot every four years or so.

I am wondering what she thinks is the cause of that. My own view is that it happens when there are successive political parties that promise things and then betray their promises, like when the Liberals broke their promise that 2015 would be the last election under first past the post and their promise that they would bring in a universal pharmacare system 25 years ago. When they tell Canadians they will do that sort of thing and then get in government and do not, does she feel that has a corrosive impact on our democracy and drives people away from the democratic process? Is that a legitimate foe she thinks ought to be addressed?

• (1800)

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner:** Madam Speaker, I tried in my speech to really emphasize that the only place McCrae's foe does not thrive is in democratic nations where people have enshrined rights to equality of opportunity and fundamental freedoms that are protected by democratic institutions and the rule of law.

There are many people who feel disillusioned at this juncture in Canadian history about their democracy because we have a government that continually, day after day, thumbs its nose at this institution, be it by giving ridiculous talking points in question period or having a cabinet minister who falsely claimed indigenous identity. We can pick from the litany of scandals, and then we watch members of the governing party, instead of demanding change from within, trying to figure out how to get a cabinet spot.

However, more importantly, watching the government continue to deny the will of Parliament is something I do think disillusiones Canadians. Those members in the government who continually, day after day, hold water for the government by standing up to ask inane questions and hold the water of the bad decisions of cabinet are what erodes democracy. If those members keep doing that, that is what erodes democracy, and that is what disillusiones people.

I would just look to my colleagues, particularly those in the governing party, and beg them to have some decency. If they cannot do that, they need to respect Parliament and stop carrying the water of a government that has proven its absolute contempt of this place and of Canadian democratic institutions.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I find it really interesting to hear the member say that the government is just making talking points when a lot of the speeches that have been given by Conservatives, and I think this member was the 171st Conservative to speak to this, were generated by AI. I take some offence to that.



In any event, if the opposition wants to bring forward a motion, which it has, and the motion is that we send this matter to committee, I do not think there is a member in the House who will not vote in favour of it. We want to vote in favour of this motion. It is a very unique situation when the movers of the motion are the ones who are filibustering their own motion. Notwithstanding everything else about this, why bring forward a motion to move something to a committee if they never had the intention of allowing it to move to committee?

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner:** Madam Speaker, the order from Parliament to the government was to hand over documents. It was not to send it to a committee. It was to release documents, so we are demanding that is what happens.

While I have time, I would like to offer some advice to my colleague, who is frequently up in this place and who recently had to apologize for spreading libellous misinformation on social media. I have to say—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We will resume debate with the hon. member for Saskatoon West.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise once again to address the sweeping corruption that grips the NDP-Liberal government here in Ottawa. Parliament is consumed with the issue of the Liberal government refusing to turn over unredacted documents to the RCMP for a criminal investigation.

These documents pertain to Sustainable Development Technology Canada, better known as the green slush fund. I have already spoken extensively on this issue, as did the Auditor General, I may add, so I am in good company. I encourage everyone to check out my Facebook and Twitter feeds to see my deep dive into the green slush fund and other Liberal criminal wrongdoings. For example, in today's case, these documents have been blotted out by the Liberals and, as a result, the police are at a standstill, but is this a surprise? In our country, police investigations of possible wrongdoing and criminal activity are not just esoteric questions confined to the Prime Minister and his cadre of NDP advisers. Crime is real.

The government may not take crime seriously, something they are demonstrating here by failing to provide to the RCMP documents that may very well hide criminal actions and connections to Liberal insiders, potentially even Liberal MPs or ministers, but crime is a crisis gripping our nation. It is a crisis that affects every community, family and Canadian.

I am speaking about the devastating convergence of drugs and crime, two interconnected issues that have spiralled out of control under the NDP-Liberal government's watch. This crisis is not about abstract statistics. It is about real people. It is about the family grieving the loss of a loved one to a fentanyl overdose, the shopkeeper who no longer feels safe in their store and parents who are afraid to let their children play in local parks because of discarded needles and drug paraphernalia. This is a crisis that touches all of us, and it demands immediate, decisive action.

For too long, the Liberal government, propped up by its NDP allies, have implemented reckless ideological policies that have not only failed to solve these problems but also made them worse. Their so-called evidence-based approaches have emboldened criminals, exacerbated addiction and left Canadians feeling less safe in

### *Privilege*

their own communities. It is unacceptable. The Conservative Party offers a clear, common-sense alternative. We believe in holding criminals accountable, in prioritizing recovery over enabling addiction and ensuring that every Canadian can feel safe in their home, their neighbourhood and their workplace. All of this is against the backdrop of a government that commits scandal after scandal.

This discussion here today is only the latest one, which is the refusal of the government to provide the unredacted documents to the RCMP so it can determine if there were actual crimes committed. When we have a federal government so quick to bend the rules, and possibly even commit crimes, is it any wonder that we have a larger crime and drug problem in this country?

To address this crisis effectively, we must begin by understanding the root causes. Drug addiction and crime are deeply intertwined, each fuelling the other in a vicious cycle that devastates individuals, families and communities. The opioid crisis is a prime example. Since 2015, Canada has seen an explosion in opioid-related deaths, driven by the rise of synthetic drugs, such as fentanyl. These substances are cheap, potent and deadly. Between January 2016 and September 2022, over 35,000 Canadians lost their lives to opioid overdoses. In my home province, the Saskatchewan Coroners Service recorded eight deaths by fentanyl poisoning in 2016. Deaths by fentanyl poisoning peaked at 272 in 2021, during COVID, and levelled out at 252 in 2023.

Addiction is not just a personal struggle. It is also a societal failure. The current government's response has been to normalize and enable drug use through policies such as safe supply and harm reduction. These programs are based on the flawed assumption that addiction is a permanent condition that cannot be overcome. This defeatist mindset ignores the potential for recovery and consigns individuals to a life of dependency.

At the same time, our justice system has been systematically weakened. Bills such as Bill C-75 and Bill C-5 have prioritized the rights of offenders over the safety of law-abiding citizens. These laws have made it easier for repeat offenders to obtain bail, have reduced sentences for violent crimes and have eliminated mandatory minimums for serious offences. The result is a justice system that no longer serves justice. We cannot afford any more years of inaction or misguided ideology.

*Privilege*

It is time to chart a course built on accountability, safety and recovery. These are important words. We need accountability here in Ottawa, like today as we debate this motion on the green slush fund and the possible criminal wrongdoing of the NDP-Liberal government in funnelling money through the green slush fund. Why do I say “possible wrongdoing”? Well, it is because the Liberals are blocking this Conservative motion to release the unredacted documents necessary for the RCMP to investigate.

• (1805)

It is amazing that the Liberal Party has prioritized itself and its own selfish needs over the safety of Canadians, selfish needs like funnelling government cash to their friends through the green slush fund. How do I know that? Well, just look at the Liberals' legislative record when it comes to criminal matters.

The NDP-Liberals passed Bill C-5, which purposely took accountability and punishment out of the courts. Since the passage of Bill C-5, violent crime and drug-related offences have skyrocketed. Repeat offenders, no longer deterred by the threat of significant prison time, have become more brazen. Police officers across the country report increased difficulty in keeping dangerous individuals off the streets, knowing they will likely be released with minimal consequences. Simply put, Bill C-5 replaced prison sentences with conditional sentences, better known as house arrest, for crimes like sexual assault, kidnapping, human trafficking, stealing cars, breaking and entering, arson, assault with a weapon, assaulting peace officers, and trafficking in dangerous narcotics and drugs.

The introduction of house arrest for these serious crimes is quite troubling. House arrest may be appropriate for minor, non-violent offences, but it is entirely inadequate for crimes like sexual assault, kidnapping or drug trafficking. This policy not only fails to hold offenders accountable, but also places an undue burden on victims and their communities. Imagine the trauma of knowing that one's assailant is serving their sentence just blocks away from one's home. One particular harrowing example is the case of a violent offender released on house arrest who subsequently commits additional crimes. This revolving door justice system undermines public trust in the legal system and places innocent Canadians in harm's way. That is why we need accountability restored to our criminal justice system.

Unfortunately, accountability is lacking in this justice system, which is why common-sense Conservatives brought forward the motion we are debating today to turn this criminal matter over to the RCMP. Indeed, common-sense Conservatives have put forward strong policy proposals on criminal justice matters since the last election. Perhaps the government, which is so intent on avoiding accountability around the criminal wrongdoings of the green slush fund, as well as everyday, common-sense Canadians, would like to hear about them. Perhaps this could distract from other conflicts of interest.

Conservative members have introduced numerous private members' bills designed to correct the failures of Bill C-5 and address the broader issues plaguing Canada's justice system. First, Bill C-299, the strengthening penalties for sexual exploitation act, seeks to increase the maximum penalty for offences like human trafficking and child exploitation to life imprisonment. While the Liberals

redacted their scandals, we introduced Bill C-321, the protecting first responders and health care workers act, which proposes harsher penalties for assaults against first responders and health care workers. While the Liberals hid their wrongdoing with redacted documents, we introduced Bill C-394, the restoring mandatory sentences for drug trafficking act, which would reinstate mandatory jail time for criminals involved in producing, importing and trafficking dangerous drugs like fentanyl and cocaine. These bills tackle the root causes of rising crime. Rising crime requires urgent solutions, yet the Liberal government chooses in the House to defend redacted records and questionable spending on the green slush fund rather than tackling the root causes of crime.

These next two Conservative bills would make sure that criminals stay in prison and do not revictimize people over and over again. Bill C-325, the ensuring dangerous offenders stay behind bars act, would prohibit dangerous repeat offenders from serving sentences in the community. Bill C-296, the respecting families of murdered and brutalized persons act, would ensure that individuals convicted of heinous crimes, such as the abduction, sexual assault and murder of the same victim, serve life sentences without parole for up to 40 years.

There is more. While the Liberals were giving money to their friends and hiding the evidence in these redacted documents, we introduced Bill C-351 to end least restrictive conditions for dangerous offenders, which would ensure that prisoners are confined under conditions necessary for public safety rather than trying to make criminals feel more comfortable. This change would keep dangerous individuals like Paul Bernard, in maximum-security facilities where they belong. I spoke to this bill when it was debated in the House, and the other side voted it down, voting in favour of Paul Bernardo.

