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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 22, 2021

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA

The Speaker: I wish to lay upon the table a letter received earlier today from the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada in relation to the order made Thursday, June 17, 2021.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and 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 five petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

CANADA DISABILITY BENEFIT ACT

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-35, An Act to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada disability benefit and making a consequential amendment to the Income Tax Act.

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

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group concerning its participation at the Canadian American Border Trade Alliance Spring Virtual Conference by video conference on May 3 and May 4, 2021.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on International Trade on Bill C-216, an act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management).

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development on Bill C-230, an act respecting the development of a national strategy to redress environmental racism.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, entitled "Immigration Programs to Meet Labour Market Needs".

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

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, two reports of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. The seventh report is entitled "Concurrence in the Findings and Recommendations of the Final Report on the Implementation of the Merlo Davidson Settlement Agreement by the Hon. Michel Bastarache".

In my many years in Parliament, I have seldom been more disturbed by the testimony of a witness. Justice Bastarache came before the committee with his report and laid out the cold, hard facts of the Merlo Davidson settlement, which had over 3,000 claims, of which 2,300 were paid out, for a total of \$125 million. All members of the committee were very disturbed by the report.

We have not asked the government for a response, but we did receive a response late yesterday from the commissioner of the RCMP, which we have included on the committee website and hyperlinked to within this report.

Routine Proceedings

I also have the honour to table the eighth report of the committee entitled, “Parole Board of Canada and the Circumstances that Led to a Young Woman’s Death”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to the eighth report.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in January 2020, Marylène Levesque was killed by a convicted murderer who had killed his wife in 2004 and was out on day parole. Ms. Levesque was failed by the system. She was failed by Correctional Services. She was failed by the Parole Board, and she was failed by the government.

The threat to Canadians by dangerous and repeat offenders on parole or after release is experienced by far too many innocent Canadians. The committee’s report outlines these failings, but does not go far enough. For that reason, Conservatives are tabling a dissenting report that outlines the severity of the systemic gaps that made the victim vulnerable and allowed the convicted murderer to kill again.

Conservatives are presenting multiple recommendations for action in order to do justice for the victim, prevent other tragic crimes like it and protect the safety of all Canadians.

• (1010)

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to speak to the Levesque report in the House. We tabled a supplementary report.

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. parliamentary secretary moving the motion will please say nay. It is agreed.

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

Hearing no dissenting voice, it is agreed and carried.

(Motion agreed to)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the supplemental report tabled by the Liberal Party today as part of the eighth report from the standing committee on the tragic death of Marylène Levesque. I will begin by expressing our condolences to the family and friends of Marylène Levesque.

Immediately after this tragic event, a board of investigation was called and led by two co-chairs independent of the Parole Board of Canada and Correctional Services Canada. The board of investigation made five recommendations to Correctional Services Canada, which were accepted, and no recommendations for the Parole Board of Canada. We support implementing all recommendations.

We were disappointed that some of the witness testimony was partisan in nature and unfortunately, the Conservative recommendations reflect that. I was particularly upset when the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles declared that our government’s merit-based appointment process to the Parole Board of Canada was part of “ideology that wants to make changes in the name of diversity, by including indigenous women, for example”.

As retired director general of corrections and criminal justice at Public Safety Canada, Mary Campbell, said, “In terms of what would address, or what would have changed what happened here,

there is one person to blame here, and that is Mr. Gallese.... As I said, if you can show me in the Parole Board decisions where an error was made, I’d love to have that discussion.

In response to the board of investigation report, Correctional Services Canada has testified that it will move to a single community supervision model for federal offenders across the country and strengthen community supervision policies. It will be strengthening monitoring tools and practices to support effective information collection and sharing throughout the offender’s sentence. CSC will be introducing new mandatory intimate partner violence training.

In 2019-20, 99.9% of offenders on day parole completed their supervision period without committing a violent offence. That is just a fact. As David Henry, director general of L’Association des services de réhabilitation sociale du Québec—

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary for a moment. We have a point of order from the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to clarify that the motion adopted to give the member special permission to present a supplementary report was to present the report, not to read the entirety of the report.

The Speaker: I was getting there. I would like to remind the hon. parliamentary secretary to be as concise as possible. I will let her continue.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, I am almost finished.

Mr. Henry said, “parole is a key social rehabilitation measure. Giving someone parole, guidance and supervision in the community ensures the safety of our communities.... The statistics speak for themselves.”

Committee members heard from the Union of Safety and Justice Employees, represented by David Neufeld, that major cuts under the previous—

The Speaker: I have to interrupt again. I have another point of order.

The hon. member for Banff—Airdrie.

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, I understand that you are attempting to give the member some latitude here, but this time is intended to present a dissenting report or supplemental report. There have been attacks on other parties, and there have been all kinds of commentary here. I really do think, Mr. Speaker, it might be time to consider that it has been enough.

The Speaker: I understand the parliamentary secretary is wrapping up, so I will give her a bit more time and then we will go from there.

*Routine Proceedings***TEXTILE LABELLING ACT**

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, the Union of Safety and Justice Employees representative David Neufeld said in committee that major cuts under the previous Conservative government's deficit reduction action plan eliminated counselling for offenders in the community.

While community resources have been increasing over the past four years, it is clear that more needs to be done. We recommend better supports for parole officers in the community and enhanced vocational programming for prisoners. We support enhanced training on domestic and intimate partner violence, and sex work and sexual assault, in consultation with sex workers, women and gender rights organizations.

Last, the Harper changes to sex work legislation has put women in precarious and dangerous situations, which is why we feel that the government should examine sex work laws.

• (1015)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order.

I seek the unanimous consent of the House, in all fairness, for the member for Lakeland to be able to share a few more comments about the Conservative dissenting report. I am sure she also has more to say. I wonder if there is unanimous consent to do that.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

* * *

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-319, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (prorogation).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a bill inspired by the work of retired procedural clerk, Thomas Hall, which was published in the *Journal of Parliamentary and Political Law* in July 2020, entitled "Taming the Power to Prorogue Parliament".

The bill goes hand in hand with my private member's motion, Motion No. 93, which seeks to establish some more explicit instructions on how the prime minister can judge whether he or she has the confidence of the House. However, this bill in particular would do three things that are meant to constrain the very broad power of prorogation the prime minister currently holds, without requiring a constitutional amendment.

Those three things are to ensure that prorogations do not last more than 10 sitting days, according to the House of Commons calendar; Parliament cannot be prorogued more than once in any 12-month period following the opening of the first session of Parliament; and Parliament cannot be prorogued between the day any estimates are presented to the House and the final supply day in that supply period.

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

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-320, An Act to amend the Textile Labelling Act (animal skin, hair and fur).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to reintroduce this bill, an act to amend the Textile Labelling Act to allow for a practice that is not in Canada right now, which should be.

As a consumer, an individual should be aware when they are purchasing dog or cat fur in clothes or children's toys. The United States and other countries have moved forward with similar legislation. This would bring us on par, at least, to having this awareness, as right now, over two million dogs and cats are slaughtered each year and used in products across Canada from various sources.

This bill would bring us into compliance with the United States and other countries and, more important, would allow consumers the right to choose. If they are going to have dog or cat fur in their or their children's coats or in toys for their children, they should at least have that knowledge.

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

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-321, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (tax credit for gifts).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to reintroduce this bill. It is not often that the *National Post* actually endorses an NDP idea and bill. This bill would allow tax credits on donations to charities, similar to donations to political parties. This way, there actually would be more giving, and there would also be more tax revenue that would go back to the individual. Charities and not-for-profits have had difficulties and challenges with regard to donations. This bill would at least provide some revenue stream for them to help.

I will just say that this is very important, because right now we know, with COVID-19, those organizations have been really challenged. This would allow our donations to charities to replicate those to political parties. They would be capped, so there would not be an endless stream of money that we can get back, allowing for fairness for all Canadians.

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

Routine Proceedings

• (1020)

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-322, An Act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (community benefit).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this will complete the trifecta, and this is important. As Bill C-227, it was previously in Parliament, and it was designed to provide community benefits for infrastructure projects.

Community benefits go to helping employment, offsetting environmental degradation, and so forth, on projects that are put through by public works, for example, the Gordie Howe Bridge, which I have been fighting for. My first public meeting on that was in 1998. We finally got some community benefits to help Sandwich Town, but unfortunately it is not in legislation. As I mentioned, Bill C-227 was passed in the chamber but was held up in the Senate. I would suggest this is a good opportunity to restore that work and provide community benefits for infrastructure projects, so that we can actually help.

Often, there is money that goes toward employment for youth, for issues related to the environment and also specific regional things.

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

The Speaker: Before going on to the next one, I just want to comment on the hon. member for Windsor West. I think all members should look to him and see how it is to be concise and precise, to just put the salient facts forward and to not take up a lot of time. I want to thank the hon. member.

* * *

[Translation]

PETITIONS

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to present a petition signed by over 800 people regarding indigenous rights in northern Ontario. The petition could not be certified because of a formatting issue.

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

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

Hearing no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried.

The hon. member for Nickel Belt.

[English]

Mr. Marc Serré: Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to the Minister of Indigenous Services.

Citizens of the Mattawa/North Bay Algonquin first nations community call upon the hon. minister to take action on the unfairness and discriminatory selection for membership by the Algonquin nation, its consultant, Joan Holmes and Associates Inc. and its solicitor,

Mr. Potts. They ask for a review of all memberships revoked based on the April 2020 proposed beneficiary criteria for contradicting interpretation of the consultant office and the Mattawa/North Bay community office. There was no input from the members, as required under section 10(2). Memberships were revoked under the proposed beneficiary criteria. They seek for all chiefs to comply with the same criteria as the members, including proof of documentation on their Algonquin ancestry to be verified by an independent genealogist.

The petitioners ask for their appeals to be heard prior to the next election, in order to allow successful appeals for an individual's right to vote to not be suppressed.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have four petitions to present this morning.

The first, petition e-3187, is signed by almost 78,000 Canadians who are calling attention to the inherent cruelty in the live shipment of horses for slaughter. It is an inhumane practice, as large draft horses are air-shipped in over 10-hour flights in crates smaller than a single horse stall without food or water, causing injury and death. The petitioners note that the science is clear: Horses suffer physically and psychologically during long-distance transport, and our animal protection laws are not fit for purpose.

The petition highlights a 2019 Nanos poll in which 69% of respondents are opposed to the slaughter of horses for human consumption. Public awareness about this issue is increasing, thanks to the efforts of the Canadian Horse Defence Coalition, music icon Jann Arden and many other horse advocates.

The petitioners call for an end to the air shipment of horses exported for human consumption, due to ongoing animal welfare concerns inherent in this practice.

• (1025)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, second is petition e-3114.

Atheists are persecuted in several countries by government and the public. Some countries, including Saudi Arabia, label all atheists as terrorists. The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled several times that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the right to freedom from religion as much as the right to freedom of religion, yet atheists are denied access to the less complex claims policy of Canada because they are excluded from the list of those who qualify, all of whom are members of a religion.

As over 2,000 Canadians note, this is an urgent matter, because the lives of several atheists are currently in danger while awaiting their refugee hearings, which would be avoided if atheists were included in the less complex claims process.

The petitioners call upon the Minister of Immigration to change the policy regarding less complex claims to include atheists in the list of people eligible for the status, so that they will be treated equally.

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the last two petitions, 11279761 and 11278785, note that indigenous peoples have rights and title to their traditional territories and have been stewards of these lands. As well, the climate crisis requires action, and old-growth forests provide immeasurable benefits.

Old-growth ecosystems in B.C. are endangered, yet logging still continues. Of the remaining almost 3% of the original high-productivity, old-growth forests in B.C., 75% are still slated to be logged.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to, among other things, work with provinces and first nations to immediately halt logging of endangered, old-growth ecosystems and to fund the long-term protection of old-growth ecosystems as a priority.

The Speaker: I just want to remind hon. members that we do have quite a list to present petitions, and I would ask that they be as concise as possible.

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

MILITARY SERVICE MEDAL

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The petition calls upon the Government of Canada to recognize the service by Canadians in the regular forces, reserve military forces and others who have taken an oath and sworn to defend our nation and who have completed 547 days or 18 months of uninterrupted honourable duty in their service to Canada from September 2, 1945 to the present day, and in perpetuity, by means of creating and issuing a Canadian military service medal to be designated the “Canadian military service medal”.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from over 55,000 individuals. Community leaders throughout Northeast B.C. have expressed grave concern over the lack of consultation with regard to the proposed caribou recovery plans.

The petitioners call upon the provincial government to further consult users, stakeholders, businesses and local government, immediately begin economic and socio-economic impact studies on the Northeast Region, and provide baseline data on populations and relevant science-based studies to support closure and recovery plans. Therefore, they call upon the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to work with the province of British Columbia to ensure that the local voices are being considered, including consult-

Routine Proceedings

ing further with community leadership and caribou experts on the ground.

BLACK CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with immense pride that I table a petition calling for the Black Culture Centre for Nova Scotia, the first and largest museum dedicated to Black history and African Nova Scotian legacy in Canada, to be designated as Canada's “National Black Cultural Centre and Museum”.

As the birthplace of Black culture in Canada, Nova Scotia is home to the oldest and largest multi-generational, indigenous, Black community and has over 52 historic Black communities, many of which can trace their origins to the 17th century.

Over 1,200 Canadians have signed this petition to support this designation, which would create a national Black cultural centre for Canada and provide Canadians an exceptional way to learn more about the diverse culture and history of African Nova Scotians and Black Canadians.

● (1030)

CHEMICAL BAN

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions here today.