These private members' bills reflect the core principles of the Conservative Party's broader justice reform agenda. Canadians can count on Conservatives to stop the erosion of public trust in the criminal justice system. The erosion of public trust caused by increasing crime mirrors the corruption and opacity surrounding the green slush fund, both of which harm the fabric of Canadian society, which is my point here today. If the Liberals would simply hand over the unredacted documents, we could get on with business here in Ottawa. We could get on with the important things Canadians are demanding, and one of those things is stopping crime.

• (1810)

Our Conservative plan to stop the crime includes the following pillars.

Number one is restoring mandatory minimum sentences for violent crimes, drug trafficking and serious sexual offences. Mandatory minimum sentences are essential to ensure accountability and public safety.

Number two is implementing jail, not bail. Repeat violent offenders would no longer be released back into the community on bail. We would prioritize the safety of law-abiding Canadians over the convenience of criminals.

Number three is expanding treatment and recovery options. A Conservative government would invest in detox and rehabilitation programs, ensuring that individuals struggling with addiction have a path to recovery.

Number four is supporting law enforcement. We would provide police with the tools and resources they need to combat organized crime and drug trafficking effectively. This includes reversing the NDP-Liberal government's restrictions on law enforcement powers under Bill C-75.

Number five is enhancing victims' rights. Conservatives would ensure that victims of crime are treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve. This includes greater transparency in parole decisions and increased support for victims and their families.

It is important that Canadians understand the Conservative approach to these criminal matters, such as the possible criminal wrongdoing that we are debating here today. Today, we are debating documents that, once this Conservative motion is adopted, will allow the RCMP to conduct a proper and formal probe into NDP-Liberal actions around the so-called green slush fund. Unfortunately, the Liberals have chosen to paralyze Parliament rather than adopt our common-sense motion and release those documents.

While Conservatives propose common-sense solutions, the NDP-Liberals engage in one misguided policy decision after another, and the consequences of misguided NDP-Liberal policies are clear. Violent crime in Canada has increased by 39% since 2015. Homicides are up 43% and gang-related murders have more than doubled. In Toronto, sexual assaults have risen by over 11% in the past year alone. The link between drugs and crime is undeniable. Drug users desperate to fund their habits often turn to theft, burglary and other crimes. Organized crime groups capitalize on this desperation, using drugs as a tool to trap individuals and expand their influence.

### *Privilege*

Public Safety Canada has stated that the illegal drug trade is a key driver of gang violence and organized crime.

The situation is particularly dire in British Columbia, where the government's experiment with decriminalization and harm reduction has backfired catastrophically. Drug overdose deaths in the province have increased by 380% since 2015, and this year alone, B.C. is on track to recording more overdose deaths than in any previous year. The evidence is clear. These policies are not working. The human cost of this crisis cannot be overstated.

Canadians are paying the price for the NDP-Liberal government's failed policies in very real ways. In Saskatoon, the police department's crime map reveals a city increasingly plagued by violence, theft and drug-related offences. Parents in neighbourhoods like Riversdale and Fairhaven tell me that they are afraid to let their children play outside. Small business owners report break-ins and vandalism at unprecedented levels.

The opioid crisis has also placed an enormous burden on our health care system. Emergency room visits for overdoses have skyrocketed, straining resources and diverting attention from other medical emergencies. First responders, already stretched thin, are now dealing with an epidemic of overdoses and drug-related violence. The emotional toll on these frontline workers is immense. It is an emotional toll that comes from the challenges of crime gripping our communities. This emotional toll reflects the consequences of a government more focused on rewarding insiders through the green slush fund than on ensuring the safety and well-being of Canadians.

Let me repeat the sad statistic of the green slush fund. The Auditor General found 186 cases where board members doled out \$400 million with clear conflicts of interest. The Liberals were taking taxpayer money and giving it to their friends and each other. That is shameful.

An emotional toll is being paid by Canadians, who are suffering through the current government of the costly NDP-Liberal Prime Minister. The NDP-Liberals have wasted billions of dollars of Canadians' money on wasteful so-called green projects through Sustainable Development Technology Canada. The sad truth is that it is being funded through Canadians' carbon tax dollars.

*Privilege*

All common-sense Canadians know that when we slap a massive carbon tax on the farmer, then on the transport truck bringing the food to grocery shelves and then on the grocery stores themselves, the price of food goes up. It is called inflation, and boy have Canadians suffered through inflation because of the carbon tax. It is simple: Canada is in crisis. Food Banks Canada's 2024 HungerCount report highlights this stark reality. In Saskatchewan, food bank usage has surged by 42% since 2019. Alarmingly, 23% of food bank users in the province are two-parent families and 18% are employed. It is a glaring sign that something is deeply wrong when hard-working Canadians cannot afford basic necessities.

• (1815)

This crisis is not limited to Saskatchewan; it is a nationwide issue. Since last year, business bankruptcies have climbed 16% while personal bankruptcies are up 14%. Do members know who is not starving? It is the NDP-Liberal insiders, who have funnelled millions of dollars of cash into their pockets from SDTC. That is who. Families and business alike are struggling under the weight of skyrocketing costs and failing policies. The Prime Minister's sunny ways of 2015 have turned into a storm of economic disaster, and it is clear that the government is not worth the cost.

That is why Conservatives have a plan to restore hope and opportunity. We will axe the tax to lower costs for families. We will build the homes that Canadians desperately need. We will fix the budget to end inflationary spending and we will stop the crime that threatens our communities. Canadians are ready for a change, and it is time for an election to bring it home. Conservatives are ready to fix what is broken and restore a brighter future for all.

Fixing the budget is part of the solution to increase public trust right here in Canada. Fixing the budget means respecting the demand of Parliament and finally releasing the documents about Sustainable Development Technology Canada, the so-called green slush fund. By releasing the documents to the RCMP, it can address the criminal aspects of this matter, because crime is crime. It does not matter if it is committed in the House by the government or on the street. Crime makes Canadians less secure. While crime rates surge across Canada, it is alarming that the government continues to block transparency around public funds, funneling taxpayer dollars into dubious projects like this green slush fund instead of addressing public safety.

The Conservative Party offers a clear, common-sense plan to address the twin crises of drugs and crime. Our approach is rooted in three pillars: accountability, recovery and prevention.

First and foremost, we must restore accountability in our justice system. A Conservative government will repeal Bill C-75 and bring back mandatory minimum sentences for violent crimes. These measures will ensure that dangerous offenders are kept off the streets and that justice is served. We will also implement a jail-not-bail policy for repeat violent offenders. Canadians deserve to know that individuals who pose a threat to public safety will remain behind bars while awaiting trial. Restoring such accountability is one step toward a brighter future that must not only stop the crime, but also address the NDP-Liberal government's disregard for fiscal responsibility, epitomized by the green slush fund scandal, which diverted resources from public safety.

We will also prioritize recovery over enabling addiction. The current government's safe supply program has been an unmitigated disaster, with up to 90% of prescribed drugs being diverted to the black market. The Conservative government will end this program and redirect funding to treatment and recovery initiatives. We will expand access to detox and rehabilitation programs, working with provinces to increase the number of treatment beds and support recovery-oriented systems of care. Programs like the Saskatoon drug treatment court, which offers alternatives to incarceration for non-violent offenders struggling with addiction, are good examples to follow.

Finally, we will invest in prevention. This includes supporting law enforcement efforts to dismantle organized crime networks and reduce the supply of illegal drugs. It also means educating young Canadians about the dangers of drug use and providing at-risk communities with the resources they need to thrive. How can Canadians feel secure when their government prioritizes schemes like the green slush fund over investments in policing and justice reform?

The crisis of drugs and crime demand immediate and decisive action. Canadians are tired of living in fear. They are tired of a government that prioritizes ideology over safety, that experiments with their lives rather than protecting them. They are tired of a government that gives their hard-earned tax dollars to Liberal friends and insiders and covers it all up by refusing to release the documents to the RCMP.

The Conservative Party is ready to lead. We will end the failed policies of the past decade and implement a common-sense approach to crime that prioritizes safety, accountability and recovery. We will bring back mandatory jail time for violent offenders, end taxpayer-funded drug dens and invest in treatment and prevention programs that actually work.

It is time to bring it home. It is time to restore safety to our streets, hope to our communities and dignity to every Canadian. I urge my colleagues in the House to join us on this mission. Together, we can build a safer, stronger Canada.

• (1820)

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

I appreciate my colleague's intervention. I know that he takes his work in this place very seriously.

The Liberals often state something to the effect that we should send this matter to PROC, to committee. However, the Speaker's order did not say that; it was to deliver—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** It did.

**Mr. Frank Caputo:** Madam Speaker, I apologize. My understanding was that the Speaker's order was to deliver the—

**An hon. member:** Madam Speaker, that is not your role. You are the Chair.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I apologize to the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. I did not say the hon. member was wrong; I just said “It did.”

• (1825)

**Mr. Frank Caputo:** Madam Speaker, I apologize if I was misunderstood. My understanding is that there was an order made that the documents be delivered unredacted. That has not happened yet. The Liberals wish to send the matter to PROC. The Conservatives believe the documents should be delivered.

What does the member think the Liberals' rationale is for just not delivering the documents unredacted? That would just end the whole thing.

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Madam Speaker, that is a very good question and one we ask ourselves a lot. Why will the Liberal government not just provide the unredacted documents as the request was made by Parliament? It is really quite a simple thing to do. They have already produced the documents with all the redactions. Simply undo the redactions and send the same documents.

They are not going to do this, because of what is contained in the redactions. The information there must be very serious. It must be very damning, potentially, for the government. It probably names people. There are all kinds of things that could be there; we just simply do not know. This is the information that is needed. It is what the RCMP needs in order to investigate properly so it knows whether there in fact was any criminal wrongdoing that should be dealt with further.

It is very important the Liberal government respect the request of the House and provide the documents unredacted.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague.

For me, what is happening in the House right now is unprecedented. The House has been seized with this question of privilege for over a month and a half, and things are at a standstill. We know what the government needs to do to resolve this impasse. It can produce the documents, which the majority of elected members are asking it to do, or it can impose a gag order with the support of another party. This government, however, does not seem to be doing anything at all to break the impasse. It seems like the government is very comfortable indeed with the current situation.

### *Privilege*

Why does my colleague think the government is just fine with the situation we are in? Is it because it does not have to face a confidence vote? Is it because it is getting tired and worn out and does not have all that many bills left to introduce?

[*English*]

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Madam Speaker, my colleague raised a very good point. In many ways it does appear as though the government is just very happy to let things go on. The Liberals certainly do not want to provide the documents, as I stated in my last answer, because they are worried about what the documents contain. At the same time, I do not think they have anything better to do either. I think they have run out of ideas, as my colleague mentioned.

I do not know that the Liberals have much left to do for Canadians. They have destroyed almost everything they have touched. They have ruined our immigration system. The list goes on and on. I honestly do not think they know what to do. In one sense, they probably are not all that sad that the House is stuck on the issue, because I am not sure there is much more they have that they would know what to do with.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague's speech was an excellent one. We are dealing with so many different Liberal corruption scandals concurrently. Just today, a senior member of the Liberal cabinet, who was the only minister from Alberta, resigned. The stack of scandals that is continuing to be investigated with respect to the member for Edmonton Centre is probably the largest that has applied to any one minister in the history of this country. It just shows how the government has debased our institutions and has ignored basic democratic norms of respect for Parliament, of the appropriate separations that are supposed to exist between institutions.

I wonder whether the member would reflect on where we have come over the last nine years and on the incredible volume of corruption. We are dealing with two privilege questions in the House at the same time. Again, this is unprecedented. What does it say about what the NDP-Liberal government has done to our country, to our institutions and to the trust that should exist in them?

**Mr. Brad Redekopp:** Madam Speaker, my colleague is quite right. From the moment the government came into power, scandals erupted. As I have spoken about many times before, the scandals are not new to the Liberal government. Scandals have always been in Liberal governments.

My colleague does raise a very interesting kind of microcase, and that is of the minister who resigned today. In one person, there are multiple scandals and just a simple refusal to admit that and a refusal to even see what is wrong in that. Finally today he was, I believe, forced out because of public opinion. I am not sure that left on his own he would have resigned, because I think there is just an innate misunderstanding and an inability to see what is actually going on.

*Concurrence in Committee Reports***CONCURRENCE IN COMMITTEE REPORTS**

• (1830)

[*Translation*]**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE****HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

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

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased that you are here. In fact, I want to open up to you, and I hope that you will have some answers for me.

Over the past month and a half, I have been going through a deeply serious parliamentary crisis, both on a personal and a professional level. It has been troubling me and keeping me awake at night. I am not sleeping well and my relationship with my friends and family is suffering. I no longer see my friends. I have been keeping to myself. My colleagues find me to be difficult and irritable. I am really having a hard time. I wanted to talk about it in the House because this concerns all members of the House.

Quite honestly, I would say that I was naive and a bit ingenuous when I was elected. I put my face on some posters and told myself that I was going to improve the lives of my fellow citizens, that I was going to come to the House to work every day to improve their lives, particularly the lives of Quebeckers.

People are concerned about all sorts of issues, such as the climate crisis, flooding, drought and the housing crisis, which we will talk about later. We are talking about a report from the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities that focuses on the housing crisis. That is quite serious, and people are grappling with this problem every day. The homelessness crisis is critical.

There is the language crisis too. French is disappearing. It has practically vanished from the rest of Canada and is dying in Quebec. Luckily, in a few years, we will have our independence and we will save the French language. In the meantime, however, we have to work within Canada and within our institutions. We have to work every day to improve the lives of our constituents.

What has been going on for the last month and a half? I come here every day and sit in my seat. I am no stranger to rehearsals. In the theatre, we rehearse a lot. I have acted in the same show 200 or 250 times. There is a big difference, however, between performing Molière 250 times and listening to 110 speeches on a privilege motion. A lot of the time, these speeches are delivered at a snail's pace to emphasize every word and really waste the House's time. The goal is to make absolutely sure that people get fed up, that they fall asleep, and that Parliament grinds to a complete halt. There is a big difference between Molière or Shakespeare and the stuff that we hear in this place. It is a far cry from Shakespeare or Molière.

I hope everyone understands my dilemma. When I arrived here, I was hoping that we would have debates, that we would put our ideas up against those of the Liberals, the Conservatives and the

NDP. I thought there would be a clash of ideas and debates, that members would launch ideas back and forth, with each idea brighter than the last. I thought this verbal and intellectual clash of ideas would lead to—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Denis Trudel:** Madam Speaker, I would appreciate not being interrupted. My colleague just broke my momentum, which is annoying. I would ask for a little respect. I am making an effort. I am performing here, unbeknownst to my agent. I should charge for this performance. The public does not usually talk. When people in the audience talk during a performance, they are kicked out, but that is another story. People have less and less respect for audience members who disrupt shows. People pay a lot of money, and they have the right to hear the performance.

Where was I? This clash of ideas should lead to brilliant, nay, incandescent bills that serve the varied interests of our constituents. That is democracy. At least, that is what it should be. As a separatist, I respect the House as an institution. However, for the past month, I have been robbed, assaulted and abused. I cannot move anything forward for my constituents in Longueuil—Saint-Hubert and for all Quebeckers.

As I was saying, I have been faced with this dilemma for the past month. One minute I was sitting here, and the next I woke up because it was my turn to speak. It has been a month and a half since I have spoken in the House. I was asked to speak about an important issue, a report by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities on the financialization of housing. “At last”, I thought, “they want to hear from me.” At the time, I was thinking about the fact that my skills and my work as a parliamentarian were being solicited. We put people to work on this file. The Bloc Québécois research team, my colleagues and I worked on this file.

We worked on the committee's report as well as the housing crisis. We did our homework. That is what I am going to talk about. The financialization of housing is a very important element in this major housing crisis. It is one of the obstacles to solving the housing crisis. The truth is, in Quebec alone, one million housing units need to be built by 2032 or so. One million units need to be built within the next eight years. However, in 2021, a record year, 67,000 units were built.

• (1835)

This means that, to achieve the objectives that were set by the CMHC and the big banks, to reach market equilibrium, which is one million housing units in Quebec and nearly 3.5 million housing units in the rest of Canada, we would need to build three times more housing units than have ever been built before. Can members imagine the construction sites, the urgency, how far away we are from the target. Can they imagine all the resources that need to be deployed to face the challenge of building three times more housing units a year than we have ever built before, year after year until 2032. It is nuts. If we do not do it, then what?

I am going to talk about homelessness.

*Concurrence in Committee Reports*

Homelessness comes up every day in the media. We recently learned that in the past five years, there has been a threefold increase in the number of deaths in the streets in Quebec. Three times more people are dying on the street. They die from overdoses or from the cold, and no one seems to care in the slightest. They are found along rivers, in tents next to sidewalks. Among those people are seniors, workers. The face of homelessness has changed and if we do not address the broader issue of the financialization of housing, which I will come back to later, homelessness will grow.

I want to talk about homelessness because there is a specific aspect of this issue that directly concerns the government. In the last budget, the government announced a \$250-million envelope to put an end to encampments in Canada. Everyone was happy, everyone applauded the good news. Unfortunately, eight months later, with winter approaching, with nights already getting colder and with temperatures dipping below freezing across Quebec and Canada, the money has yet to be paid out. Quebec's share is about \$60 million. Quebec is ready to match this amount and invest another \$60 million to help house people.

We saw that this morning in Montreal. There are people sleeping along Notre-Dame Street. The city does not know what to do with them any more. Even if they are removed from there, no one knows where to put them. The federal government keeps adding administrative and bureaucratic hurdles. People who want to open shelters are being asked, what colour will the walls be? How big will the beds be? Will the blankets be synthetic or wool? How many pillows will be required? How many pencils will be used to register the number of homeless people sleeping at their shelter? It is so dumb. They keep adding forms and hurdles. People are fed up.

When it comes time to take care of people, housing organizations in Quebec know what to do. However, these organizations are not like Microsoft, Google, Amazon, X or Elon Musk. They do not have billions of employees who can spend all their time filling out an endless number of forms. The people who work in these organizations want to help other people. They are empathetic and competent when it comes to getting people off the streets and finding them a place to live, when it comes to helping people to improve their circumstances and finding them social housing. We are talking about helping people overcome addictions. We are talking about helping them return to work. Some of these people may be just getting out of prison and they need to reintegrate into society. These organizations know how to do that. We just need to give the people with the proper know-how the means to accomplish these goals.

It is unacceptable that this \$50 million is just sitting around in Ottawa when it could be helping single mothers who are sleeping in their cars in Rivière-du-Loup or Saint-Jean-de-Dieu, a small village not far from Kamouraska. I know this is true because I went there. People are living in tents all over the place. In recent years, some women have even given birth on Quebec sidewalks. How can we allow such a thing to happen in a G7 country? How can we allow this money to sit idle in Ottawa, for some demented administrative reason, when it could be making a difference on the ground?

My time is almost up. I wanted to talk about the financialization of housing, but I am happy that I was able to talk about something that is important to my constituents.

• (1840)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the passion and the energy of that speech. I thought the member was very effective at communicating some of the struggles we are dealing with in the chamber right now. He talked about how he came here to be able to represent his constituents and work as a parliamentarian, but we cannot because we seem to be at a logjam in terms of our ability to get past one single issue.

The good news is that, and there is good news in this, the Bloc can help the government get past this impasse we are at right now by working with the government to deal with this question of privilege. He is right, 188 or 191 or so people have now spoken to this privilege motion, of which 171 were Conservatives. Conservatives are filibustering this place. They are preventing us from doing the work he speaks so passionately about. Will he work with the government to allow us to get past this so we can get to that really important work he was talking about?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Trudel:** Madam Speaker, that is so disingenuous. We are ready to end this circus. Our conditions have been very clear for a month now in the House. No one can deny that.

I was talking about seniors living on the streets earlier. The government had a chance to help them by increasing old age security for seniors 65 to 74. We want to help them. This week, I saw a story on LCN about workers going to help clean a woman's house. Her living situation was pitiful. I cannot get over the fact that such a thing is being tolerated in this day and age.

The government had its chance. For a month, we have been talking to it about vulnerable seniors. It had its chance to help them. If it had helped them, we would be ready to talk.

[*English*]

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I think that the hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert was on to something when talking about the Conservative tactics.