In the first petition, the citizens of my riding are calling on the government to reverse course on their ban on strychnine, which is used to control Richardson's ground squirrel populations as Richardson's ground squirrels can pose a serious threat to the health and well-being of our livestock population and also to our food security.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is calling on the Government of Canada to defend the energy sector at any opportunity as presented to them both nationally and internationally, to make sure that they are prioritizing the natural resource sector here in Canada.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to present two petitions from concerned Canadians.

The first petition is e-3424, with more than 1,000 signatures. This petition concerns the recent military action in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the conduct of forces during and after the conflict. It also includes details about the holding of Armenian prisoners of war, and calls for condemnation of Azerbaijan due to its illegal holding of these POWs.

Routine Proceedings

RACISM

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition, petition e-3185, has more than 2,000 signatures. This petition was started because of issues about a street named “Swastika Trail”, which has caused frustration and concern for some residents. These petitioners are calling for the end of using the word “swastika” as a name, sign or symbol in Canada where it will lead to hatred or harm, and ask that in those instances the name be changed.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to table e-petition 3174 today.

The petitioners state that Health Canada has an open file to license a medical marijuana facility at 7827 Beaver Creek Road, in Port Alberni, British Columbia. They state that the Walmart-sized cannabis facility would be located directly across the street from Kackaamin, a first nations family trauma and addictions healing centre that provides treatment to adults, while housing the entire family. Kackaamin is doing the work of healing from their shared history of colonialism and residential schools. They were never consulted in the initial planning of the facility and have requested that the facility be located elsewhere.

The petitioners are calling on the government to acknowledge the implicit racism in the policy choices of Health Canada's cannabis licensing process and handling of this file. They are calling on the government to expedite review of this file and cancel all cannabis licenses at 7821 Beaver Creek Road. They ask the government also to apologize to Kackaamin and reaffirm its commitment to UNDRIP and the TRC's calls to action.

FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have several petitions to present today.

The first petition was originally brought forward by the late MP Mark Warawa, who was very passionate about protecting the conscience rights of health care professionals. This petition is from Canadians across the country wanting protections for doctors and medical professionals. They are calling on the House of Commons to adopt conscience rights legislation for physicians and health care institutions. They recognize that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects freedom of conscience and freedom of religion.

• (1035)

FIREARMS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the second petition I am presenting today is from Canadians across the country who are calling on the House of Commons to support the health and safety of Canadian firearms owners. The petitioners recognize the importance of owning firearms, and are concerned about the impacts to hearing loss caused by the damaging noise levels of firearms and the need for noise reduction.

The petitioners acknowledge that sound moderators are the only universally recognized health and safety device that is criminally prohibited in Canada, and that the majority of G7 countries have recognized the health and safety benefits of sound moderators, allowing them for hunting, sport shooting and noise reduction. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to allow legal

firearms owners the option to purchase and use sound moderators in all legal hunting and sport shooting activities.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition I have to present is from Canadians across the country who are calling on the government to recognize and safeguard human life at all stages of human development. They are calling for the government to recognize human life from conception to natural death.

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition I have to present is from Canadians across the country who are concerned about the impacts of violent and degrading sexually explicit material online and the impacts on public health, especially on the well-being of women and girls. They recognize that we cannot say we believe in preventing in sexual violence toward women while allowing pornography companies to freely expose children to violent, sexually explicit imagery every day. As such, they are calling on the Government of Canada to adopt meaningful age verification on all adult websites.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition I have to present today is from Canadians across the country who are concerned about the equal application of the law. The petitioners are indigenous members in my riding and are concerned that the First Nations Financial Transparency Act, which is supposed to enhance financial accountability and transparency, is not being enforced.

The petitioners also point out that the federal government recognizes band membership when allocating funds, yet often off-reserve band members face alienation and are limited in receiving funds and services from their respective bands. They are calling on the Government of Canada to enforce the First Nations Financial Transparency Act to ensure that off-reserve band members are provided levels of funding that are equal to those received by on-reserve band members.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the last petition I am presenting today is from Canadians across the country who are concerned about the increases to the carbon tax. They are supportive of Bill C-206, which will be voted on soon. The petitioners note that there was no carbon tax increase in the Liberals' election platform, and that increasing the carbon tax severely impacts and penalizes those living in rural and farming communities. They are concerned about the increasing costs of heating and groceries, along with how the government is trying to bring about a one-size-fits-all approach instead of co-operating with the provinces.

The petitioners are asking the Liberals to respect their electoral promise and not increase the carbon tax, which disproportionately affects rural and western Canadians. They want co-operation with the provinces and ask for the speedy passage of Bill C-206 so there are exemptions from the carbon tax for certain farm fuels.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to table today.

The first petition is from my constituent, Brookes Bayfield. She notes that the UN Special Rapporteur and Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have recently expressed concerns that the Canadian government continues to hold reservations on article 12, which ensures that persons with disabilities have the right to refuse treatment, to not be deemed incapable and to not be subject to substitute decision-making.

As such, the petitioners are calling on the government to rescind all reservations to article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and repeal laws that authorize substitute decision-making related to treatment for psychological and other disabilities, as well as laws that violate the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by continuing to authorize detention, restraint, isolation, community treatment orders, drugging, electroshock, sterilization and other similar impositions.

Madam Speaker, the second petition I have to table—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, we are out of time. There are still a lot of MPs who wish to present petitions.

I see the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I wonder if there would be unanimous consent to allow members to finish tabling petitions this morning.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is no unanimous consent. All other petitions can be tabled on a different day.

Government Orders

I want to remind members that as we near the end of this session a lot of members wish to table petitions. I remind members to be more brief when they table their petitions in order to allow everyone to table their petitions.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time, please.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1040)

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021, NO. 1

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (for the Minister of Finance) moved that Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what a pleasure it is to address the House on such an important piece of legislation. To be very clear, in budget 2021 the government has outlined a plan to allow us to finish the fight against COVID-19, heal the wounds left by the COVID-19 recession as much as we can, and ultimately create more jobs and prosperity for Canadians in the days and decades to come.

This is critically important legislation, and we would encourage all members of all political stripes to support it. Within it is a continuation of the government's focus on the pandemic. In the last federal election, Canadians wanted Parliament to work well together. They wanted us to come together to do the things that were necessary to facilitate a more positive environment for all Canadians, and being thrown into a pandemic made the priority fighting COVID-19: the coronavirus.

From the very beginning, our Prime Minister and this government have made it very clear that fighting the pandemic was our number one priority. We put into place a team Canada approach and brought together all kinds of stakeholders including different levels of government, indigenous leaders, individuals, non-profit organizations and private companies. We brought them all in to hopefully minimize the negative impact of the coronavirus.

Government Orders

It is because of those consultations and working with Canadians that Canada is in an excellent position today to maximize a recovery. The statistics will clearly demonstrate that. We have a government that has worked day in and day out, seven days a week, and is led by a Prime Minister who is truly committed to making Canada a better community.

I have, over the last number of months, witnessed a great deal of frustration from the opposition, in particular the Conservative opposition. The Conservatives continuously attempt to frustrate the process on the floor of the House of Commons. There was a time when all parties inside the chamber worked together to pass necessary legislation, and worked together to come up with ideas and ways to modify things so we could better support individuals and businesses in Canada. However, that time has long passed. The degree to which we see political partisanship on the floor of the House of Commons today is really quite sad.

Yesterday was embarrassing. I know many, if not all, of my colleagues found it embarrassing and humiliating to see one of Canada's most noble civil servants at the bar on the floor of the House of Commons. The New Democrats and the Bloc joined with the Conservatives to humiliate a civil servant who should be applauded for his efforts over the last 12 months. He was publicly humiliated by being addressed in the manner he was, on the floor of the House of Commons, and it was distasteful. I say shame to the NDP, the Bloc and the Conservatives.

● (1045)

There were alternatives. If they did not want to take shots at the civil service, they could have dealt with it in other ways. For example, the Minister of Health provided the unredacted information to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, which was made up of parliamentarians from all political parties. Instead of passing the motion they did, they could have passed a motion for that committee to table the documents they wanted from the civil service. After all, the civil service provided the unredacted copies to that committee, not to mention that documents that had been redacted for national interest and security reasons were sent to another standing committee.

The political partisanship we are seeing today is making the chamber, for all intents and purposes, dysfunctional. We have seen the official opposition, less than a week ago, come to the floor of the House of Commons and within an hour of debate attempt to shut down Parliament for the day. It actually moved a motion to adjourn the House. The opposition is oozing with hypocrisy. On the one hand, it criticizes the government for not allowing enough time for debate, and on the other hand it tries to shut down the chamber in order to prevent debate.

If we were to look up the definitions of the words “hypocrisy” and “irony” in *Webster's*, which I have not, I wonder if they would describe what we are seeing from the opposition party, which moves concurrence debate, not once or twice but on many occasions, so that the government is not able to move forward on legislation, including Bill C-30, which we are debating today. That legislation is there to support Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Members of the Liberal caucus have fought day in and day out to ensure those voices are heard, brought to Ottawa and ultimately

formulating policy that will take Canada to the next level. However, we have an official opposition that I would suggest has gone too far with respect to its resistance and destructive force on the floor of the House of Commons.

I have stated before that I have been a parliamentarian for approximately 30 years, the vast majority of which were in opposition. I am very much aware of how important it is that we protect the interests of opposition members and their rights. I am very much aware of the tactics opposition parties will use, but at a time when Canadians need us to work together, we have an official opposition that is acting as an obstructive force. When we talk about how Bill C-30 will be there to support small businesses and put money in the pockets of Canadians so they have the disposable income necessary to pay the bills that are absolutely essential, the Conservative Party continues to play that destructive role. It continues to focus on character assassination and on ways to make something out of something that is often not real. The Conservatives are more concerned about political partisanship than getting down to work, which was clearly demonstrated last Thursday. They are more concerned about character assassination, as we saw the official opposition, with the unholy opposition alliance, take personal shots at a national hero, someone we all know as the Minister of National Defence. This is unacceptable behaviour we are witnessing.

● (1050)

We have critically important legislation before the House. We can think about the types of things Bill C-30 would do for Canadians. If we want to prevent bankruptcies from taking place, we need to support this legislation, as it supports small businesses through the extension of the wage subsidy program, a program that has helped millions of Canadians, supporting tens of thousands of businesses from coast to coast to coast.

This is the type of legislation that we are actually debating today. It is not the only progressive, good, solid legislation that we have brought forward. Yesterday, through a closure motion, we were able to push through Bill C-10. We can imagine that legislation not being updated for 30 years. It is a major overhaul. We can think about what the Internet looked like 30 years ago, compared to today.

The Liberal government understands, especially during this pandemic, and we see it in the budget, the importance of our arts community, whether it was with Bill C-10 yesterday, where the government had to push hard to get it through, or the budget implementation bill today, where we are again having to use time allocation. It is not because we want to, but because we have to.

If we do not take measures of this nature, the legislation would not pass. The opposition parties, combined, often demonstrate that if the government is not prepared to take the actions it is taking, we would not get legislation through this House. The opposition parties want to focus on electioneering. We have been very clear, as the Prime Minister has stated, that our priority is the pandemic and taking the actions necessary in order to serve Canadians on the issue. It is the opposition parties that continuously talk about elections.

Government Orders

In my many years as a parliamentarian, in the month of June we have often seen legislation passing. It happens. It is a part of governance. One would expect to see a higher sense of co-operation from opposition parties, in particular from the official opposition party, not the obstruction that members have witnessed, not the humiliation that we have seen on the floor of the House of Commons at times.

Liberal members of the House are prepared to continue to work toward serving Canadians by passing the legislation that is necessary before the summer break. We still have time to address other pieces of legislation. Minutes prior to going into this debate, I was on a conference call in regard to Bill C-19. Again, it is an important piece of legislation. I challenge my colleagues on the opposition benches to come forward and say that we should get that legislation passed so that it could go to the Senate.

I mentioned important progressive pieces of legislation, and the one that comes to my mind, first and foremost, is this legislation, Bill C-30. Next to that, we talk a lot about Bill C-6, on conversion therapy. We talk a lot about Bill C-10, dealing with the modernization of broadcasting and the Internet, and going after some of these large Internet companies.

● (1055)

We talk about Bill C-12 and net zero, about our environment. We can check with Canadians and see what they have to say about our environment and look at the actions taken by opposition parties in preventing the types of progressive legislation we are attempting to move forward with.

We understand that not all legislation is going to be passed. We are not saying the opposition has to pass everything. We realize that in a normal situation not all government legislation is going to pass in the time frame we have set forth, given the very nature of the pandemic, but it is not unrealistic for any government, minority or majority, to anticipate that there would be a higher sense of co-operation in dealing with the passing of specific pieces of legislation. Bill C-30 is definitely one of those pieces of legislation.

Unfortunately, some opposition members will have the tenacity to say they are being limited and are unable to speak to and address this particular important piece of legislation. Chances are we are going to hear them say that. To those members, I would suggest they look at the behaviour of the Conservative official opposition and remind them of the Conservative opposition's attempts to delay, whether it is through adjourning debates, calling for votes on those kinds of proceedings, concurrence motions or using questions of privilege and points of order as a way to filibuster, which all happen to be during government business.

Bill C-3 was a bill that initially came forward a number of years ago from Rona Ambrose, the then leader of the Conservative Party, about judges. We can look at the amount of debate that occurred on that piece of legislation. It is legislation that could have and should have passed the House with minimal debate. It was hours and hours, days, of debate. Even though the Conservatives supported the legislation, even back then they did not want to have the government passing legislation.

Their purpose is to frustrate the government, prevent the government from being able to pass legislation, and then criticize us for not being able to pass legislation. What hypocrisy this is. Sadly, over the last week or so, we have seen the other opposition parties buy into what the Conservative opposition is doing, which has made it even more difficult.

As much as the unholy alliance of opposition parties continues to do these things and frustrate the floor of the House, I can assure Canadians that, whether it is this Prime Minister or my fellow members of Parliament within the caucus, we will continue day in, day out to focus our attention on the pandemic and minimizing its negative impacts.

We are seeing results. Over 32 million vaccine doses have been administered to Canadians. We are number one in first doses in the world. We have close to 35 million doses already in Canada, and we will have 50 million before the end of the month. Canada is positioning itself well, even with the frustration coming from opposition parties. We will continue to remain focused on serving Canadians, and Bill C-30 is an excellent example of the way in which we are going to ensure that Canadians get out of this in a better position. We are building back better for all Canadians.

● (1100)

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member spoke at length about dysfunctionality and how the opposition parties were creating dysfunction. I wonder if he considers it dysfunctional when Parliament is not debating bills every day, or when there are no opposition day motions, or when there are no emergency debates, or when there are no tabling of reports from committees, or when there are no private members' bills, or when there are no adjournment debates. That is how his government governed for a big part of 2020.

Could the member comment on that?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. In the last eight months, we had more emergency debates than I have seen in the previous six or seven years. We have had just as many private members' hours. We have had opposition days, all be it, some of those opposition days were very offensive.

It was an opposition day that led to what we saw yesterday, the humiliation of a public civil servant, someone who we should be thanking. The combined unholy alliance of opposition parties wanted to make a public statement by humiliating a public civil servant at the bar on the floor of the House of Commons. Shame on the members of the opposition. That collective group should hang its head in shame.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, the speech we heard was rather predictable. In fact, when the parliamentary secretary rises, we know almost exactly what he is going to say for the next 20 minutes.

Government Orders

We also heard him laying a lot of blame and expressing a lot of criticism toward the opposition, particularly for making the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada appear before the House and for stalling bills and keeping them from being passed on time.

However, is the parliamentary secretary able to identify his own government's shortcomings? If he did some soul-searching, perhaps the parliamentary secretary would realize that some of the problems with the way his own government is managing things are what led us to these conclusions and outcomes.

I would ask the secretary this: Could he show a little humility and identify one of his government's shortcomings during this parliamentary session? It is actually very simple.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, at the beginning of the pandemic, we brought in a suite of different programs to support Canadians and businesses. The programs were not perfect, and we continued to look at ways we could improve those programs. We have never said that everything is perfect. We continue to try hard to ensure that we maximize these benefits for all Canadians. We all have something to learn from it.

Yesterday, the members of the Bloc had a choice. They could have mandated the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, for example, to table the unredacted documents, and they chose not to do that. Instead, they chose to humiliate a public servant, unjustifiably.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, the government moved immediately, within four days of the pandemic hitting, to provide an unprecedented \$750 billion in liquidity supports for Canada's big banks, and, of course, we have seen record profits of \$60 billion so far during the pandemic.

However, at the same time, with Bill C-30, we are seeing significant cuts in the CRB, ultimately from the \$500 a week the NDP fought for down to \$300 a week, below the poverty line for all those Canadians who still need the CRB over the coming months to put food on the table and keep a roof over their head.

I would like the parliamentary secretary to simply explain why the government is slashing benefits on which Canadians so urgently rely.

• (1105)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, Canadians can see through the NDP's continuously scripted lines. At the end of the day, the Government of Canada, with the help of many, came up with a program, which Canadians know as CERB, to support putting disposable income in the pockets of Canadians. It was a hugely successful program, a program that came from nothing, with excellent civil servants making it happen. Over nine million Canadians directly benefited by that program. Yes, it cost billions of dollars, but it was money well spent to support Canadians.

This government has had its eyes on supporting Canadians from day one, and we will continue to provide the necessary supports to ensure we can get out of this pandemic as best as we can.

Mr. Chris d'Entremont (West Nova, CPC): Madam Speaker, minority Parliaments are not easy. I spent six years in two minority parliaments in Nova Scotia. We had to actually work with the opposition to ensure we could get the things we needed for our constituents. We went out of our way to ensure that opposition MPs, or MLAs at the time, got what they needed to help their constituents.

What I hear from the member is bellyaching about the opposition members and what they do not want to do. The management comes from the Liberal side. The management comes from the House leader and the management team. How much has that member reached out? How much have those ministers reached out to us? I have been waiting for weeks for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to reach, and that has not happened.

Has there been some introspective that maybe some of these things the member bellyaches about are because of the Liberals mismanagement of many of these files?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I use yesterday as an example. Yesterday, we had a civil servant come to the bar, which is the first time in 100 years, to be publicly humiliated. I felt ashamed. I thought it was disgusting. That would not have happened if it were not for the NDP, Bloc and Conservatives forcing that civil servant to stand before the House to be admonished. I thought it was distasteful.

A minority government means exactly what we saw yesterday, that the combined opposition have the majority. Anytime they want to humiliate someone, they can easily do it. They know that and they do not have any reservation in doing it even if it is somewhat historical in its very nature. That is not the only example, unfortunately.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, anyone could have seen that speech coming from miles away.

For weeks now, the parliamentary secretary has been calling Parliament dysfunctional and accusing opposition parties of picking fights. What he is doing is setting the stage for what he really wants: a snap election.

I will pick up where my colleague from Drummond left off. Here is my question for the parliamentary secretary. Would the parliamentary secretary humbly state—and humbly here means “not proud; having a low estimate of one's own importance”—that last August's prorogation of the House constituted an obstruction to our parliamentary work?

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[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the prorogation that took place last summer was easily justified in regard to the previous throne speech and the necessity to introduce a new throne speech, which was done on September 23. All one needs to do is just read the document to get a better appreciation as to why prorogation was important, keeping in mind that even through the prorogation, we might have lost maybe two days of debate at best.

• (1110)

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, in my earlier remarks about the budget, I noted that with this budget, the Prime Minister had squandered a historic opportunity to reposition our economy for long-term success. I did, however, acknowledge that the budget contained a number of temporary measures that were critical to sustaining Canadians as we struggled to get past the pandemic. I commended the government for extending the wage and rent subsidy programs and a number of other measures that would continue to support struggling Canadians.

That is what a responsible opposition does. We offer helpful suggestions where possible and we call out failure when it happens. Therefore, I wish I could say that we Conservatives will support this budget, because we should not let the perfect become the enemy of the good. However, the reality is that this budget completely fails to deliver the growth budget that the finance minister had promised. Instead, it represents, as former deputy finance minister Kevin Lynch recently noted, the largest “transfer of debt and risk” that our country has ever seen. The finance minister failed to recognize the enormity of that challenge and in so doing, failed to include in her budget the strong fiscal anchor and debt management plan for which her own mandate letter called.

This budget would see our massive national debt swell to \$1.4 trillion in the immediate term, with a hint from the government that it plans to borrow even more. The only anchor the minister could point to was a trajectory that would see Canada's debt-to-GDP ratio move slightly below 50%, far above what it was pre-pandemic, with endless debt and deficits for our children and grandchildren to repay.

The minister has been asked many times if she ever expects the government to return to balance; in other words to live within its means. She has steadfastly refused to answer, clearly a signal that the answer is no. Is this the growth budget the Prime Minister promised? It is absolutely not. While it would dramatically grow deficits, debt and the size of government, there is little that would position our economy for long-term growth and prosperity.

While other G7 countries have invested heavily in things like critical infrastructure, cut taxes, embarked on regulatory reform, harnessed the value of their innovators and reoriented trade away from hostile regimes like China, our Prime Minister has simply sprayed half a trillion dollars at targets intended to secure his reelection.

There is no plan to reorient our industrial policy from a tangibles to an intangibles economy, and there is no plan to capture the value of Canadian education, research and development, and innovation to ensure our start-ups commercialize and create jobs in Canada. There is no plan to reverse the dramatic flight of foreign capital

from our country and to get nation-building infrastructure built. We now have the dubious distinction of being known as the country where nothing ever gets built. The demise of northern gateway, Keystone XL and energy east, and the potential demise of Line 5 under the current Liberal government, are evidence of that. What is worse is that this budget throws our oil and gas sector under the bus by expressly excluding it from the CCUS tax credit.

Again, is this a growth budget? It is not at all. In fact, even the Prime Minister's former policy adviser, Robert Asselin, recently confirmed this when he said that the budget doubles “down on programs that do not address our innovation shortcomings and have yielded few results to date.” He said, “it is hard to find a coherent growth plan.”

The finance minister clearly has not been taking the advice of her own Liberal advisers. She has also failed to act on other pressing issues. Her budget fails to properly address the looming threat of inflation and with it, rising interest rates, which could have a profound impact on millions of Canadians with mortgages.

• (1115)

In fact, last week we learned from Stats Canada that the cost of living continues to rise and is the highest it has been in over 10 years, proving that the minister's trillion-dollar debt and endless deficits are actually making life much more expensive for Canadians. One of the reasons for this is that the minister injected massive stimulus into our economy when economists were warning that she risked stoking the fires of inflation, and here we are. Even the Parliamentary Budget Officer commented that the Liberal government may have miscalibrated the necessity to spend on stimulus.

I will not sugar-coat this. The threat that massive borrowing and spending will lead to runaway inflation is real. I know the government does not want to hear that and is hanging on to the belief that inflationary pressures will be transitory. It says there is nothing to see and do not worry and tells us to be happy. However, Germany's Deutsche Bank is not buying it. It recently warned of a ticking inflation time bomb, a warning our minister refuses to heed.

Government Orders

For example, why is the Liberal government spending hundreds of millions of our tax dollars on the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank? It is a bank that makes no investments in Canada and instead supports China's efforts to assert its power and influence across Asia. In fact, why is this government collaborating with the communist regime in China on anything while that regime commits genocide against its own Uighur Muslim population, lays waste to democracy in Hong Kong, engages in harvesting organs from persecuted minorities like the Falun Gong and betrays Canada in the CanSino vaccine debacle? Why are the Liberals partnering with China when the Prime Minister cannot even explain why two Chinese scientists were escorted from a high-security virology lab in Winnipeg and fired? Why is Canadian money being invested in a bank controlled by China's communist regime when our two Michaels continue to languish in Chinese prisons? The minister has refused to answer these questions, as more and more taxpayer money is wasted on the Prime Minister's efforts to appease China.

This budget also failed to deliver a clear plan to safely reopen our common border with our largest trading partner, the U.S. Some two billion dollars' worth of trade crosses our border every single day, yet the budget scarcely mentions border security and trade facilitation, and makes no mention of whether discussions with the Biden administration are under way to safely reopen our border.

We are going to judge the government's budget not on the quantity but on the quality of its spending. Based on that standard, much of this budget remains unsalvageable. We Conservatives are now in a better position to judge the merits of this budget and to determine what it might mean for Canadians in the short, medium and long term. As I said, in the short term there are a number of measures that we can support that will help Canadians through this economic and health crisis, but in the medium and especially the long term, there is very little to get excited about. It is just endless debts and deficits with not even a pretense of the Liberal government ever wanting to return to balance.

As a responsible official opposition, we have no choice but to reject the government's attempt to spend the cupboards bare in order to position the Liberals for re-election, leaving future generations of Canadians to pick up the tab. There is one thing Canadians can be absolutely sure of. A Conservative government will implement a true Canada recovery plan that secures our future by getting Canadians back to work, by helping small businesses recover, by restoring Canada's reputation and competitive advantage and by prudently managing the massive financial burden that the government has left us. The Conservatives have done it before and we will do it again.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member started off by acknowledging the important programs that have supported Canadian businesses and workers over the last year with money that we had to spend as a country to keep our economy going. However, I hear the Conservatives constantly asking how we are going to pay for it.

The NDP says it should be the super wealthy who pay for it, the billionaires who made over \$70 billion during the pandemic. We put forward an idea for a 1% wealth tax on Canadians with assets over \$20 million. Canadians really like this idea. In fact, 80% of Canadians like the idea, two-thirds of whom are Conservative.

I am wondering what the member has to say. Why does his party not support this? It seems like the most logical idea regarding who should pay for this is the people who can afford to.

• (1120)

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, it seems that every time that NDP members get up in the House, their only solution to the fiscal challenges and the financial challenges facing Canadians is to increase taxes on this and that.

I want to point the member to the fact that the NDP, the Bloc and our Conservatives are working together at the finance committee to find out how the Canadian government can better collect taxes that are owed. We know there is a tremendous amount of tax evasion taking place and an aggressive avoidance of taxes within Canada. Some of the biggest companies and the richest Canadians are finding loopholes for, and other ways around, paying taxes that they should be paying in Canada.

I am hopeful that as we continue to study this challenge, with all of this tax revenue falling through the cracks because the federal government cannot properly collect the tax that is owing, we will deliver some of the additional revenues required to bring our country back on track and will find a way to balance the budget, something the Liberal government has refused to tell us it is going to do. Sadly, the government has repeatedly refused to answer when it will return to a balanced budget or if it will ever return—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have to allow for other questions.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, given the answer the member gave to the last question about tax avoidance, loopholes and the various mechanisms that people are using to avoid paying taxes, I am reminded of discussions I have heard, in private settings and publicly, about looking at the tax code in its entirety, rather than looking at individual sections of it.

There have been calls to look at the whole tax code and basically start from the scratch. Does the member agree with the position that this is a good way to proceed when trying to address some of these problems?

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, the short answer is yes. In fact, if the member looks at the pre-budget consultation report that the finance committee came up with, he will see that the dissenting report from the Conservatives contains the recommendation that the government finally engage in comprehensive tax reform. It should find a way to simplify our tax system to make it fairer, making sure that everybody pays their fair share, and should simplify it so that it is easier to collect taxes and it is easier for Canadians to fill out their tax forms every year.