I would put to this chamber that the previous speaker before him, the member for Saskatoon West, has never been accused of being a riveting speaker. In fact, that was evidenced by the energy here in the House. It is refreshing for me, as a New Democrat trying to learn French in the House. I have to give, first, some comments about the incredible work of our translators, who not only do the translation but also translate the passion that the hon. member has.

As for this hon. member from the Bloc, the hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, I know him to be a theatre person, someone from the national theatre of Canada, in fact. I just have one question for him, and it might be the question of the night.

Which Shakespearean character does he channel when he rises in the House to deliver his monologues or, sometimes, soliloquies?

*Concurrence in Committee Reports*

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Trudel:** Madam Speaker, that is a very interesting question.

By the way, I would like to thank and congratulate the interpreters who work with me. I know it can be a challenge. Sometimes I get carried away and go off on a tangent. I am grateful to them, as I have already told them. It cannot be easy. I know it is challenging. I am infinitely grateful that they are able to convey my meaning to my unilingual English-speaking colleagues. I have said it before, but I wanted to say it again.

I started out as Hamlet, asking the deep questions: to be or not to be a parliamentarian. I started out in that direction, questioning myself the way Hamlet does. Afterwards, I would say I started leaning more towards Prospero or characters from Shakespeare's comedies like *Twelfth Night*—

**An hon. member:** Not Romeo.

**Mr. Denis Trudel:** No, Madam Speaker, not Romeo, as my colleague says.

I would say first Hamlet, and then one of the characters from Shakespeare's comedies.

• (1845)

[English]

**Mr. Garnett Genus (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, speaking of Hamlet, something is rotten in the state of Canada. Rent has doubled. Housing costs are way up. Young people cannot afford to buy a home. It is all because of the failing policies of the Prime Minister. We saw one cabinet minister resign today.

Does the member agree that what we really need to do is replace the Prime Minister with a common-sense Conservative alternative?

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Trudel:** Madam Speaker, that question involved a really big hypothetical, but things got a bit noisy so I only half heard the question.

My colleague alluded to Denmark. Funnily enough, since we are talking about corruption, in another Liberal era, there was a Mr. Gagliano who was appointed ambassador to Denmark. I do not know whether there is a connection, but Hamlet, Shakespeare, ambassador to Denmark and Mr. Gagliano—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

[English]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will admit from the outset it will be hard to follow that act. That certainly was a very impassioned speech. I always enjoy hearing from my colleague in the Bloc when he has thoughts to offer in this place. However, he was absolutely right on a number of issues. I agree completely with him.

For starters, there is the fact that we have not been able to continue to work on the important legislation that Canadians expect us to work on. Let us be honest. For the preceding two and a half years before September, we were able to be an effective government through an agreement with the NDP. We had the opportunity to work with the NDP on common issues, on some issues that were more important to them; on some issues that were more important to us. We had the ability to work together and we got a lot done for Canadians during that time. I think it would be hard to argue against that when we look back at pharmacare, dental care and a lot of other initiatives. Yes, I will give credit to the NDP. The NDP did a very good job at negotiating those and bringing them to the government's attention, issues that many Liberals had also been fighting for within our caucus for quite a long time, at least as long as, if not longer than, I have been around. The point is that we were able to get work done. We were able to actually do something in here and deliver meaningful things for Canadians. I already mentioned pharmacare, and I mentioned dental care. The national school food program is another one, along with \$10-a-day child care and making sure that the framework legislation behind that was well established. This is what Canadians have asked us to do by electing us to come and work on their behalf.

The member from the Bloc is absolutely right. I felt his sense of defeat about not being able to do anything, of coming here, sitting here and then suddenly realizing it is his time to speak after listening to over 170 Conservatives filibuster over the last 25 or 28 sitting days of this House. What have they been filibustering? They have been filibustering a motion that they introduced into this House. They have been filibustering a motion that asks to send a very important issue to committee. I will not say it is not a very important issue. Then, as soon as they introduced the motion, they said they had no intention of actually letting it pass. Why did they even introduce the motion in the first place? Is this the hill that they are ready to die on? It is easy, because the Conservatives want to give the impression to Canadians that it is impossible to do anything in Ottawa. Things have come to such a standstill that the only option left is to have an election.

The Conservatives have been betting on this for weeks now. I regret the fact that we ended up in this position. Unfortunately, I can understand the political motives behind it. The New Democrats decided they did not want to be part of that working relationship anymore after two and a half years of seeing successful things happen. I understand that decisions had to be made for whatever reasons. We can debate whether or not that was right or wrong, but the one thing we cannot debate, because there is no room for discussion in this, is whether or not we were effective for two and a half years and are not effective now, at least during the regular sitting time of this House.

I will say that it is really good that a lot of legislation was passed in the spring, legislation that the Senate is still dealing with and has been able to deal with during this time. I just came from a reception across the street put on by folks from the east coast, a shed party over there. I also talked to a senator who said it was a good thing that we did have a lot of legislation. We have been able to work through that and get caught up on a lot of that.



*Concurrence in Committee Reports*

We are still continuing to deliver. We are still seeing legislation that would otherwise never be implemented if an election was called now, stuff like pharmacare, for example. Although we passed it here, it had to go over to the Senate and do its work there. While in the Senate, it had to go through all the proper stages.

• (1850)

Unfortunately, we have now come to a point at which the NDP is making it virtually impossible to do anything, but I do not excuse the Bloc completely either. As I indicated in my question for the member, I ask why it does not work with the government to say to the Conservatives that maybe 172 speakers for 20 minutes each on an issue is enough. I am not good enough with math to do the—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam is rising on a point of order.

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the member knows that we are debating the financialization of housing—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member knows that there is a lot of latitude in what members can do. The hon. member has 20 minutes to come to the point that we are discussing, so I will give him the time to get there.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I am fully aware of the concurrence motion that we are debating today. I just wanted to set some of the context in which I find it troubling that we are having to debate these issues through concurrence motions. We should be debating housing through government legislation, which the NDP was able to successfully contribute to not that long ago.

That is what we should be debating. We should not be debating concurrence motions, moving things around, and how we take a committee report and send it back to committee as proposed in the amendment. We should be working on actual government legislation that would have a meaningful, tangible impact on Canadians' lives. A concurrence report coming from committee, although very important in terms of the work that we do here, does not have the ability to direct any kind of legislation other than in terms of asking the government to bring in a new piece of legislation with respect to the issue.

Let us talk about this concurrence motion and about housing more specifically. When it comes to housing, the reality is that we find ourselves in a unique position once again. We have introduced a program, the housing accelerator fund, which is very effective. Kingston received almost \$30 million. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition is great with his two-word slogans, and it was recently revealed in a story that—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan is heckling me right now, so I will use him as an example. The member—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, we know that Liberals struggle with numbers, but axe the tax, build the—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We are not going to do that right now. The hon. member knows very well that this is not a point of order.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands has the floor.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition really likes his slogans, and he is very effective at taking an issue and confusing it so Canadians cannot really see what the objectives are.

The Leader of the Opposition will say that the housing accelerator fund is a program that has never produced any housing. If we go back and look at everything they have said in the House, we see that 19 of the Conservative members at times have been very critical of the program, yet they themselves have written letters to the Minister of Housing asking for money for their communities through the program because, although the Leader of the Opposition sits there and talks about how the fund has never built any housing, they know that the \$30 million, the amount that is coming to Kingston, is not meant to physically build houses but instead is there to unlock other housing developments.

As an example, the City of Kingston has historically, over time, maybe through provincial legislation and maybe through zoning efforts on its own, developed cumbersome processes to develop housing. Maybe the development charges are too high. Maybe permit fees are too high. Maybe there is too much red tape. The federal government says it is going to give the City of Kingston \$30 million, and it has to be aimed only at how city officials remove their red tape and how they figure out ways to encourage more housing to be built faster in their city.

The funniest part about this is that it is something that the Leader of the Opposition himself was talking about a couple of years ago. At the same time that we introduced the program, before it had been voted on in the budget, he was actually saying that we took his idea. However, the Leader of the Opposition suddenly decided he was going to confuse the issue for Canadians so they do not know what is really going on here; he was just going to say, "The money going to the cities is not building housing."

The money that is going to the cities is intended to encourage them and to find ways to reduce red tape and build faster so we can get more housing built. The federal government fully knows that there is no way we as society and as the government can build the amount of housing that is required, and nor do we want to. The government's job is not to build housing, except in certain circumstances where we are working with organizations, to build affordable housing, for example.

*Concurrence in Committee Reports*

Therefore I find it really rich to hear Conservatives get up and talk about the failure of the government and of the housing accelerator fund, when behind the Leader of the Opposition's back, 19 Conservative members have been secretly writing letters to the Minister of Housing, saying that their mayor or their council really needs some of the housing accelerator fund because they know that it is going to help them build faster, that the program is going to work and that their communities need the money too.

There is an idea that the Leader of the Opposition says was his idea. He then starts slamming it as being completely ineffective, once we also agree and bring forward our very similar idea. Then while the Leader of the Opposition is doing that and while they are getting up in the House talking down the housing accelerator fund and saying it is an absolute failure, Conservatives are sending secret letters to the Minister of Housing saying, "Can we please get some of that money, because we know it's effective?"

Then the Leader of the Opposition finds out that the letters have been sent and he tells his MPs that they are no longer allowed to send letters to the government asking for help for their communities. Let us just think about that for a moment. The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan is no longer allowed to write to the government to ask the government to help his community.

Those are the people who elected him to come here. They are the people who gave him the mandate to represent them here, and the leader of his party is barring him from the ability to be able to advocate on their behalf, once he found out that many of the Conservative MPs were doing it behind his back.

● (1855)

Let us think about that for a second. Once a week, Conservative MPs have to go into a room and listen to their leader tell them what they are going to do: "Here is my three-word slogan for the week and everyone has to start saying it." Then behind his back, they say to hold on a second; maybe this guy has it wrong and this is a good program. Then they write a letter to the Minister of Housing.

**An hon. member:** It's a great program.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, yes, it is a great program. That is where we are right now.

It is important to ask who Conservative MPs are representing in the House. Do they represent their communities or do they represent the Leader of the Opposition? I think it is pretty evident from everything that has gone on in the news, the stories we have heard about the Liberal Party and what we talk about in caucus that we can get away with saying a lot. We can vote our conscience and get away with it. That is not the case with the Conservative Party, not when leaks are coming out saying Conservative MPs are concerned that the entire operation of the Conservative Party is whatever the Leader of the Opposition happens to think of on a given day and what slogan he comes up with in the shower on a given morning. He will all of a sudden give the new three-word slogan, and his team will monitor to see how many MPs have been saying it and at what time. They will get gold stars every time they say it. Then whoever gets the most gold stars gets a prize. That is effectively what is happening over there, so there is no representation of their communities.

I am extremely perplexed by where we are, specifically as we talk about the housing file. It is really important to ensure that when we are here, we represent the views of our constituents. I have stood up in the House from time to time and said that I agree with what an NDP member said when I know it is not the position of the government. I will give an example: I did not support buying a pipeline. I do not think any federal government should order a pipeline, but guess what.

**An hon. member:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I thank the one NDP colleague who is clapping.

I am still going to be in the Liberal caucus tomorrow for saying that. I can do that. Conservatives cannot do that.

I encourage one Conservative MP to stand up and say one thing they disagree with their party on. They cannot because they know the wrath that will come from the Leader of the Opposition if they do. What this ultimately comes down to is representing constituents and holding strong to the values that we believe our constituents elected us to represent in this place.

With that, I have a subamendment to move. I move:

That the amendment be amended by adding after the word "role", the words "and impacts".

● (1900)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The subamendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary claimed that members of the Conservative caucus are no longer able to write letters to the government. That is in fact false. In order to demonstrate the point, I wrote a letter to the government while he was speaking. The letter says as follows: "Dear Government, please help my community by calling a carbon tax election now." If one of the pages could come over and bring that to the parliamentary secretary, I would greatly appreciate it.

What my community wants is very clear: It wants to replace the government and its failing policies with a government that will actually get housing built. The parliamentary secretary talked about a program the government has that is building bureaucracies. He admitted this in his speech. He said that the program does not build homes; it gives money to municipalities in the hope that they will clean up problems with their permitting process.

*Concurrence in Committee Reports*

The Conservatives have a much better solution. First of all, we will make housing more affordable for Canadians by removing the GST from new homes. We will also say to municipalities that they have to meet certain housing targets to receive the same level of federal funding. If they exceed those targets, they will get a bonus, and if they do not meet those targets, they will face a clawback. We would pay for results instead of just giving municipalities money and feeding bureaucracies in the hopes that it is going to change things. Our plan will actually get homes built.

I will send that letter now.

• (1905)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, notwithstanding the gimmick of what the member just did, it is very clear that he is not one of the 19. He is a good soldier of the Leader of the Opposition. He does what he is told. I would encourage him to talk to the member for St. Albert—Edmonton. That member wrote a letter to the housing minister, specifically asking him to please support the member's community with the housing accelerator fund.

He can play the games that he wants. Ha, ha, it is really funny, although we are trying to talk about something serious here. The reality is that the member is just here to recite his leader's talking points. He says that this program of his, of removing the GST, is somehow going to solve all the housing problems. I guess it will solve problems by removing the GST from new housing. However, we only pay GST on a brand new home. This is only going to be applied to people who are buying a brand new home.

I would love to know how many young Canadians who are first-time homebuyers are only buying brand new homes. We are completely removing everybody else. How is that program going to suddenly solve the whole housing crisis?

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak on a very important issue for the residents of Hamilton Centre: the financialization of housing. I want to give the hon. member the opportunity to respond because he suggested that, in this current context, it is not the government's role to build housing. If he knows the Kingston workers' history project in his own riding, he would be able to visit the site and see what the history of the CMHC was.

It was not always the case that the CMHC was simply an insurance company for big developers. In fact, it started out of the wartime homes project, which, in Kingston, built 250 homes in his community after World War II.

I invite the hon. member to rise. He does not have to cite his party's policy, but perhaps he could envision a bigger, bolder role for the defiscalization of housing. In this, the federal government could meet the scale and scope of the crisis, actually go back to its roots and build affordable homes, as they did with the little strawberry box housing they have in both Kingston and Hamilton Centre. I am going to ask him to stand up and just dream a little bit bigger today.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, there is a very important role for the federal government to play in housing. I want to talk specifically about affordable housing. The reality is that, yes, the federal government was involved in building affordable housing

back in the 1960s and 1970s. The federal government did that. I think, personally, of all the experience I have had in affordable housing in Kingston. I sat on the affordable housing development committee before I was a city councillor. As a city councillor, I continued to sit on that committee. As mayor, I saw a lot of legacy projects.

The reality is that the affordable housing that the federal government was involved in building in the 1960s and 1970s, unfortunately, led to stigmatization and the ghettoization of housing. If he wants me to dream bigger, and I will do that with him right now, the proper way to build affordable housing is to build it in a way that integrates it into a community. We should not have 100 affordable units all together. We should have 10 affordable units in 10 different areas of the city, of the community, because that actually allows the affordable units to be integrated throughout the community.

We decrease the stigmatization, not only of the affordable housing that is being offered but also of those who live in the housing and the way they interact with folks who are not living in affordable housing. In particular, the style of affordable housing that was being offered back in the 1960s and 1970s was stigmatized. There is an incredible amount of work that can be done here, and there is a role for the government to play in this.

I have always supported what I have said in terms of what that role is.

• (1910)

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I was a little concerned to hear the member say that this debate was not meaningful. I want the member to know that the community members and the witnesses who came to the study find this work very meaningful, and the government has a lot of opportunity to take those recommendations.

I just want to give a shout-out here. Today was the wrap-up of the 2024 Housing Central Conference in Vancouver, hosted by the Aboriginal Housing Management Association, the BC Non-Profit Housing Association and the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC.

All of them are very interested in this debate, and they would like to know what the government is going to do in regard to the recommendations in that report.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I never once said that this debate was not important and was meaningless. I started my speech by talking about the Conservatives using the House in a meaningless way, because they are doing that through their filibuster on the other issue. Then, after the member who just asked me a question rose on a point of order to bring me to relevance, and rightly so, I started talking about the importance of housing and the federal government's role in it.

*Concurrence in Committee Reports*

I seriously reject the notion that I suggested this is not an important topic. It is actually one of the very few important topics that I have had the opportunity to stand up and speak to since we came back in September. I appreciate having the opportunity to contribute to a debate on such an important matter.

**Mr. Matthew Green:** Madam Speaker, to follow up on my previous question, I think the hon. member was confused. What I said was that 250 houses were built in Kingston, because the wartime project was about prefabricated family units.

I was a city councillor, and I know what happened during the 30 years of deferred federal investments in social housing, which is very different from what Liberals like to call affordable housing. The member suggested that social housing, non-market housing, had a stigma. I would put back to him that the people seeking refuge in tents right now, who will be facing the winter months coming up as snow begins to fall, would absolutely love to be in social housing.

Social housing does not have to be built in the ghettoized style of the 1960s and 1970s. Lots of models all across Scandinavia and Europe show that medium density, appropriate density, in urban settings could be applied with a social context. That gets back to the heart of this debate, which is about definancializing housing.

How does the hon. member intend to take the power, the corporate capture, of the real estate market away so we can go back to providing not just affordable homes but social homes to those who do not have the income to match the astronomic rise in the cost of living?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I did not ignore the member's first question. On the contrary, I acknowledged, at the beginning of answering the question, that I knew what he was talking about. I know about the housing built in Kingston that he was referring to. However, I thought it was more important to talk about affordable housing: housing that is supplemented by the government, housing the government helps to build and housing the government gets involved in through rent geared to income.

On the last point, I am fully aware of the housing this government has built in my riding. This government has contributed over 230 homes in Kingston since 2015.

**Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am very proud to be here tonight on behalf of my constituents and to be able to speak freely on behalf of the people of Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan. I would like to share my time with my colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. I am just going ask for a certain amount of latitude before speaking to the important subject of homelessness.

I want to recognize the passing of my mother Caroline Tolmie on October 8 and the passing of my father Robert Walls Tolmie three weeks later on October 30. Both of my parents were born in Glasgow, Scotland. I have shared on numerous occasions that having both parents who are Scottish, one half of me likes to drink scotch, the other half of me hates paying for it, but both halves of me like to fight.

My grandfather was a sniper on the offensive in World War II and during the campaign to liberate northern Europe, he and his fel-

low soldiers were drinking in a café. Canadian soldiers came running in, sounding the retreat as the enemy was on a counter-offensive with more firepower. The British soldiers scrambled to get their gear together and the Canadian soldiers, while waiting, started shooting at the bottles of liquor that were left on the shelf. In horror, my grandfather yelled, "Cease fire, cease fire." He asked the Canadian soldier, and I am not going to use the exact language he used, what they were doing. The Canadian replied, "If we are not drinking it, they are not drinking it."

My grandfather befriended the Canadian soldiers, and he wanted to move to Canada. He was never able to, but his dream was realized when my mother and father immigrated to Canada in the late 1950s and early 1960s. They moved to Canada when Diefenbaker was the Prime Minister of Canada, and I am proud to share the boundary riding lines with the former prime minister as I serve in this capacity.

My family came here with the hopes and dreams of owning property, and wanting to bring home powerful paycheques to provide for their family. They believed that Canada was a place where they could raise a family, and that their children and grandchildren could prosper. I believe in that dream, but people these days have lost hope and do not. My grandfather and my parents would be horrified knowing that many people experiencing homelessness are the brave sailors, soldiers, airmen and airwomen who were willing to put their lives on the line for the freedoms we enjoy today.

This tragic state of affairs, where homelessness is on the rise and food banks are having to shut because of the inflationary increase on food and other essentials such as clothing, is directly impacting veterans who are finding it hard to survive under the NDP-Liberal regime. When someone struggles with the everyday essentials, with homelessness, they lose hope. When they lose hope, it can directly impact their mental health.

I recently witnessed, in our veterans affairs committee, my colleague from Banff—Airdrie interviewing a witness and he revealed horrific testimony that has impacted me. My colleague stated, "This is a question I have for you, Marie. Mr. Blackwolf mentioned the triple-D policy that we often hear about from veterans. He mentioned it as delay, deny, discouragement. I kind of like that, because usually we hear it as delay, deny, die."

My colleague went on to ask the witness, "Marie, you told me a story when I visited with you recently that really illustrates the delay, deny, die, triple-D policy. Would you mind sharing that with this committee for the benefit of everyone?"