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Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives continue to bring up China and the Liberal Party. I would like to remind the member that it was the Harper Conservative government that signed an agreement with Communist China, the 2012 Canada-China FIPA, which gave Chinese state-owned corporations a great deal of power over our democratic authority. It was Rob Nicholson, the defence minister at the time, who signed an agreement with the Chinese for military co-operation in 2013.

I would like to step back into taxes. We know that trickle-down economics has not worked. Cutting taxes for the ultrawealthy has meant that they have lined their pockets, and the burden of taxation has gone to the working class and the middle class. That is not working. It is not good for our economy and it is not good for working people. I agree with the member for Kingston and the Islands that we need serious tax reform and need to make sure that the wealthy pay their fair share.

Would the member not agree that the burden falls too much on working people in the middle class?

• (1125)

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, the member knows that I just responded to the question. I am in favour of comprehensive tax reform to bring our tax system back to fairness and balance to make sure those who should be paying taxes are paying taxes.

With respect to the FIPA, I would say the member obviously has not read it. I have, and it does not in any way create additional market access. This agreement is called a post-establishment investment protection treaty. In other words, it only protects investments once they have been made in Canada. The decision the federal government makes is whether it is going to allow a foreign investment to be made in Canada if it is above a certain threshold value.

The suggestion that somehow this agreement opens up the market for Chinese investment is patently false. In fact, this agreement protects Canadian investors when they make investments in China and are then discriminated against by Chinese governments. This—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to allow for another question.

The hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Abbotsford for his comments on this year's budget. He mentioned that inflationary pressures are already embedded in the economy. We know that the best way to tackle inflation is to grow the economy to make sure that it is producing all the goods and services that people need.

Does the member have comments about what this budget does to grow the economy?

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, inflation does represent a significant threat to our economy and to Canadians right across the country because as inflation grows, interest rates typically follow. That is something every family who has a large mortgage needs to be concerned about.

My colleague is also right in that the best way to address a recessionary economy, a large budgetary deficit and a massive, growing

debt is to grow the economy. What we can do is cut spending, which I do not believe any of the parties in the House of Commons are talking about; increase taxes on Canadians, which is what the NDP, the Bloc and the Liberals always propose; or grow the economy, thereby finding a way to manage the debt and start to return to balanced budgets, at least in the long term.

Given the massive debt we have now incurred, growing the economy is the best way forward. One thing the Conservatives will not do is increase taxes on Canadians at such a difficult time.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know the member for Abbotsford has constituents who rely on the CRB. Particularly in the tourism industry and a number of other industries, people will rely on it to put food on their tables over the course of the summer.

I would like the member to comment on the government's slashing of the CRB from \$500 a week to \$300 a week, which is below poverty levels. Does he feel it is in the best interests of his constituents to see the marked slashing of those benefits at such a critical time?

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's work at the finance committee. I think we work together quite well on that committee.

We have repeatedly said that Canadians need to be financially supported by government until such time as all of us have made it through the pandemic. We are not advocating for slashing and burning. We are advocating that once Canadians make it through to the end of the pandemic, they are weaned off of these supports. We do not believe in slashing and burning these programs, because they are absolutely critical for sustaining Canadians through this very difficult time.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, before I start my speech, I seek unanimous consent to split my time with the hon. member for Shefford.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé have the unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I thank all my colleagues for giving me their consent; it was very nice of them.

This morning, it seems to me that I will be repeating things we have been saying for a while now. Evidently, it takes a lot of repetition for the message to sink in.

I will start by talking about health transfers.

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Of course, it is important to pass Bill C-30 swiftly, that is to say, before the session ends, because, among other things, the support measures need to be extended. We all agree on that point. However, there are significant flaws.

The main idea in my speech is that the federal government wants to hold all the power and be omnipotent. It wants to exert its dominance over the other levels of government and over Canadians. The health care transfers are a darned good example.

Why is the current government, the Prime Minister, refusing to give 28 billion dollars annually to the provinces and Quebec, who are all asking for the same thing? If it did so, after three to five years the health care problems in the provinces, territories and Quebec would mostly be resolved, which would allow us to better manage the health system. As a result, the provinces, territories and Quebec would no longer need to ask the federal government to kindly come to the rescue by giving them a few billion dollars.

Politically speaking, it is much better and more relevant and advantageous to hold a big press conference, with a big smile and a sunny disposition, and look like the great saviour. We are offered only a billion dollars, and told to come back on our knees and beg for more again next year, because Ottawa wants to hold on to that power. The unreasonable spending power is the evil side of the Canadian federation, and so is the unreasonable sharing of taxation powers: 50% of Quebecers' tax dollars go to Ottawa, but Ottawa does not take on 50% of the responsibilities. That is the problem.

That is one of the themes I wanted to address in my speech, but I will now move on to something else.

Old age security comes to mind. Why are the Liberals increasing old age security? They probably want to hold on to that as a nice election promise. Government members are always waiting for the next election campaign. FADOQ members and seniors' groups are paying attention to the government's promises. The benevolent government tells them not to worry and promises to take care of seniors if it is re-elected. What a crock.

The government has an opportunity to do this now. All the opposition parties are on board. We were calling for this before the pandemic began, not now because of the pandemic. Things were not going great before the pandemic, and the situation is much worse now.

Every day, or nearly every day, people tell me that they received an adjustment of \$1.59. It is a slap in the face. People ask me what we are doing and whether we are still delivering the message. That is why, with every darned speech I make on the budget, I bring these things up. I do this work for my constituents.

I do not want to blame anyone, but I would like to offer members of the House some food for thought. Sometimes I get the impression that members may have forgotten the initial commitment we make. I invite each and every one of us to remember our first election campaign, even though some members have been here for 25 or 30 years. That is a nod to Mr. Plamondon, who has never forgotten why he is here. There are others who have been here for a long time. Let us not forget—

• (1135)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I would remind the member that he is not to name members of the House and he must always address his speech to the Chair.

The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, it is because this man's name is etched on my heart. The name of his riding is Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel.

I was saying that members need to remind themselves of their commitment. I invite them to think of the people who call their riding office to tell them how they are struggling to put food on the table. I have been helping some of those people this year.

Let us remember the older people who supported the Quiet Revolution in Quebec and the establishment of the society we live in today, which has allowed us to thrive because it is so generous and prosperous. I would not be here today if not for the Quiet Revolution. I am a son of the proletariat, of the working class. If these people had not created the good public education system that we have in Quebec, I would not be here. Could we remember that from time to time?

I will talk about the renewal of an agriculture-related measure because, as members know, I cannot make a speech without talking about agriculture. Another good example of the arm's length relationship that the federal government wishes to maintain was the extension of the tax deferral on patronage dividends of agricultural co-operatives for another five years. This measure has been in place for more than 10 years, actually 15 years. It works well, but every time it is about to expire, the sector panics. They have to ramp up their lobbying system and contact all of us. All elected members of the House with farmers in their riding have been contacted this past year because of concerns about the lack of an official commitment to renew this measure.

People in the agricultural sector are happy the measure has been renewed for five years, of course. They would not say they are unhappy, but it is not exactly what they wanted. They wanted the measure to be permanent.

Why would the government make a measure permanent and make people's lives easier when it can score political points and come off looking so good and generous by making a wonderful announcement every three or four years about renewing the measure?

Make that measure permanent and move on to other things. Elected representatives should be working to improve people's lives and their constituents' lives for the long term, regardless of their political interests. We have all noticed the announcements happening all over the place, little mini-announcements about \$25 million for this or \$100 million for that. That is fine, and I am not saying I do not want those announcements, but let us do some really structural, long-term things for our people.

Take, for example, the emergency processing fund, which was implemented during the pandemic. I forwarded some cases to the minister's office but nothing came of it. These cases involved people who had started modernizing their regional processing plants—plants we so desperately need—in good faith, but ended up being told that the program had run out of money. They were told that it was unfortunate, but that they would have to try again another time. When the government is feeling generous and people have begged enough, it will see whether it can inject another \$1 million or \$10 million. When I raise the issue, they tell me that \$10 million more were invested, but that is not enough. Sure, \$10 million is great, but what businesses need is effective, long-term assistance.

My time is running out and I would be remiss if I did not bring up the point I raised the other day about support for temporary foreign workers. As of June 16, the \$1,500 amount has been reduced to \$750, even though bringing in temporary foreign workers is no less expensive than it was before. Quarantines are still mandatory and necessary. The farmers who are bringing in foreign workers right now are just as important as those who brought in foreign workers two months ago. Why are businesses being treated differently and unfairly? It still costs money.

In my last speech, I cited a letter from the agricultural community addressed directly to the government and the minister asking them not to cut this money. What is more, these people lost a tremendous amount of money in the Switch Health mess. Not only should these amounts not be reduced, but more money needs to be given to these people to compensate for the problems they encountered with Switch Health.

• (1140)

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am curious. From the member's tone, body language and speech, he seemed to be pouring it on pretty thick on the government for all of its failures and its wrongness in its approach, yet the member and his party are supporting it. I would ask him to reconcile the two.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, we can certainly reconcile the two. I thank my colleague, who I dare not name, for his good question.

Sometimes what the opposition parties and often the government seem to fail to grasp is that we are a party of propositions. There are two ways to be the opposition in life. We can stand up and say that the government is rotten or we can stand up and say that it did not get it quite right and here is what we propose. We have been doing that consistently since October 2019 and we will continue to do that. The member's impression may come from the fact that we collaborate, we make improvements and we vote in favour of the budget because it is important to extend certain measures, but that does not mean that it is perfect, which is why we criticize it at the same time. We are doing our job as parliamentarians.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, when I hear my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé discuss topics that affect so many colleagues in the House, particularly on the issue of agriculture and the urgent need to treat our farmers and

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dairy producers with the respect they deserve, I must admit that I am surprised not to see more of a reaction to his speeches.

As he just said, dairy farmers in Quebec and farmers in general face a huge number of challenges, and they need to feel that the government and their MPs are behind them.

I would like to ask my colleague whether he feels that this work is going well on the ground, in the various ridings, based on the relationships and discussions he has with the community.

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague from Drummond for his question.

My answer will be mixed. There have indeed been actions taken to support farmers, but often they are inadequate one-offs, involving meagre amounts that, I just said earlier, are used to make “mini-announcements” rather than bring in anything permanent.

There are requests, and I will give three examples. If the House feels strongly about the question asked by my colleague from Drummond and wants to do something for the farming community, Bill C-216 protects supply management once and for all. All parties voted overwhelmingly in favour of this bill, which was referred to committee and must now come back to the House. I wish it had come back before we leave.

Bill C-208 is currently before the Senate. I find it very fishy that it is taking so long. I hope the Senate passes it before Parliament rises.

There are several measures like that.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question about cuts to the emergency benefit.

So far, people who are out of a job and need an emergency benefit to put food on the table and keep a roof over their head have been getting \$500 per week. Now the government is about to cut that back to \$300 per week, which is below the poverty line.

How have my colleague's constituents reacted to this massive cut to the emergency benefit?

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question.

It is all in how these things are handled. The important thing is making sure support measures incentivize people to work. We have hammered that point home constantly over the past year. Let us help people. Rather than reducing benefit amounts, let us create an incentive for people to get jobs. At the same time, it makes sense to start reducing the amounts to get people back to work. This is about balance.

Unfortunately, I would need much more time than I have to answer the question properly.

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• (1145)

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, my esteemed colleague and seatmate, the member for Berthier—Maskinong , is a tough act to follow. Since he was a teacher, he knows that repetition is the key to success, and that is what we need to do. My husband, who works in advertising, would say the same thing, so that is what I am going to do today.

It is with excitement for the end of the year that I rise today to speak to Bill C-30 at report stage. Many of my colleagues and I have said it before, so the House already knows that the Bloc Qu b cois will vote in favour of this bill to implement certain measures in the 2021 budget.

However, as the Bloc Qu b cois critic for seniors, I want to remind the House that we first voted against budget 2021 because the federal government was not responding to our two main requests, which remain essential.

Before the House adjourns for what might be an indeterminate period of time, I want to reiterate those requests. First, the Government of Quebec and the Canadian provinces are formally requesting adequate, recurrent health funding. Second, seniors are calling for an increase in old age security for those aged 65 and up, a request brought forward by the Bloc Qu b cois.

The government continues to ignore Quebec's request. I know because I recently met with many elected members and employees at the National Assembly of Quebec, who speak to me about this regularly. This is a unanimous request from the provinces, Quebec, the National Assembly, and even the House of Commons, which adopted a Bloc Qu b cois motion last December that called on the government to significantly and sustainably increase Canada health transfers.

The government refuses to increase the current level of health transfers from 22% to 35%. Instead, Bill C-30 offers only a one-time increase in health transfers, as announced last March. At the time, I showed that the amounts were clearly insufficient.

In this speech, which will quite probably be my last before the summer break, I will address our key requests for health and for seniors, as well as our requests for businesses and business owners. I will finish with a few wishes for the future of this Parliament.

The Bloc Qu b cois has made sensible choices in the best interest of Quebecers. The deficit announced in budget 2021 is lower than expected: \$354 billion instead of \$382 billion. The difference happens to be \$28 billion, the exact amount that Quebec and the provinces are asking for. With the government clearly gearing up for a massive spending spree, by refusing to increase transfers, Ottawa is making a political choice, not a budgetary choice, to the detriment of everyone's health.

The saddest part, however, is that Bill C-30 is strictly an election budget. It merely repeats the Liberals' 2019 campaign promise to seniors to increase old age security, but only for those aged 75 and over and by only \$766 per year, or \$63.80 per month. This increase, which will not take effect until 2022, is not enough for seniors or for the Bloc Qu b cois. More importantly, it leaves those aged 65 to 74 out in the cold, which is practically half of the current benefi-

ciaries of old age security. Let us also not forget the one-time \$500 payment to made in August 2021, also only to those 75 and older.

That is why I continue to keep talking about our support for seniors. The Bloc Qu b cois will continue to demand a substantial increase, namely \$110 more a month, for all seniors aged 65 and over. We do not accept the Liberals' argument that financial insecurity begins at age 75 and that younger seniors can just go to work.

For that reason, I am currently sponsoring petition e-3421, which was put online by Samuel L vesque on behalf of his grandparents. Several seniors' groups have also sent letters in support of this request that comes from the entire House, except the Liberals, who continue to be isolated.

Ottawa is not doing as we asked and is creating two classes of seniors. Seniors' groups and seniors want to know why only seniors 75 and older are getting this increase and why it only starts in 2022. There are testimonials posted on FADOQ's web site showing that the lives of seniors 65 to 74 can also be difficult, and that they have needs that cannot wait until they turn 75.

For the Liberals, vulnerable people 65 and over do not deserve their attention. For the Liberals, insecurity only begins at 75. Naturally, we are not against the idea of a good number of seniors, about 50%, receiving the help they need, which is what Bill C-30 would do.

In terms of the economy, I am elated to know that Bill C-30 has finally rejected the foundation for creating a pan-Canadian securities regulatory regime, which the Bloc Qu b cois and Quebecers strongly opposed. I would like to congratulate my colleague from Joliette for this important win and his hard work on this file. Ottawa could not be allowed to centralize securities regulation in Toronto. This is a big win for Quebec.

• (1150)

The Quebec National Assembly adopted four unanimous motions calling on the federal government to abandon this idea. Seldom had we seen Quebec's business community come together as one to oppose a government initiative. A strong financial hub is vital to the functioning of our head offices and the preservation of our businesses.

As we have seen with the pandemic, globalized supply chains are fragile and make us entirely dependent on other countries. We must develop our own chains and restore economic nationalism. Some measures in the budget are good, and we support them and support implementing them. For example, the budget will extend some essential, albeit imperfect, assistance programs, such as the wage subsidy and rent relief, until September 25, 2021. This is a positive because businesses, especially the ones back home that made good use of these programs, need some predictability in the programs they will have access to in the coming months. I should point out that this extension comes with a gradual decline in the amounts provided, which is a concern.

The Bloc Québécois will ensure that our businesses have access to programs that meet their needs for as long as they need them, particularly in the sectors that will take more time to get back to normal, such as tourism and small- and large-scale live events. These sectors are very important to Shefford, which relies on Tourisme Montérégie and Tourism Eastern Townships, and, of course, on many cultural events, such as the Festival international de la chanson de Granby. I could go on.

The bill also introduces some measures to combat tax evasion, but it does not go far enough. The government is presenting these measures as a massive campaign against corporate tax evasion, but in reality, these are just some highly specific, minor changes connected to ongoing litigation. The fight against tax havens will have to wait, even though it is a very important aspect of building tax fairness to enhance social justice.

Another thing to highlight is the creation of a new hiring subsidy program for businesses that are reopening. It could be useful. Bill C-30 would create this new program to encourage businesses to re-hire their staff. We know that the hiring subsidy will come into effect in November 2021. Businesses will then have the choice of applying for either the hiring subsidy or the existing wage subsidy, whichever works out better for them. These are measures that could be very useful.

Since my time is running out, I will try to cover everything quickly. I have a wish list. I would have liked to see more investments in social and affordable housing in this budget. This problem continues to affect my riding in particular, especially the city of Granby, which is otherwise considered a great place to settle down. Businesses in my region are experiencing a labour shortage and need housing to attract workers with families so they can try to recruit them, but they have nowhere to house them.

There are also some bills that will not receive royal assent. That really saddens me. I would have like to see the *Émilie Sansfaçon* bill passed to allow people who are suffering from a critical illness to have 50 weeks of leave instead of 15 weeks. It is a matter of recovering with dignity.

I would have also liked to see the House pass my colleague from Manicouagan's Bill C-253 regarding pension protection and for it to receive royal assent. People who worked hard their whole lives have the right to enjoy the fruits of their labour. This bill would help them age with dignity.

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I would have liked a budget with more support for our farmers. That is so important in my riding, which is part of Quebec's pantry. I would have liked to see a greater willingness to help the next generation of farmers. I want to point out that, right now, farmers are suffering because of frost and a lack of precipitation. They need better risk management programs and more precise traceability programs. Farmers are also feeling the effects of climate change.

I would have also liked to see tougher environmental measures for a greener recovery. For example, the government should invest just as much in forestry as it does in the oil industry. My Bloc Québécois colleagues and our political party established a comprehensive plan to focus more on renewable natural resources to get out of the crisis and to drive our regions' economies.

In closing, I would like to add one last thing. It goes beyond the budget, but as the status of women critic, I cannot give my last speech before the summer break without mentioning the crises that have been affecting women in particular since I arrived in the House. We commemorated the 30th anniversary of the *École Polytechnique* attack, but the issue of better gun control has still not been resolved because too many people are not satisfied with Bill C-22. Femicides are on the rise. There have been 13 just since the beginning of the year. Quebec is calling for transfers with no conditions and fewer delays to provide better funding for women's shelters. Quebec knows what to do. There are also the cases of assault in the Canadian Armed Forces. The Deschamps report needs to be implemented.

In short, there is still a lot of work to be done. Let us reach out to one another and work together. The federal government's paternalism and interference needs to stop. We need to take action. There is still so much to be done.

• (1155)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned that the Bloc would like \$110, I believe, for every senior over 65, and there are about three million seniors who would benefit by the increase from the government for those 75 and over. I wonder if the member could provide a cost to that particular commitment. Is that a Bloc Québécois commitment?

Also, it is encouraging to hear a Bloc member talk about the national housing strategy, for which we are literally spending billions of dollars. It is not too often that we get a member from the Bloc actually encouraging the federal government to have that footprint in housing, so I would like to compliment her on that. I think most Canadians see the value in having a national government, and as the government, we are providing historic amounts of money to invest in non-profit housing.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I will try to give a brief answer.

If I understood correctly, my colleague had a two-part question.

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First, he talked about seniors aged 75 and older who will get something. However, there are just as many seniors who will get nothing, because they are under 75. This means the government is completely turning its back on 50% of seniors.

Do my colleagues know how much this would cost? The Bloc Québécois has done the math, and it would cost \$4 billion. That is roughly what it would cost to include people between the ages of 65 and 74. I cannot believe Ottawa cannot find \$4 billion to help all seniors.

In response to the other question from my colleague, I would say that this is clearly an area of jurisdiction that must be transferred to Quebec. I realize that agreements need to be signed when it comes to social housing.

I recently spoke with quite a few elected representatives in Quebec, specifically on the issue of seniors. Some seniors want to remain in their homes, and they need safe and affordable housing. Quebec is asking for increased funding to deal with social housing so that seniors who want to stay in their homes longer do not have to spend all their money on rent.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Shefford for her speech.

I want to tell her that I have the same concerns as she does about seniors aged 65 to 74. These seniors know that they too can count on the support and solidarity of the NDP. The NDP is standing up for them.

Why does she think that the Liberal government wants to cut support for people who need it right now? She talked about the culture and tourism sectors in her riding, and I must admit that I share her concerns. The Canada recovery benefit is going to be cut. It will be reduced from \$500 to \$300 per week. That is a 40% cut. The Liberals offer no rational explanation as to why this has to happen now, in July, when the economic recovery is not fully under way yet.

I would like to ask my colleague what she thinks about the Liberals cutting direct support to workers.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois firmly believes that a number of measures will have to remain in place until certain sectors have fully recovered from the crisis. The culture and tourism sectors, for example, will suffer the effects of the crisis for longer.

I invite my colleagues to think about what my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé said; he said that we need to strike a balance. Many entrepreneurs and businesses in my region are aware that there was already a labour shortage before the crisis. Therefore, there needs to be a delicate balance to ensure that these measures make work more attractive. I realize that there is a balance to be struck. As long as we are still in this crisis, we will have to look at this. We have to help people in the sectors most affected, while allowing companies to have incentives for people to return to work.

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague for mentioning Samuel Lévesque, a young man from my riding, whose parents live in my

colleague's riding, who is circulating a very important petition. This 20-year-old young man is fighting for his grandparents to help put more money in their pockets. I congratulate him.

Does my colleague think the federal government's unreasonable spending power, which another colleague mentioned earlier, is a way of holding Quebecers and Canadians hostage?

• (1200)

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I think the government's spending power could be interpreted as "power to not spend".

Under the pretense of a crisis, the government does not want to reinvest in certain sectors, particularly health, insisting that it will see how things are after the crisis, that it will determine if, and how much, it can afford to invest. Is that spending power or "power to not spend"? One has to wonder.

As I said at the end of my speech, the federal government must stop interfering in provincial jurisdictions. As for the much-touted national frameworks, the national framework for reproductive health, the national framework for women's health and the national framework for mental health, the federal government should give the money to Quebec. Quebec knows how to use that money.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am speaking from the traditional, unceded territory of the Qayqayt First Nation and of the Coast Salish peoples.

[*English*]

I am rising today in the context of the final days of Parliament. This is perhaps the final speech that I will make in this Parliament. The Prime Minister has made no secret about his deep desire to go to elections as quickly as possible, and the rumours appear to show that by the end of the summer we will be in an election.

In this pandemic Parliament over the last 15 months, it is important to review what the NDP has been able to achieve, where the government has clearly fallen short and where I believe Canadians' aspirations are in building back better after this pandemic.

We pay tribute every day to our first responders, our front-line workers and our health care workers who have been so courageous and so determined during this pandemic. Whenever we speak of it, we also think of the over 26,000 Canadians who have died so far during the pandemic. We know that it is far from over. Although health care workers are working as hard as they possibly can, some of the variants are disturbing in their ability to break through and affect even people who have been fully vaccinated.

We need to make sure that measures continue, because we need to make sure that people are protected and supported for whatever comes in the coming months. It is in that context that the NDP and the member for Burnaby South, our leader, have been so deeply disturbed by the government's plan to massively slash the emergency response benefit that Canadians depend on.

Hundreds of thousands of Canadian families are fed through the emergency response benefit, yet in budget Bill C-30, the government slashes a benefit that was above the poverty line to one that goes dramatically below the poverty line. This is something that the Prime Minister wanted from the very beginning. We recall that 15 months ago, the Prime Minister was talking about \$1,000 a month for an emergency response benefit. He talked about \$1,000 a month for supports. It was clearly inadequate. That was why the member for Burnaby South and the NDP caucus pushed back to make sure that the benefit was adequate to put food on the table and keep roofs over their heads of most Canadians, raising it to \$2,000 a month or \$500 a week.

We did not stop there, of course. We pushed so that benefits would be provided to students as well. Students were struggling to pay for their education and often struggling to find jobs. We pushed for those supports. We pushed for supports for seniors and people with disabilities. Regarding people with disabilities, I am profoundly disappointed that the government never chose to do the work to input every person with a disability to a database nationally. When they file their tax returns, they should be coded as people with disabilities. The government refused to do that, so the benefit to people with disabilities only went to about one-third of people with disabilities in this country, leaving most of them behind.

We pushed as well to ensure that the wage subsidy was in place to maintain jobs. This is something that we saw in other countries, such as Denmark and France, always with clear protections so that the money was not misused for dividends or for executive bonuses. We pressed for that to happen in Canada with those same protections. We succeeded in getting the 75% wage subsidy. The government refused to put into place the measures to protect Canadians from abuse so, as we know, profitable corporations spent billions of dollars on dividends and big executive bonuses at the same time as they received the wage subsidy from the federal government.

We pushed for a rent subsidy for small businesses as well. I know the member for Courtenay—Alberni, the member for Burnaby South and a number of other members of the NDP caucus pushed hard to make sure that those rent subsidies and supports were in place. The initial program was clearly inadequate. We kept pushing until we eventually got a rent subsidy that more Canadian businesses could use.

• (1205)

We are proud of that track record of making sure people were being taken care of, and this is part of our responsibility as parliamentarians. Some observers noted that NDP MPs are the worker bees of Parliament. We take that title proudly, because we believe in standing up and fighting for people.

Where did the government go then by itself, once you put aside the NDP pressure and the fact the government often needed NDP support to ensure measures went through Parliament? We were able to leverage that to make sure programs benefited people, but there were a number of programs the government put forward with no help from the NDP, most notably the \$750 billion in liquidity supports for Canada's big banks, which was an obscene and irresponsible package.

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The \$750 billion was provided through a variety of federal institutions with absolutely no conditions whatsoever. There was no obligation to reduce interest rates to zero, as many credit unions did. I am a member of two credit unions: Vancouver City Savings and Community Savings in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Both of these dropped interest rates to zero at the height of the crisis.

Many of the credit unions that are democratically run understood the importance of not profiting or profiteering from this pandemic, but the big banks did not. They received \$750 billion in liquidity supports with no obligation to reduce interest rates to zero and no obligation to remove fees or service fees.

We have seen unbelievable amounts of profiteering through this pandemic. Those massive public supports were used to create the space for \$60 billion in pandemic profits. To ensure the profits were increased even more, the big banks increased service fees. Often when they deferred mortgages, they tacked on fees and penalties and increased interest. They acted in a deplorable way with free agency from the federal government, because the federal government refused to attach any conditions to the massive and unprecedented bailout package.

We know from history that past federal governments acted differently. Past federal governments put in place strict laws against profiteering. They made sure there was a real drive to ensure the ultra-rich paid their fair share of taxes. We got through the Second World War because we put in place an excess profits tax that ensured companies could not benefit from the misery of others. This led to unprecedented prosperity coming out of the Second World War.