Ms. Marie Blackburn, in her testimony, stated the following:

Yes, I can.

It was a hot summer day last year, and the air conditioning went out in the building, and I thought, you know what? I'm going to scoot out of here early and go home and have some gin and tonics on my deck and just cool down.

*Concurrence in Committee Reports*

## ● (1915)

I'd seen this car in the parking lot all day long. He'd come and he'd go. He'd come, he'd go, and then he was just sitting there. When I was leaving, he came and tapped me on the shoulder and asked, "Are you able to help me?" I said, "What is it you need?" You could tell he was very stressed out and nervous, and he said that just needed some help with some family bills. We went back into that sweltering hot building, and we did the intake on him. He needed to pay his mortgage. He had no food for his family. He was behind on all of his bills. I said, "It's not a problem. We can pay all of that for you". Off he went, and off I went.

Then he called me about two months later, and he thanked me, because his family unit was back together. His wife and he had sorted out things. The kids were back in their soccer games, whatever the case may be. He said to me, "I just want you to know that would have been my last day on earth had you not helped me, because I had a gun under my seat, and if you had said no, I would have blown out my brains in your parking lot."

This is just another example of how long people are waiting to get these benefits that they're eligible for. It's ridiculous, really. It is. This is why we say that our mandate is to ultimately prevent veteran suicide. We are sort of between Veterans Affairs and the client to make sure that we can pay their bills, we can help with their kids or we can put food on their table. I don't know how you fix waiting for these benefits for as long as they have to sometimes, but something like this might give you a better understanding to figure out what we go through as boots on the ground.

Not everyone is so lucky to have someone as dedicated as Marie to help them out.

According to "The State of Homelessness in Canada 2016":

In recent years, there has been an increased focus on the plight of Armed Forces veterans who experience homelessness. Research has shown that approximately 2,950 veterans are experiencing homelessness, representing 2.2% of the homeless population in Canada. Alcohol and drug addiction are key drivers of veteran homelessness, followed by mental health challenges (including post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD]), and difficulty transitioning to civilian life.

The veterans affairs committee just submitted a report to the House on the transition to civilian life. Conservatives submitted our own report and comments, and I will quote from that. It is entitled "Common-Sense Conservatives Supporting Veterans in their Transition to Civilian Life", and it states:

Once again, the Liberal Government and the latest report from the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs fails Veterans by completely missing the mark and ignoring the real concerns brought forward by the men and women who selflessly served Canada. The Liberals' excuse for ignoring Veterans concerns is that this is an issue which could be examined in perpetuity as the evolving nature of the modern world and workforce will undoubtedly continue to present new challenges to Veterans in transition. Therefore, the Liberal Government and their NDP and Bloc partners have attempted to absolve themselves of any responsibility to Veterans, but Conservatives wholeheartedly reject that Liberal premise and table this dissenting report to be a voice....

In closing, we must recognize the damage that the NDP-Liberal government has done to every single person who is struggling with homelessness. My family came here with a dream to own property, and struggled under a previous Liberal government in the 1970s when another prime minister with the same last name was in charge. Things have not gotten better. We need to do better for the people of this country and for veterans.

## ● (1920)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I apologize to my children for abruptly hanging up on them.

I am pleased to be back in the House to be able to speak about this important report on homelessness. I will start by following up on comments made by the member for Kingston and the Islands, who actually admitted what the government's so-called housing ac-

celerator program does. He admitted it does not build homes. Let us be clear, this is not just something we say to criticize the program. This is what the government acknowledges about its housing accelerator program, that it does not have as its purpose the construction of homes.

The government's approach is, in some sense, to recognize, as the member said, that there are some significant problems with red tape and the cost of government at various levels limiting housing construction. However, its solution is to pile more money into those same bureaucratic processes and to think that is going to make the system better. The member identified in his speech a problem we have been talking about for a long time in the official opposition, which is that the cost of government, red tape and gatekeepers are slowing down and limiting the construction of new homes.

The member's solution is, effectively, to say to those gatekeepers, "We are going to give you more steel and more poles so you can build more and higher gates." The response should instead be, in order to provide relief to Canadians who are trying to buy homes, to lower their taxes, which would make it easier for Canadians to buy homes. The government should also say to municipalities that it is not going to pump more dollars into ineffective bureaucracies, that it is going to expect results in terms of housing construction and that municipalities have to meet targets for new home construction. It should say that if municipalities meet those targets, they will be able to continue to receive transfers from the federal government, and actually receive a bonus if they exceed that target, but that there will be a clawback, a fiscal implication, if they fail to meet those targets.

Instead of simply giving more money to bureaucracies that the government has just acknowledged have some problems, our approach will be to say to those same bureaucracies that we expect results, and we want to incentivize results by tying federal transfers to results in terms of new housing construction. It reflects a fundamentally different attitude toward policy-making.

In the official opposition, we care about results. We think the measure of the effectiveness of a housing policy is whether people are housed. The government seems to think the measure of an effective housing policy is not the results but the intention demonstrated by the expenditure. We care about the results. The government wants its activities to be assessed on the basis of its intentions and measured by its expenditures. It creates a program, says it has a good intention and is going to put money behind it, even though it does not actually get homes built.

*Concurrence in Committee Reports*

In the official opposition, we say we are going to take all that money the government is feeding into already bloated bureaucracies and use those resources to take the GST off new homes for Canadians. We are going to lower the taxes Canadians pay, we are going to give that money directly to Canadians instead of putting it into bureaucracies and we are also going to say to municipalities that they have to achieve certain results in terms of new home construction.

That is clearly a much better, much more effective approach. We are focused on incentivizing and pushing those results. If municipalities do not produce those results, they are going to face a claw-back of federal transfers. Meanwhile, it also reflects a belief that giving Canadians back more of their hard-earned money rather than transferring more money into municipal bureaucracies is the solution, giving Canadians the ability to afford their homes. We have a clear plan. It is to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. Of course, tonight we are talking about building the homes.

● (1925)

The Liberals always act as if those lines are a trigger for them. The member for Mississauga seems to be triggered by these lines: axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. Colleagues can see that we have clear, robust plans behind each of those identified priorities. They reflect a commitment to Canadians to actually deliver results. They are not just to talk about things or to have good intentions, backed up by taxpayer-funded expenditures. Our proposals are to achieve concrete results. We will axe the tax. We will build the homes. We will fix the budget. We will stop the crime. We will ask Canadians to measure our government, not by good intention and by expenditure, but by the actual results that are achieved. I invite the contrast that the member has proposed.

We are confident that giving money to Canadians and incentivizing real results from bureaucracies is the way to achieve results, not to pile more money into bureaucracies and expect somehow that the results are going to change simply by increasing the volume of expenditure on exactly the same things. If we look at the results of the last nine years, we are clearly much worse off. Canadians are paying twice as much for their housing. They are paying twice as much for rent. There has been a dramatic increase in violent crime. The Prime Minister, with the current housing minister, who is the former immigration minister, gravely mismanaged the immigration system. The minister who broke immigration was transferred over to housing because the government thought he could be a communicator for them on that file, but he has failed to deliver results in housing just as he failed to deliver results when it came to immigration.

The parliamentary secretary, as well, has talked about how for the last two years we were getting things done. He said we were effective in the sense that we were putting forward ideas and passing them. I do not think Canadians would say the government was effective. It has effectively been moving the country in the wrong direction. It has effectively made housing costs higher, made rents higher and increased the crime rate. This was the result of the NDP-Liberal coalition. We had a photo op of the NDP leader saying he was tearing up the coalition agreement. Then he taped it back together and has supported the government at every turn.

It will be Canadians who judge the plans that are put in front of them. I am looking forward to the chance to make our case to Canadians, to make the case in favour of our plan to axe the tax, build the homes, as we are particularly talking about tonight, as well as fix the budget and stop the crime. However, the NDP has continued to prop up the Liberals for a variety of reasons. I would challenge New Democrats to have the courage of their convictions, if they are their convictions. If they really think that piling more dollars into existing bureaucracies is the way to build homes, despite this not working for the last nine years, they should bring that case to the Canadian people and see what Canadians decide.

We will be coming forward with our plan to incentivize real results from bureaucracies and to deliver real tax relief for Canadians. We will be bringing our plan to Canadians; the Liberals will be bringing theirs. That will happen when the carbon tax election eventually comes. The Liberals should have the courage of their convictions. They should see the demand from Canadians for change and they should put their proposal before the Canadian people. They are unwilling to do that, though. They talk a good game about how they are apparently confident about what they are doing, but they are unwilling to bring their proposal to the Canadian people.

Let us have a carbon tax election. Let us have that election now. Let us see what Canadians think about what the government is doing. I am proud to stack our plan to build the homes against their nine years of failures any day.

● (1930)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to read a quote:

Here, we should be encouraging our municipalities to build housing more rapidly. I will ensure that the funding for municipal infrastructure corresponds with the number of houses that the municipality manages to build. I will require every big city to increase building permits by 15% per year or they will lose their infrastructure funding.

Do members know who said that? It was the Leader of the Opposition. That is exactly what the housing accelerator fund is. It is a program that ties the funding to municipalities to their ability to create more housing. It is not just money that is being given to bloat bureaucracy, as this member suggests. It is actual money that is tied to creating more housing, and the municipalities have to prove that they have been able to increase the housing. That is not just our idea. The quote that I just read, supporting this exact concept, was from June 7, 2023, from the Leader of the Opposition. Therefore, for the member to be critical of the housing accelerator fund is to be critical of the proposal that was made by his own leader.

● (1935)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, the member is wrong, and I will explain the difference again.

*Concurrence in Committee Reports*

Conservatives would tie existing funding to results, and we would use this money to put it back into the pockets of Canadians in the form of a significant tax cut. We would provide tax relief to Canadians, and we would use existing funds to incentivize the construction of new homes. That is completely different from the government's proposal, which is putting new money into bureaucracies that are already struggling to actually achieve the results that are required.

Our approach is fiscally responsible. It would recognize the value of a dollar in the hands of Canadians, as opposed to government, and it also insists on incentivizing the results.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, what is the member talking about when he says “our approach is fiscally responsible”?

The only thing he has been able to offer is to say that the GST would be removed off purchasing homes. That is great for somebody who is purchasing a brand new home. I guess that will benefit them, but what about everybody else who is not building a new home? How is he able to stand in the House and say their plan would produce results, when the only plan that he has been able to offer is to take the GST off a brand new home?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, this is clearly the choice.