This is not the case with the current government. It is not the case with this Prime Minister. Instead of any measures at all against profiteering, it was encouraged, and we have seen Canada's billionaires increase their wealth by \$80 billion so far during the pandemic. We have seen \$60 billion in profits in the banking sector, largely fuelled by public monies, public supports and liquidity supports.

We have also seen the government's steadfast refusal to put in place any of the measures other governments have used to rebalance the profiteering that has occurred during the pandemic. There is no wealth tax and no pandemic profits tax. When we look at the government's priorities when it acts on its own, with the NDP removed from the equation and all the measures we fought for during this pandemic, it is \$750 billion in liquidity support for Canada's big banks with no conditions. It is no break at all from Canada's billionaires reaping unprecedented increases in wealth during this pandemic. It is no wealth tax, it is no pandemic profits tax and it is also a steadfast refusal to crack down on overseas tax havens.

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Let us add up where the government went on its own over the course of the last 15 months. There was \$750 billion in liquidity supports for the banks and \$25 billion that the Parliamentary Budget Officer tells us goes offshore every year to the overseas tax havens of wealthy Canadians and profitable corporations. There was \$10 billion in a wealth tax that the government refused to put into place: That is \$10 billion every year that could serve so many purposes and meet so many Canadians' needs.

• (1210)

However, the government steadfastly refuses to put in place that fiscal measure that so many other countries have put into place. It is a refusal to put in place a pandemic profits tax that would have raised nearly \$10 billion over the course of the last 15 months.

We are talking about a figure of close to \$800 billion in various measures that the government rolled out, or refused to in any way curb, that could have been making a huge difference in meeting Canadians' needs. When Canadians ask, as they look forward to a time, hopefully soon, when we will be able to rebuild this country in a more equitable way that leaves nobody behind, we need to look at why the government steadfastly refuses to put these measures into place. It is not because there is not the fiscal capacity. We have surely seen that.

I need only add the incredible amount of money the government has poured into the Trans Mountain pipeline: According to the PBO again, it is \$12.5 billion so far and counting. It is an amount that keeps rising, with construction costs that are currently either committed to or will be committed to in the coming months. It cost \$4.5 billion for the company itself, which was far more than the sticker price. Add those numbers up and we are close to \$20 billion that the government is spending on a pipeline that even the International Energy Agency says is not in the public's interests or in the planet's interests. That is nearly \$20 billion. We have to remember that the government and the Prime Minister came up with that money overnight, when the private sector pulled out of the project because it was not financially viable. Within 24 hours, the Prime Minister and the finance minister at the time announced that they would come up with the purchase price to buy the pipeline. Subsequently, they have been pumping money into this pipeline without any scant understanding of or precaution to the financial and the environmental implications.

The government has proved that it can come up with big bucks when it wants to, but Canadians are left asking the following questions.

Why can Canadians not have public universal pharmacare? The government turned down and voted out the NDP bill that would have established the Canada pharmacare act on the same conditions as the Canada Health Act. The Liberal members voted against that, yet we know that nearly 10 million Canadians have no access to their medication or struggle to pay for it. A couple of million Canadians, according to most estimates, are not able to pay for their medication. Hundreds die, according to the Canadian Nurses Association, because they do not have access to or cannot afford to pay for their medication. The Parliamentary Budget Officer tells us that Canada would save close to \$5 billion by putting public universal pharmacare into place. Of course, the government has completely

refused to implement its commitment from the 2019 election. The Liberals will make some other promise in the coming election that the Prime Minister wants to have.

Why can we not have public universal pharmacare? The answer, of course, is that there is no reason why we cannot. It is cost effective. It makes a difference in people's lives. It adds to our quality of life, and it adds to our international competitiveness because it takes a lot of the burden of drug plans off of small companies. The reason we cannot have pharmacare is not financial: It is political. It is the Liberal government that steadfastly refuses to put it into place. The Liberals keep it as a carrot that they dangle to the electorate once every election or two. They have been doing that now for a quarter century, but refuse to put it into place.

Why can we not have safe drinking water for all Canadian communities? The government members would say it is complicated and tough. It was not complicated and tough for the Trans Mountain bailout. It was not complicated or tough for the massive amounts of liquidity supports, unprecedented in Canadian history or any other country's history, that the government lauded on Canada's big banks to shore up their profits during the pandemic. It certainly has not been a question of finances, with \$25 billion in tax dollars going offshore every year to overseas tax havens.

• (1215)

Therefore, the issue of why we cannot have safe drinking water I think is a very clear political question. There is no political will, as the member for Nunavut said so eloquently in her speech a few days ago.

Let us look at why we do not have a right to housing in this country. We know we did after the Second World War. Because an excess profits tax had been put into place and we had very clear measures against profiteering, we were able to launch an unprecedented housing program of 300,000 public housing units across the country, homes like those right behind me where I am speaking to the House from. They were built across the country in a rapid fashion. In the space of three years, 300,000 units were built because we knew there were women and men in the service coming back from overseas and we needed to make sure that housing was available. Why do we not have a right to housing? Because the Liberals said no to that as well. However, the reality is we could very much meet the needs of Canadians with respect to affordable housing if the banks and billionaires were less of a priority and people were a greater priority for the current government.

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Let us look at access to post-secondary education. The amount the Canadian Federation of Students put out regarding free tuition for post-secondary education is a net amount of about \$8 billion to the federal government every year. I pointed out that the pandemic profits tax is about that amount, yet the government refuses to implement it. Students are being forced to pay for their student loans at this time because the government refused to extend the moratorium on student loan payments during a pandemic. Once again, banks, billionaires and the ultrarich are a high priority for the government, but people not so much.

Let us look at long-term care. The NDP put forward a motion in this Parliament, which the Liberals turned down, to take the profit and profiteering out of long-term care and put in place stable funding right across the country to ensure high standards in long-term care. We believe we need an expanded health care system that includes pharmacare and dental care. The motion to provide dental care for lower-income Canadians who do not have access to it was turned down by the Liberals just a few days ago. It would have ensured that long-term care would be governed by national standards and federal funding so that seniors in this country in long-term care homes are treated with the respect they deserve. The government again said it could not do that. Once again, the banks, billionaires and the ultrarich are a high priority, yet seniors, who have laboured all their lives for their country, provided support in their community and contributed so much are not a high priority for the government.

Let us look at transportation. The bus sector across this country is so important for the safety and security of people moving from one region of the country to the other, yet we saw the bus and transportation services gutted, and the federal government is refusing to put in place the same kind of national network for buses that we have for trains. In a country as vast as Canada, with so many people who struggle to get from one region to the other for important things like medical appointments because they do not have access to a vehicle is something that should absolutely be brought to bear, yet the government refuses to look at the issue because banks, billionaires and the ultrarich are a high priority.

Finally, let us look at clean energy. We know we need to transition to a clean energy economy. We have seen billions of dollars go to oil and gas CEOs, but the government is simply unprepared to make investments into clean energy. I contrast that vividly with the nearly \$20 billion it is showering on the Trans Mountain pipeline, which is for a political cause rather than something that makes good sense from an economic or environmental point of view. It is willing to throw away billions of dollars in the wrong places, but we believe that money needs to be channelled through to Canadians to meet their needs. That is certainly what we will be speaking about right across the length and breadth of this land in this coming election.

• (1220)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have heard this NDP member refer to the NDP as the “worker bees” on a number of occasions. He is selling himself short, as worker bees are nothing more than mindless drones that fly around and contribute to the hive mind. The NDP actually offers quite a bit more than that in this House, and I would encourage him to consider a different term.

To the member's discussion about fiscal capacity, he seems to suggest that just because we were able to take on this fiscal capacity during a pandemic, we should be able to do it at any time. That is simply untrue. The reason why Canada, a country like ours, can take on this fiscal capacity right now is because our allies, our partners that we interact with and that we trade with regularly throughout the world, are also taking on that capacity. We are going through this together, globally, with other nations. That is why we are able to take on this kind of fiscal burden at this particular time. It is because we are going through it with other like-minded nations.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the member has made our point for us, and that is that other countries have put in place wealth taxes because they see that massive gulf between the very wealthy in their countries and most of their population.

That is why when we go to other social democratic countries, we see much stronger protections around health care and ensuring that there is a transition to clean energy economy. We see, in other countries, our international allies are far ahead of Canada in terms of making the investments that count, investments in health care, investments in education, ensuring as well that people have a right to housing, and that we transition to the clean energy economy.

Canada could learn a lot from our international partners. My point is very valid, that the Liberal government is refusing the good examples that would make a difference in the quality of life for Canadians.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to applaud my fellow British Columbian for the work that he has done in terms of the all-party credit union caucus. He raised the profit-taking by certain companies, particularly the large banks. I would also point out that many small credit unions, unlike the big ones, like Vancity, already do so much. Valley First credit union in my area does Feed the Valley. Interior Savings Credit Union does bursaries for students.

Rather than focusing on what we agree on, we are in elected office, so I am going to ask the member a question where we maybe part ways. I agree with the member that the Trans Mountain pipeline should not involve taxpayer funds. In fact, Conservatives believe that pipeline projects should go forward on the basis that they are safe and let the market work from that.

NDP members in my riding of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, support that, specifically in merit, because they believe in supporting jobs. What does the member have to say to his own party members in my section of the province?

Government Orders

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the reality is I have not met a single NDP member who believes in spending \$18 billion of public funds in the Trans Mountain project, that the Parliamentary Budget Officer has evaluated and has indicated is not a viable project given the context of today, given the report of the International Energy Agency.

Pouring more billions of dollars into this pipeline that is not a viable project, according to the PBO, is money that would not create jobs. Ultimately, after Trans Mountain is completed, we know it would be 60 full-time jobs for the province of British Columbia. It is an unbelievable amount of money for 60 full-time jobs.

For folks in—

• (1225)

The Deputy Speaker: We will go to other questions and comments.

The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for New Westminster—Burnaby for his speech. As with the previous speaker, we agree with the NDP on many things. Quite honestly, I have to tell my esteemed colleague that I am disappointed we have not been on the same page more often.

I would like to talk about health transfers. In his speech, the member went to the trouble of pointing out that national standards are an essential part of the conversation about health transfers. I disagree. Is the member aware that there are provincial standards in Canada and Quebec and that a dire shortage of resources is to blame for the tragedy that struck those facilities?

Can the member look his voters right in the eye and tell them that Canada is so great and is going to give them money but that there will be strings attached because the government is going to tell them what to do with the money even though the people on the front lines are the ones who know what to do?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, nobody has pushed for health transfers more than the NDP. We opposed the Harper government's cuts, and we oppose the fact that the current government is refusing to dole out enough cash to maintain the health system. That is very clear.

We want the government to give Quebec and the provinces more resources to improve everyone's health and create a better health system. The pandemic affected seniors' health services in British Columbia, but it had an impact elsewhere too. We saw what things were like in Quebec's long-term care facilities. The government has to provide adequate funding to ensure a better quality of life for seniors across Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. friend for the great work he does.

Day in and day out, all I hear from the Liberals' side is that they are supporting Canadians, that they have Canadians' backs and that everything is a high priority, but what we do not see in Bill C-30 is the supports for people with disabilities, except for a three-year

study on who has to live on \$1,200 a month. That is inadequate. Then, we find out the Liberals want to extend the CERB with Bill C-30, but they did not tell us the story. They want to give us the rates that people with disabilities are living on and to reduce it to that low below poverty. Then, we have the great work they do in supporting seniors, but they only want to support half the seniors.

Does my friend believe this is the way we are supporting Canadians and having their backs, or does he feel it is very shameful, what the government would implement?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the member for Hamilton Mountain is a real fighter for his constituents and for people right across the country, like workers and seniors. I really want to thank him for his service to Hamilton and to the entire country.

He is right. The Liberal speech is nothing, until we look at where the money goes. When we look at where the money goes, it goes to banks and billionaires. There is \$750 billion in liquidity supports. Without batting an eye, they did not announce it publicly, they just doled it out. Billionaires are up \$80 billion in increased wealth through this pandemic, and the government steadfastly refuses to use any of the tools that other countries have put into place. There are enough vacuous, vapid Liberal speeches. We follow the money and we see where the priorities are, and the priorities of the current Liberal government are banks, billionaires and the ultrarich, and that comes to a real detriment of people.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talks about banks. One of the things I think about, and this comes from the parliamentary library, is who owns the banks. It is the Public Sector Pension Investment Board, the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan, the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan and the Ontario Pension Board. That is for the RBC. Then for BMO, there is the Health Care of [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] Plan trust fund, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, the Public Sector Pension Investment Board and the Ontario Pension Board. Then for TD, there is the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan.

Would the member not recognize, be honest with Canadians and say who actually owns the banks?

Government Orders

• (1230)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, will the member actually recognize that it is obscene to provide \$750 billion of liquidity supports to Canada's big banks, with absolutely no conditions, to allow them to increase service charges, to impose penalties and fees and to do all the damage they have done over the course of this past year by refusing to provide supports to so many small businesses and people who are actually relying on the banks to provide some support during this pandemic? The Liberals do all that, and then say they are going to cut CRB by \$200 a week and they are going to cut other supports Canadians rely on.

Will the member acknowledge that is inappropriate, given how much the Liberals have given to the banks and billionaires and how they are cutting back on the needs of people?

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Essex.

Before I get started on the budget, this may be the last time I get to appear in front of you, Mr. Speaker, given that there seems to be a lot of chatter about an election. I want to take this time to thank you for your service to your country and say what a pleasure it has been to be able to serve with you. I wish you the very best in everything that you do into the future.

I am standing here again on a budget bill. Although much of this budget was important because it helped families and businesses ensure that they had some kind of income so they could manage through this crisis, it is also important that we talk about how it will potentially burden the future of many families and younger people as we have amassed this enormous debt.