The Liberals have had nine years. They have objectively failed to build homes. We are not building homes at nearly the rate we need to. Housing costs are up dramatically for all Canadians. It has been nine years of failure under the government, and its members believe that announcing additional funding for existing bureaucracies is going to change that. Canadians, again, are not going to judge the current government by its intentions or its expenditures. They are going to judge it by the results.

Meanwhile, Conservatives have a record in government of much better performance when it comes to actual housing affordability for Canadians, and we are putting forward specific proposals that would cut taxes for Canadians, incentivize the construction of new homes and achieve results. Certainly, Canadians will judge the results, just as they will judge the current government by the results.

However, eliminating the GST on new homes would provide a significant benefit for Canadians. It would increase home construction. It would help to achieve the results that the current government has failed to achieve for nine years. Essentially, I think what we are hearing from the parliamentary secretary is a partial admission of failure up to this point, but he is saying that now they are suddenly going to change things.

It has not worked. With nine years of failure, we are worse off. We need a new government, and we need a common-sense carbon tax election so Canadians can decide.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, the member did not answer my question, but notwithstanding, I will take the bait.

Will the member tell us, please, about all this housing that the former Conservative government built? They want to take credit for all the housing that the market built back when they were in government before. However, the reality is that, when it comes to actual affordable housing units, the leader of the Conservative Party built six houses in the entire country when he was housing minister.

I know this not just because I hear it in the House a lot but also because I was a mayor in an Ontario city at the time, and we received zero from the Harper government.

Can the member please tell us more about the Conservative record?

• (1940)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, this is unbelievable, if we listen to this member. He says that when Conservatives were in power, yes, things were going well in terms of housing, but it was not because the Conservatives were doing a good job. Then he says that now, after nine years, things are going poorly for Canadians, but it is not the government's fault. This member would have us believe that these dynamics—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We have to resume debate.

The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I always find it interesting to be in the House and to listen to the Conservatives and the Liberals fight about who did housing worse. As the NDP, we can tell them that they both did it terribly. Both governments decided they were going to walk away from their responsibility to offer safe, human-right housing in Canada and give it to the market.

Now the Liberals and Conservatives are seeing the fruits of their misguided decisions in the fact that people in my community and other communities across this country are living rough in tents, in parks, on benches and in their cars. Meanwhile, right beside them are 20-, 30-, 40- and 50-storey luxury towers. We only have to go to Vancouver and see the chandelier that is hanging under a bridge as public art steps away from Canadians who are living in tents. They cannot afford to get into these luxury towers and they are having their housing removed. I would ask the Conservatives and the Liberals, as they come to what the Liberals called a meaningless debate today, to think about what they have done and how it has manifested.

I want to say a big thanks and really recognize the member for Vancouver East, my colleague in the NDP, who was years ahead on the issue of the financialization of housing and the role and impact it was having on people. I say to the member from the Liberal side that the amendment of adding impact is important because there has been an impact. We can think about this study and about what my colleague the member for Vancouver East saw in her community in Vancouver, people becoming homeless and more and more people finding housing out of reach while luxury condo after luxury condo was being built. I saw the same thing in my community of Port Moody—Coquitlam, where purpose-built affordable rental units were bought up by wealthy developers and financialization landlords to create more housing that the people they were displacing could not afford to get into.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

I think about when one of the very first luxury condo projects got approved in my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam, back in 2014 and 2015, and the developer came and said they were going to do rental housing beside it. They were going to do two towers and do rental housing. Back in 2014 and 2015, we thought that would be great. What they did build was a luxury building. It was a luxury rental building not accessible for the people they had displaced when they bought up the old affordable purpose-built rental housing and built their two luxury towers.

I want the current government members to know that their decisions, and the decisions of the Conservatives before them, have made people homeless. It is not just me saying this. The federal housing advocate said the aim of these people, these corporations, involved in the financialization of housing is to maximize their profit by increasing rent and cutting services for tenants. They are doing it on purpose.

I will go back to my colleague from Vancouver East, who put a dissenting report together for this financialization of housing report to say that the government needs to stop this loss of affordable purpose-built rental housing and to start protecting these buildings. I want to give credit to the B.C. NDP government, David Eby and the housing minister Ravi Kahlon. They immediately put forward a \$500-million fund to protect affordable purpose-built rental housing in our communities across B.C.

What did the federal government do? It did nothing. It was asked over and over again to protect affordable rental housing and the government members let it ride with the market. It is totally unacceptable and it is why we are in this position we are in today. The government is missing in relation to protecting affordable housing and creating affordable housing.

• (1945)

Do members know why? It is because the Liberals are propping up these landlords. These financialized corporate landlords are their donors. They are their friends. They know them personally. They are protecting them in committee. In fact, as the NDP, when I asked for one of these financialized landlords to come to committee and talk about what it does with respect to its housing, the Liberal parliamentary secretary for housing protected it and voted against having it come in. It was the same with the Conservatives. We have not heard from these landlords that are financializing housing because they have been protected by the Conservatives and the Liberals.

I will add that Starlight Investments, one of these financialized landlords, was invited twice to committee to testify and twice it refused. Instead of the Liberal government saying that was not acceptable as it is accountable to Canadians, it said it was fine. In fact, during the summer, the chair of that committee said that it was fine and he would let it send in a written response. No. It needs to come to committee, talk about its business practices and what it is doing.

I also want it to talk about its partnerships with the federal government because it has connections to these financialized landlords through asset management. The financialization of housing is not just happening out there in the market with these landlords; it is happening right inside our pension funds with choices being made by the Liberal government.

Therefore, there is a lot of work to do here. Who is suffering? The most vulnerable people in Canada. I want to talk about seniors. Seniors are some of the longest-holding purpose-built rental tenants. For 10, 15, 20 even 25 years they have been in those apartments. They are the ones who are being targeted by these landlords who want to financialize. They want to get them out so they can jack up those rents. It is absolutely disgraceful. In B.C., for the first time ever, people over 55 are finding themselves homeless. This is absolutely unacceptable.

I go back to the Liberal member who made a speech earlier and said that this debate is meaningless and does not do anything. That is their choice. The Liberals have decided to do nothing, to let seniors, persons with disabilities, single moms and immigrants to this country become homeless. The Liberal government is involved in that decision to let financialized landlords kick them out of their homes. There was recently some research on this that came through the CBC. There is some very strong research that proves that these financialized landlords raise rents through these above-guideline rent increases more than any other type of landlord. Not just that, they evict at a higher rate. Where is the federal government to stop this exploitation and the pushing of people out onto the streets? It is nowhere. It does not even want to have a discussion about it at committee. It is protecting its financialization landlords. It is not taking this crisis seriously. I ask the government this. How many more seniors, persons with disabilities, single mothers and indigenous women having to give up their kids because the shelter does not allow them to bring their kids with them—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** It being 7:50 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

• (1950)

[*Translation*]

The question is on the amendment to the amendment.

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

[*English*]

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Pursuant to Standing Order 66, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, November 27, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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



*Adjournment Proceedings**[English]*

## PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I said a few weeks ago that the Liberals' indigenous procurement scandal was the biggest scandal we have seen yet, and I think Canadians saw why today. A senior Liberal cabinet minister from Alberta with multiple different areas of responsibility, the member for Edmonton Centre, left cabinet because of the Liberals' indigenous procurement scandal. Now members across the way think this is funny. It is not funny.

The Assembly of First Nations has told committee that a majority of the contracts that are supposed to be going to indigenous entrepreneurs, supporting economic development in indigenous communities, are going to shell companies. Indigenous leaders have been repeatedly testifying at committee that there is rampant abuse in a program that is supposed to benefit indigenous entrepreneurs and communities. People are pretending to be indigenous. There are shell companies and there are abuses of joint ventures, where virtually all of the benefit goes to a non-indigenous company. This is the abuse that has been happening, and we have been talking about it for months.

However, it has just recently come out that a company owned by the former minister of employment, who just resigned, was pretending to be indigenous in order to try to get government contracts. Therefore not only is there rampant abuse of the program by people who are not indigenous but are pretending to be indigenous or trying to take advantage of the program in other ways, but also there is a former member of the Liberal caucus who owns a company that pretended to be indigenous-owned when it was owned by a minister of the Crown who is not Indigenous.

The former minister repeatedly misrepresented himself. The Liberal Party, in its public statements, identified him as indigenous and said that he was part of the Liberal's indigenous caucus. Every other member of the caucus still identifies as indigenous, but he acknowledges that he is not, even though he was a member of it. In various situations, he falsely represented himself as being indigenous; this was part of a political story he wanted to tell, but it was also the basis on which the company he owned pretended to be an indigenous-owned company and tried to get contracts on that basis.

The former minister's company is not the only instance of abuse. Again, the AFN is saying that it happens with the majority of companies getting the contracts. There are companies like Dalian Enterprise and a Canadian health care agency, which got over \$100 million each and where there were very clearly abuses of joint ventures. These are companies that were taken off the indigenous business list but nonetheless profited significantly while they were on it. This is absolutely disgusting.

Indigenous peoples in this country are experiencing unacceptable levels of poverty. The government came in with high words about reconciliation, yet here we are today. The Liberals came in promising reconciliation, and nine years later a minister of the government is leaving cabinet because he pretended to be indigenous and used that pretense to try to advance the commercial interests of his own private company by getting contracts from the government. The government defended him for far too long. He remains a member of

the government caucus, and his company remains eligible for government contracts.

Will the Liberals show some contrition tonight and recognize how badly they failed on reconciliation—

• (1955)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services has the floor.

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge that we are on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

I thank the member for this opportunity to talk about the importance of economic reconciliation through supporting indigenous businesses. I think it is important to take a step back to remind members why the procurement strategy for indigenous businesses was created in the first place. Indigenous people in Canada comprise approximately 5% of the overall population, yet, historically, businesses owned by first nations, Inuit and Métis entrepreneurs were consistently winning a lower percentage of federal contracts.

In the early 1990s, the government saw an opportunity to facilitate indigenous people's access to procurement opportunities. In 1995, the eligibility criteria for the current procurement strategy for indigenous businesses, PSIB, then under a slightly different name, was approved. Based on engagements with indigenous organizations and business leaders, in 2021, Public Services and Procurement Canada, in collaboration with the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat and Indigenous Services Canada, created more opportunities by implementing the mandatory minimum 5% indigenous procurement target.

Today, the procurement strategy for indigenous businesses and the mandatory 5% target continue to be two important ways the Government of Canada supports indigenous businesses, including indigenous entrepreneurs, across the country. We have heard many times from indigenous partners how important this PSIB is for advancing economic reconciliation and supporting indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs.

Since we announced the 5% target, we have seen a surge in indigenous entrepreneurs' interest and investment in the program. In contrast, the proportion of contracts going to indigenous businesses in the Harper years never went above 1%. Now, Conservatives are trying to undermine this critical program by focusing on the extremely rare instances of bad actors that do not represent the overall merit of the procurement strategy.

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Investing in indigenous communities and building up indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs benefits all Canadians. According to the 2022 national indigenous economic strategy for Canada, the continued exclusion of indigenous people costs the Canadian economy \$27.7 billion every year. The National Indigenous Economic Development Board found that closing the existing employment gap could help lift over 150,000 indigenous people out of poverty. There is a real cost to inaction.

I would like to be clear: we are working closely with indigenous partners to improve the indigenous procurement process and address these concerns. Together with indigenous partners, we are gathering information and building the foundation for a co-developed, transformative, indigenous procurement strategy that supports economic reconciliation. One of the components of this co-developed strategy is the transfer of the indigenous business directory to indigenous partners. We know that first nations, Inuit and Métis are best positioned to define and verify indigenous businesses.

We will continue to work with indigenous partners to co-develop a path forward that strengthens economic relationships with indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses. These increased economic opportunities for first nations, Inuit and Métis people are vital to ensuring continued growth and prosperity for all of Canada. We will continue to improve and support the program as it is vital for supporting indigenous businesses and communities. I hope that our Conservative colleagues will support us in doing that.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, it is really unbelievable that the government persists in its arrogant pretense that everything is totally fine. The member did not at all mention the fact that today, a minister of the Crown left cabinet because his company was trying to abuse this program. She said, “extremely rare instances of bad actors”. That is completely the opposite of what we were told by the Assembly of First Nations and by many other indigenous leaders.

The government is not listening. Indigenous leaders are telling us that abuses are rampant in this program, that there are companies that have received hundreds of millions of dollars through abuses. They are not indigenous but they are benefiting from this. We have a member of the Liberal caucus who is a bad actor in this whole process.

Again, will the government show some humility and stop pretending everything is fine, listen to indigenous leaders and actually recognize that there is a big problem?

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, I would be happy to go into more detail about what happens in those rare occurrences where concerns with supplier integrity are suspected. If a department or agency has concerns about supplier integrity or misconduct at any point in a procurement process, they can refer the matter to Public Services and Procurement Canada's office of supplier integrity and compliance.

The office administers the strengthened ineligibility and suspension policy, which came into effect earlier this year. This policy sets out the circumstances and processes that enable the registrar of ineligibility and suspension to suspend and de-buy our suppliers. This includes suppliers who have been charged with or convicted of a

specific offence or have been found to lack business integrity or business honesty in a manner that directly affects their present responsibility.

On this side of the House, we will continue to improve and support the indigenous procurement process in true partnership.

● (2000)

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.):** Madam Speaker, we are back this evening to debate a question that I asked the Prime Minister, a question that arose from constant media coverage and from a parliamentary intelligence committee report that provided insight on the infamous 11 parliamentarians who were in the pocket of the Chinese Communist Party.

I asked the Prime Minister if he had trouble sitting at the cabinet table, as he must have wittingly known that at least one of his ministers may not have been working in the service of Canada. The Prime Minister knew he could not defend the indefensible, so instead of answering the question, he attacked my question by theatrically stating that I was displaying “irreverence and unseriousness in a place that deserves a serious contemplation of issues of national security”. What is disgraceful, very serious and irresponsible is the continuous refusal of the Prime Minister to name those individuals and provide information that he sat on for several months to the appropriate authorities so that a badly needed investigation can be launched, charges can be laid and our courts can determine the guilt or innocence of those who remain kept in seclusion.

It is obvious that the Prime Minister is in denial or completely unaware that he is not above the law. Moreover, he is equally clued out in understanding that nowhere is it written that a prime minister has the power to obstruct justice and override the Criminal Code of Canada. It is unconscionable that the Prime Minister has ignored all efforts for these 11 individuals to be identified and for the laws of Canada to be applied.

The Criminal Code is clear on the issue of treason, and unlike the Prime Minister, most Canadians believe that the Criminal Code is the law of the land and that laws are there to protect Canadians, not to protect Liberals or anyone else who sells out their country for political or financial gain. The code is not some plaything of a prime minister. It is incumbent on a prime minister to act to protect Canadians and our democracy from those who are out to subvert our institutions. That is the duty of a prime minister.

I find it passing strange that the Prime Minister is concerned about the opposition leader's security clearance when the Prime Minister is shielding the investigation and prosecution of those who are in league with agents of foreign interference, including at least one cabinet minister. As long as those 11 traitors remain unnamed and uninvestigated, the Prime Minister is in fact abetting foreign interference and protecting those in the pocket of Beijing. Why?

There is no defending the indefensible. No matter what is in the parliamentary secretary's talking points, for the leader of the Liberal Party to cover for 11 traitors who are in the pocket of the Chinese Communist Party and who are escaping justice is an affront to Parliament and to all Canadians. Those 11 individuals remain in the protected custody of the Prime Minister, who, by his own actions, is in contempt of our laws and of the administration of justice. What is the Prime Minister so afraid of? Is the Prime Minister afraid to release the 11 names because of who they are or the roles they hold in the government, in his own caucus or in the Liberal Party?

I will ask once again a very simple question of the government: Will it release the names, yes or no?

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to speak to the paramount issue of combatting foreign interference in our democratic institutions. I certainly take this matter very seriously. I have respect for the House, and I wish the member would demonstrate the same. The allegations referenced here are misleading and defamatory, and he is simply peddling misinformation.

On this side of the House, the Prime Minister and ministers of the Crown have security clearances and have been vetted by national security. That is more than I can say for the Leader of the Opposition, who the member opposite is sitting closer and closer to. That is why I would like to turn my attention to what matters, which is what the government is doing on foreign interference.

In September 2023, the government announced the establishment of the public inquiry into foreign interference in federal processes and democratic processes following extensive consultations with all recognized parties in the House of Commons. All parties agreed to the terms of reference and the appointment of the commissioner, Justice Marie-Josée Hogue, a judge of the Court of Appeal of Quebec. The commissioner is mandated to examine and assess interference from China, Russia and other foreign state or non-state actors, including any potential impacts, to confirm the integrity of and any impacts on the 2019 and 2021 federal general elections at the national and electoral district levels.

As members of the House know, the commissioner's interim report was delivered on May 3, 2024. Some of the key findings from this initial report were that foreign interference did not affect the overall outcomes of the 2019 and 2021 elections, and the administration of these elections were sound. Foreign interference did not undermine the integrity of Canada's electoral system.

The commission's initial report did not make any recommendations for the government or other stakeholders. These will be included in the commission's final report. The government looks forward to reviewing the final report and any recommendations the

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

commissioner may have for better protecting federal democratic processes from foreign interference. These will help inform future measures. In the meantime, the government continues its work to counter the evolving threat of foreign interference in Canada's democratic institutions.

Since the commissioner was appointed, the government has taken a number of steps. In September 2023, the Prime Minister made a statement in the House of Commons that there were credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the Government of India and the killing of a Canadian citizen in British Columbia. In October 2023, the government issued a second public statement on a probable Chinese government's "spamouflage" disinformation campaign targeting dozens of Canadian parliamentarians and issued letters to those parliamentarians who were targeted.

In December 2023, Canada joined the United Kingdom's attribution of malicious cyber activity in Russia that targeted U.K. politics and democratic processes. In January 2024, early preparations for the critical election incident public protocol panel began with individual briefings to panel members. Also in January 2024, the government published and shared a tool kit to resist disinformation and foreign interference and "Countering Disinformation: A Guidebook for Public Servants".

In March 2024, the government introduced Bill C-65 which proposes amendments to the Canada Elections Act, including measures to further strengthen federal electoral processes against foreign interference. This bill has passed second reading in the House and is currently being studied in committee. In June 2024, unclassified briefings on foreign interference were provided to members of Parliament. On June 20, 2024, Bill C-70, the Countering Foreign Interference Act, received royal assent.

The Government of Canada has taken a range of measures to address the evolving threat of foreign interference in Canada's democratic processes. We look forward to reviewing any recommendations that Commissioner Hogue may have in her final report. In the meantime, the government continues to take steps to protect Canada's democracy.

• (2005)

**Mr. Kevin Vuong:** Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary has been instructed not to answer the question regarding the release of names. That is fine.

Instead, I would like to ask the government about the New Oriental International College Academy in Markham. If she followed the Hogue inquiry, she would be familiar with the school, as the inquiry was told that this private high school based in students from Markham to vote for the member for Don Valley North in his nomination campaign.

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This school is endorsed by the Chinese consulate, and last year, this high-powered school's CEO partied it up with the Prime Minister on Parliament Hill. Not only that, but this same Chinese consulate approved school students who were offered a summer leadership program to work in the Prime Minister's Office. This must be investigated. If this were the United States, a special prosecutor would have already been appointed. No matter what the party is or who the person of interest is, no one is above the law, not even the Prime Minister.

Will the government appoint a special justice to look into the Prime Minister's actions for working with a school flagged by CSIS?

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, the government is committed to protecting and strengthening Canada's democracy, and I will reiterate that time and time again. I can tell the member is very passionate about this, and it is important that all members of the House take this very seriously. We look forward to the ongoing work of the public inquiry into foreign interference in federal elec-

toral processes and democratic institutions, as I mentioned, including the commissioner's final report in December. The government will review the report in due course, including any recommendations the commissioner may have.

In the meantime, the government has taken many steps to counter the threat of foreign interference in our democratic institutions since the commission began its work. Democracies around the world are grappling with the threat posed by foreign interference. Canadians can have confidence that robust safeguards are in place to protect our democracy. The Government of Canada continuously adjusts these measures to meet this long-standing and evolving threat.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:10 p.m.)

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