This February, I was appointed as the shadow minister for COVID-19 economic recovery. It has been an incredible honour to serve in this role, because it has given me the opportunity to go across the country virtually and look at the economic impacts COVID has had on every sector, every region and every demographic of the country.

A strong economic recovery should be inclusive to all demographics, sectors and regions, ensuring that all persons and all areas of the country thrive and that we have specific objectives with measurable strategies for every sector to ensure that nobody gets left behind. It is impossible to implement a cookie-cutter plan, which is pretty much what I see in the Liberal budget. We will not get a full recovery unless we look at every economic sector to make sure it is successful.

The budget outlined how the federal Liberals proposed to rebuild the Canadian economy in a way that will bring Canadians along. This is another example of a lot of talk without a clear, precise, strategic and thoughtful action by the government.

If the government was actually interested in bringing all Canadians along, it would have laid out outcomes for job creation, growth and prosperity in this country's agricultural sector, maybe the energy sector, the forestry sector and the natural resources sector, just to name a few. There are millions of Canadians who work in these sectors. It is time that the government at least got honest about what it is trying to accomplish. Quite frankly, it seems like we are stuck

in this never-ending cycle of spending more to achieve less. It is all talk and no action.

I hearken back to when I first had the opportunity to get involved as a contributor to the economy. I was able to buy into a business when I was 21 years old. I look back at those times and how I looked at the world as my oyster, that I would be able to do something, build something, grow something. Sadly, I do not hear that from youth anymore. I do not see that in this budget, which does not necessarily set people up for success.

A bunch of stats have come out of this budget, like the largest debt and deficit we have seen in the history of our country, and yet very little to show for it. We are certainly not moving forward. In fact, I often think we are moving backwards. It is important that we look at a few stats. Canada fell out of the top 10 ranking of the most competitive economies. We have fallen near the bottom of our peer group on innovation, ranking 17th, as stated by the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Canada ranks 11th among G7 countries, among 29 industrial countries, with a debt-to-GDP ratio of 33%, and Canada fell to 25th out of 29 countries. In other words, Canada has the fifth-highest level of total indebtedness. No other country experienced such a pronounced decline in its debt ranking. The debt-to-GDP ratio will rise from 31% last year to 56% this year. The Bank of Canada projects business investments to grow at 0.8% over the next two years, failing to recover to 2019 levels until 2023.

Consumption and government spending will represent about 80% of economic growth over the next two years, while investment and exports will be next to zero. An important industry like mineral fuels accounted for 22% of our country's exports, the number one exported product, which is something we should not forget about. We still have the third-largest proven oil reserves in the world and are the third-largest exporter of oil.

• (1235)

Just as the government continued to do since 2015, it has ignored the Canadian natural resource industry. There is virtually no mention of the energy sector, which is Canada's number one export. By ignoring the strength of Canada's resource, forestry and agriculture sectors, among others, the government has failed to recognize the impact these sectors would have on our battered economy. The world wants and needs more of our natural resources, so we should be thinking about expanding our market share, not hastening its decline. At the very least, we should be trying to develop policies that make sure we have an active role in these sectors.

There is an entire chapter in the budget dedicated to environmental initiatives aimed at net-zero emissions by 2050, which includes \$18 billion in spending, but with dubious assumptions about the impact on economic growth. Rather than supporting a proven catalyst for economic growth like the natural resource sector to accelerate Canadians' recovery and get Canadians back to work, the Prime Minister has decided to continue the abandonment of this industry and hedge our future on uncertain technologies.

Government Orders

Conservatives are not opposed to developing and enhancing Canada's environmental-oriented sector. In fact I, along with the Conservative Party, highly encourage Canadian market participants in this sector to continue to grow and create more jobs and revenue while making sufficient contributions to the nation's ecological sustainability. I am proud of our industry. Our industry has been doing fantastic work and is a leader in the world. We should be proud of that and stand up for it. As we continue to combat this pandemic and the economic damage it would cause, we must unleash and utilize the capabilities of all profitable revenue streams. That includes green technologies and natural resources.

There are some vague references in the budget to growing green jobs and retraining the workforce for new jobs. It is very vague. Where and in which sectors are these jobs going to be created, and by when? Words are great, but actions speak louder. In the province I come from, people want to know, if they will be trained into a green job, where that job will be, what kind of income they will get and how they are going to be able to support their families in that new role. We have heard lots about retraining for these jobs that do not exist yet, but the need for tradespeople only happens if something is approved and built in this country.

What is it going to take? If the economy is going to grow, it has to be private sector-driven. The high cost of doing business in Canada, the red tape and the over-regulation make it almost impossible for small business owners. That has to change. There has been a real and visible impact on Canada's capacity to attract foreign investment. We need to be able to tell people they are welcome in this country and their investments are welcome. The perceived risk around investing in Canada's energy sector has to change.

What does the future look like? What is the trajectory? What does the country look like? We see inflation now. The target was 2% and it is running at about 3.6%. It is very concerning for people who are trying to live on a budget. My biggest fear for the country is that this budget will continue to invest massive sums of money into under-tested, under-productive schemes that fit the government's political agenda. The title is "A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth and Resilience", but the federal government's budget contains very few details on specifics and a lack of measurables, and it really does not say how it is going to execute on this plan.

I am concerned this budget is far from resilient and far from sustainable. If it were resilience that the government was after, it would be asking itself how this federal spending is going to position the country for post-pandemic success. We need to ensure that any spending helps with productivity in this country and ensures we have long-term sustainability. The well-being of our people and our economy cannot afford to be stuck in this never-ending cycle of the government's scheme of throwing money into the wind and hoping something sticks.

The most important focus for our country right now needs to be investment and commitment to ensuring Canadians get back to work. That is why the Conservative Party of Canada would implement the Canada recovery plan, a plan that would recover the hundreds of thousands of jobs in the hardest-hit sectors. Canadians deserve strong leadership, inclusive leadership and a robust plan for not only recovery, but prosperity for many years to come.

• (1240)

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know that the member comes from a part of our country that has contributed so much to Canada's economy and prosperity for years. If there was ever a time when Canada needed to do all that it can to strengthen our sectors, our producers and those who actually produce our energy, work our fields and grow our food, it is now.

I wonder if the hon. member would be willing to comment on the absolute need to have a government with a vision to bring the best out of Canadians. We have so much to offer to the world and those who want to do business with us. We have the most responsibly produced energy in the world. We have the best producers of food and agriculture. We can only increase our manufacturing capacity.

We have great opportunities that are missing. Would the hon. member like to comment on that? What are his thoughts?

Mr. James Cumming: Mr. Speaker, I am an incredibly proud Canadian. We have an enormous capacity and potential in this country. It is time we recognized it. It is time we let these sectors grow and prosper.

I firmly believe the rest of the world wants more of what Canada produces. We are leaders on the agriculture side, leaders on the forestry side, leaders on the energy side. Let us recognize that. Let us look at our strengths and make sure we emphasize those strengths, get behind those strengths and grow this economy so that kids will have something to look forward to in this country.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the one thing I did not hear the member mention in his speech was tax evasion and the need to ensure that the wealthiest Canadians pay their share. I was reading in the news today that since 2015, the CRA has only investigated 44 Canadians with net worth over \$50 million for tax evasion. Only two of those went to prosecution and no fines were issued.

I wonder if the member could inform us what his approach is to cracking down on tax evasion and what message this news sends to Canadians who work hard and pay their share.

Mr. James Cumming: Mr. Speaker, my position would never change on this. If people earn an income and owe taxes, they should pay. We should use the full force of the law to make sure that we go after those who are trying to take advantage of any kind of scheme that would allow them not to pay their fair share of tax.

In the same breath, we should also recognize that wealth creators are good for our country. They are creating wealth. Creating more jobs and more investment in Canada is good for our country. Those who do it by the rules, let us support them and let us cherish them because they are the ones who are going to help us grow this economy.

Government Orders

• (1245)

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my great colleague from Edmonton on his amazing speech and the great job he is doing in the House in his various roles.

In the Financial Post yesterday there was an article that said, “Brace for even higher rates when the Bank of Canada does start raising” and “Interest rates expected to climb above the previous peak for the first time in decades amid robust recovery”.

Could the member comment on the threat that higher interest rates will pose to the sustainability of our economy, which he so eloquently spoke about during his speech?

Mr. James Cumming: Mr. Speaker, it is a great concern, as we see inflation starting to move to 3.6%. We have issues with supply chains. We have issues with housing costs. We are seeing a lot of things drive up costs. The concern is that we are going to see interest rates do the same thing.

The level of debt that we have taken on in this country has to be paid back, and there is going to be interest that has to be paid on that debt, even if it is termed out over a period of time. A lot of the budget is now going to have to go toward debt repayment. That money could be spent on housing. It could be spent on some of the things that we desperately need in this country. That is a big concern.

Future generations will be stuck with this burden. That is the thing that is most distressing.

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-30.

I want to thank the member for Edmonton Centre for his incredibly compelling speech, and he did a fabulous job. As well, to follow up on his comments, all the best to you, Mr. Speaker, in the future.

As I was walking up to the House today, I was given to thought. I thought about my family, my staff, my friends and the people of Essex, and the impact that Bill C-30 would have on each and every one of them. Each of us will be affected by the bill. I want to give many thanks to my family, my staff and my constituents of Essex for the opportunity to be in this place to speak to Bill C-30.

Fifteen months ago, after the government's failure to heed the early warning signs of the pandemic ravaging Asia, Parliament was shut down for three weeks to flatten the curve. These many months later, the government's record is characterized by bad ethics, poor decision-making, undemocratic measures and huge deficits.

The government, propped up by the NDP, Bloc and Green Party, has repeatedly failed Canadians, from its early and repeated power grabs, its failure to shut down international flights in the early stages of the pandemic, its failure to secure PPE and its disastrous vaccine procurement and rollout. On top of that, we had the ill-conceived Canada student support program and the resulting WE scandal that led to the prorogation of Parliament to avoid scrutiny. For 15 months, we have seen the Liberals reward their Liberal buddies with contracts and now judicial appointments.

Only the Conservatives, as the official opposition, have stood against the Liberal excesses. The NDP has voted with the Liberals basically at every turn, even joining with them to shut down committees to help the Liberals avoid scrutiny. At a time when Canadians needed true leadership, ideology partisan interests have trumped principle.

Why am I mentioning this record in a speech on the budget? Because post-COVID, Canada needs an economic recovery plan and, yet again, the Liberal-NDP-Bloc-Green Party alliance has failed to offer anything but shiny baubles. The record speaks for itself. The NDP-Liberal budget is a massive letdown for workers in my riding of Essex. This is not a growth budget, and it fails to put forward a plan to encourage Canada's long-term prosperity.

I have three children just entering adulthood, and my first grandchild was born just a few weeks ago. I think of families in my riding, generations that have made their home in Essex County, and I wonder if my children and their children will be able to have the things that previous generations took for granted: a well-paying job, affordable housing and saving for their children's education. I am receiving hundreds of emails from constituents who remember the Canada of my youth. They tell me that they have no heart to celebrate Canada this year. They see the writing on the wall.

Rampant corruption, unchecked, has tarnished our hallowed halls. Bill C-10 threatens our Charter of Rights, and deficit spending and high debt always leads to tax increases and program cuts down the road. It is an open question if we will be able to protect our social safety net and our senior's pensions, who should be able to enjoy their retirement worry-free.

As the government continues to print money against Canada's GDP, as Conservatives predicted, inflation has risen to 3.6%. The cost of housing has soared and, as I said previously, putting it out of reach for many young families. As the cost of living rises, so does the cost for basics, like food, which hurts the lowest-income Canadians and seniors on fixed incomes the most. The government spending today borrows against our children's future. It is not a cliché; it is a simple reality that everyone who has a personal or household budget to manage understands.

Government Orders

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has noted that a significant amount of the Liberal spending in the budget will not stimulate jobs or create economic growth. The Conservatives support getting help to those who have been hit the hardest by the failure of the Liberals to create jobs. In fact, the Liberal government has spent more and delivered less than any other G7 country. Canada's Conservatives were very clear that we wanted to see a plan to return to normal, that would safely reopen the economy and get Canadians back to work.

● (1250)

It is very clear that the Liberal-NDP budget was more about partisan politics than creating jobs or growing our economy. With their uncontrolled spending, the Liberals made it clear that they had no plan to return to a balanced budget. Throughout the pandemic, the Conservatives have made emergency support programs better for Canadians.

Alas, unemployed Canadians are hoping to see a plan to create new jobs and economic opportunities for their families. Workers who have had their wages cut and hours slashed are hoping to see a plan to reopen the economy. They were let down.

Layoffs at the Fiat Chrysler plant in Windsor mean that expectant mothers will see their maternity benefits cut, with all the money going out the door in income support. What has the government done for them?

Small business owners have been devastated by repeat lockdowns. Many have closed their doors permanently. Many are hanging on by the slimmest of margins.

Gyms like Xanadu in my riding have petitioned the government for ongoing aid. I have stood in the House for them. It will take months for them to recover, if they do at all.

Many hair salons and barbershops, many of them owned and operated by women supporting their families, do not qualify for business support.

Travel advisers went 15 months without any revenue. What does this budget do for them? Absolutely nothing.

Manufacturers in my riding whose entire business model is based on cross-border transactions have experienced losses of major contracts because the government did not see fit to deem them essential despite repeated appeals to their government. It is a tone-deaf government that cannot not grasp the concept that we cannot export goods without the free movement of the people who make and sell them. The effects of this will be felt for years. It will take many years for manufacturers to get back to where they were.

While they brag about the numbers, the Liberals fail to understand that the stuff manufacturers are working on now was negotiated two years ago, before the pandemic. Manufacturing is 13% of Canada's GDP. This sector is the largest contributor of taxable income. In Essex and Windsor, 54,000 jobs are represented in this industry. Eighty-five per cent of those goods produced go to the United States of America.

Manufacturers have done a good job. They were mandated to keep open and they did everything required, yet the government did

not see fit to recognize their good work. When I first raised this issue with the minister in the House, and other government officials appearing before the special committee on Canada-U.S. economic relations, the government's response revealed its total ignorance and outright indifference.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention the loved ones who have been separated by the Canada-U.S. border closure. Even when changes were made to broaden the definitions, many were left out or could not afford to quarantine for 14 days. To make matters worse, the government then added quarantine hotels and exorbitant costs with unsafe substandard care. The human toll has been deep. Here are but a couple of examples: grandparents unable to meet their grandchildren for the first time; parents looking to be with their son, graduating after 10 years.

The simple fact is that this budget does nothing to secure the long-term prosperity for Canadians. It does nothing to help my excellent riding of Essex. Canada's Conservatives got us out of the last recession. Canadians who are worried about their future know that we can and will do it again.

● (1255)

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned many times how people were struggling and needed help, especially through this difficult time. Does he agree with me that people with disabilities need immediate help now, some funding to help them during these hard times? Does he agree with the NDP and the Bloc that seniors should all be treated the same and not have a two-tiered system?

Mr. Chris Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I agree that everyone needs help. The budget should be helping everyone; nobody should be left behind. Be it seniors, young adults, our youth or people with disabilities, everyone should be helped, especially, and hopefully, at the end of a pandemic.

Yes, we need to look from 100,000 feet down and ensure that everybody is duly taken care of.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague if he agrees with the Bloc Québécois that, in order to better protect all workers and meet needs created by the pandemic, the federal government should have accepted the idea of transferring the amounts requested for health care to the provinces and Quebec through the Canada health and social transfer. That would provide better support for the entire health and social services network in Canada.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Chris Lewis: Mr. Speaker, it is so important for the federal government to work with individual provinces, with their leaders and, quite frankly, with their governments. Everyone has to come to the table. It is important that everyone has a voice at the table and whatever works best between the federal government and each specific province is a direction about which we certainly need to talk.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Essex for pointing out that the Liberals love making things up. One of the things that they suffer from is a disease called “dyspocketnesia”. What it means is taking from “this pocket”, which is the taxpayer pocket, and putting it into “that pocket”, which is the government’s pocket, and then forgetting about why they did it.

One person who does not forget about things that the Liberals do is the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who points out the Liberal claim that they would create 315,000 jobs this year, 334,000 in 2022, and 280,000 in 2023. He notes that it is more likely 39,000 jobs this year, 74,000 next year and 94,000 in the year after that.

I wonder if my colleague would mind commenting about these job numbers.

• (1300)

Mr. Chris Lewis: Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, there are other people who know about the taking money out of this pocket and putting it into that one. It is everyday taxpayers. It is the young 20 or 21-year-old man and woman who pays taxes and wonders what is left in their bank account at the end of the day.

As I mentioned in my speech, 54,000 jobs directly related to manufacturing in Windsor-Essex are coming under the gun if we do not get this ship righted really soon.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the member’s speech. He said that everybody needed help, and I agree. Seniors who are not getting their OAS increase because they are under the age of 75 but over the age of 65 need to be treated equally.

People are going to be cut from their CRB payments when they are not going back to work yet. Businesses, in particular in the tourism industry, are not going to have the wage subsidy extended in time.

The member also talked about the debt. I wonder how he sees these two things fitting together. Who should be bucking up and paying their fair share?

Mr. Chris Lewis: Mr. Speaker, they are directly related. I do appreciate the fact that he brought up tourism. Tourism in my riding of Essex has been devastated beyond belief. One hand will feed the other, but we must have tourism to drive that back up and to drive down the deficit.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to the budget implementation bill.

Before I do that, I would just like to say thank you to some people. Undoubtedly, one of the problems with a minority Parliament is that we never quite know when that election might come.

Whether the rumours are true or not, two years is certainly, by conventional wisdom, on par with the standard length of a minority Parliament, so I will take this opportunity to give thanks to some people.

I have been coming to this House for 75 sitting days in a row. I have been in the House almost every single hour, every single minute. I just referenced my own participation and attendance in the House, which I think I am allowed to do.

I could not have done this work without the incredible work of the folks back in my offices. We all know we have these incredible teams of people who work behind the scenes. In particular, in Ottawa, I have Kaitlin and Kelly, who have been working to help me prepare for here.

Then, of course, because I have been here so much, I have not been able to be back in my riding or working on a lot of that constituency work. I have three incredible women in my Kingston office, Ann, Nicole and Jennifer, who have been handling that case work and working with the government to help people through these difficult times.

I just want to give a huge thank you to them for being so supportive in the functions and for being an incredible team that really knows how to come together.

I also would like to say thank you to you, Mr. Speaker. When you first announced you would not be running again, I said something briefly, but I have really enjoyed you as Deputy Speaker. I hope that means something coming from the riding that also produced the longest serving Speaker of the House of Commons, Peter Milliken. We certainly have a keen eye for a good Speaker.

You have undoubtedly done such a good job in your role as Deputy Speaker throughout the years. Whenever you are in the chair, I have admired your patience with us, even at times when we seem to be at each other’s throats. Thank you for that.

Getting toward my discussion on the budget, I would like to talk about the first responders out there who have literally been fighting this pandemic on the front lines for the last 15 to 16 months. We come to this place and we fight, argue, debate and create policy with the hopes that it impacts those on the front lines and makes a genuine difference in the work they do. At the end of the day, they are the ones we need to be looking out for, making sure they have the right tools to fight and do the incredible work they do.

A lot of those frontline workers are probably not even all that keenly interested in what is going on in this place, but nonetheless we have an incredible obligation to make sure they have what they need to do the job they are doing on our behalf.

To that end, I know it has come up in this debate from a couple of different members, I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to members of the House with respect to something that happened in this House yesterday. Hopefully we could learn from the experience.

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I learned very early on in my political career, back in municipal politics in Kingston, that it is fair game to be fighting and disagreeing with other politicians. We are elected. We choose to be put in this position. We choose to come forward, voice our opinions and engage in those debates and that dialogue. However, staff do not. What we witnessed here yesterday was something that, quite frankly, has not happened in this Parliament, in this institution, for more than 100 years.

We dragged a public civil servant to the bar of the House of Commons, to Parliament, to receive a scolding from the Speaker. I am appealing to members because of my desire to try to have them recognize that that is not proper conduct toward a public servant. If there is disagreement or concern over the manner in which a government or a particular minister is acting, it would be entirely appropriate to engage in holding them accountable, and if they wanted to, to pull that minister before the bar, if they could do that, and to exercise the same kind of decision or scolding on them.

● (1305)

I just do not think it is right to bring a public servant, especially the lead of the Public Health Agency of Canada while we are in the middle of a global pandemic, to be used as a political tool, as we saw yesterday. It is just not appropriate and, in fact, it has very rarely ever happened. Never has a public servant come before the bar. The last time a private citizen did was in 1913.

For all the differences we have in this place, I really hope we can learn something from yesterday and commit to never doing that again. Politicians are here to be the ones who are in the line of fire, not our public servants, who are doing the incredible work on behalf of Canadians. I will note that my understanding is that that particular public servant has been in executive positions in public health for the last 17 years, which spans multiple governments of different parties.

I did obviously want to speak to the budget implementation act, and I am very proud to be supportive of this. I am very proud not just of the government, but also of this Parliament, for the way it acted 15 or 16 months ago to get supports to Canadians, quite often through unanimous consent motions. We were passing motions in this House to immediately trigger sending money to Canadians who needed it. It was not just because Canadians needed the money, although that is incredibly important, but also because we were encouraging people to stay home.

In the beginning of this pandemic, the objective was to get people to stay home. We did not want people to go out because we did not want them to become infected and for the pandemic to spread. We saw our public service working through the direction of Parliament to send money out in record speeds. When we think about what it did in four short weeks back in March of 2020, it is truly remarkable. I am indeed proud of all members of this Parliament for working together.

I know different parties had different ideas about how much the wage subsidy should be, and I think we ended up with better proposals and better policies as a result of those deliberations and discussions. I am very relieved to see this budget, and it looks like it will be supported and that it will pass, so we can continue those supports through to the end of this pandemic.

We see the light at the end of the tunnel. We can see what is coming, and we can see we are going to be, fingers crossed, in a much better position in the coming weeks and months in terms of relaxing restrictions throughout the country. We can see Canadians will be getting back to life like it was before the pandemic.

I think knowing the government and Parliament were there for them genuinely means a lot to Canadians because, when it was necessary to provide the supports, the government, and indeed Parliament, had their backs. It is extremely rewarding for me personally to see that we were able to do that.

I also think there is a great opportunity here. I will choose my words carefully, because when our Minister of Finance said that there was a political opportunity she was pounced on and her words were taken out of context. At the heart of this, there is an opportunity in all of this to look at the way in which Canadians are supported, where we can do better and where we can make corrections. For example, long-term care homes and developing national standards on long-term care homes is something we can do better in.

This pandemic has provided us with an opportunity to say that we failed many seniors in long-term care homes and must do better. It is a provincial jurisdiction, and I certainly do not want to reopen the debate with the Bloc Québécois about who is responsible for what. I totally accept provinces are responsible for long-term care, but the federal government could play a leadership role in defining how we can develop some long-term care standards, just like we do with our national building code, as one example.

We can also look at this as an opportunity to say we need to invest in our economy now if we want to come roaring out of this and ask ourselves where the best place is to invest right now. If we look throughout the world, we see new technologies developing.

● (1310)

There is an opportunity here for the government to determine if it should continue to invest just in traditional infrastructure like roads and bridges or also look at some of these new technologies. We could help businesses develop them so these technologies and new opportunities can continue to spin off for years and decades to come.

Therefore, I think it is entirely appropriate to look at where we can position ourselves in the global economy in the years to come and use that as a strategy for where to invest money now. It is incredibly indicative of the government to take that approach and quite frankly for any government would take that approach.

I find it concerning and unfortunate that the words of the Minister of Finance were taken out of context when she said that there is a political opportunity to look at child care. The opposition clipped half of her sentence, because what she was really saying is there is a political opportunity to look at the way we are approaching child care.

I am very happy to see the budget announcement on child care. I will start off by saying we probably owe to the Province of Quebec for the desire and need to move toward more affordable child care. Quite frankly, it has done an incredible job of showing what child care supports can mean to individual families and some of the burden it relieves.

It has recognized that, in 2021, it is not only the responsibility of parents to raise children, but also that of our collective society. That is where child care comes in, and why I think we are better off as Canadians because of Quebec's experience with child care.

Not only has Quebec seen an increase in people in the workforce as a result of its incredibly good child care program, it has particularly seen more women in the workforce, which is incredibly important because, more often than not, it is women who end up staying at home with the children. By using child care opportunities to help subsidize those costs, Quebec has seen more women enter the workforce, which has contributed to more economic activity, which means more income taxes paid. It has also contributed to more women pursuing the entrepreneurial desires they may have held back on because they chose to or were expected to stay at home with children.

Therefore, I look at this child care plan in the budget as not only a support for families, but also as an economic opportunity to unleash into the marketplace and the labour force those people who want to work, but for one reason or another, based on their family situation and young children, have chosen not to participate. That would result in more people working and paying taxes.

This would also result in having more entrepreneurs and people running family businesses, generating income and creating ideas, which would be better for our entire society and indeed all Canadians. Therefore, as the government strives to provide more supports with respect to child care, I hope it takes a long, hard look at the incredibly efficient model Quebec has produced and how it has changed the labour force, according to the statistics that have come out.

I will also touch briefly on seniors and the OAS. I know that has been coming up a lot. In particular, there has been a lot of criticism about how the increase should be for every senior over the age of 65, which is a really good talking point. It sells well and delivers well when the Bloc and NDP members continually bring it up. However, the reality of the situation is that the longer seniors are in retirement, the more of their savings they go through and the less they have as they get older. This is not the case for every senior, but it is the case for low-income seniors in particular.

• (1315)

The government had a choice here. It could either increase the amount for everybody or increase it even more for those aged 75 and over. Of course, in response to that, we are asked why we did

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not increase it for everybody. Well, there are limitations. There are budgetary limitations and decisions that have to be made from time to time with respect to how much money to spend. I think the government is trying to balance the objective of having meaningful supports with the genuine need for them.

I do not hold the NDP and the Bloc entirely in disdain, for lack of a better expression, for using that argument. I think it is a very effective political argument, so I can appreciate why they are doing it, but I think it is important to recognize why the current approach is the right one.

Finally, I want to talk about the debt incurred as a result of the pandemic, because I know that has been coming up a lot. The reality of the situation is that if we had told any member of the House two years ago that the debt would be over a trillion dollars, they would have probably laughed and said nothing. When I think back to the first majority Parliament session that I was a part of, I remember that people were harping about an extra \$10 billion being spent or said the deficit was supposed to be \$10 billion and it ended up being \$20 billion.

We are now talking about hundreds of billions of dollars. It is over a trillion dollars. Indeed it is a lot of money, but the choices were quite clear: Do we invest in Canadians so that we can come out of this in a much better position, or do we leave people on their own? It is not a Liberal, Conservative or NDP thing. Every member agreed on it. Every member voted in favour of it, and we had unanimous consent motions to spend the money because members knew it had to be done.

As I indicated in a question for the member for New Westminster—Burnaby earlier, this was acceptable because every country did the same thing. Every country took on incredible amounts of debt. If Canada had been the only country that took on this kind of debt, it would have been detrimental to a lot of our policies. It would have sent companies running out of the country. It would have done a whole bunch of other things that could have been seen as extremely negative.

The reality is that all of the ally countries that we interact with in the marketplace through commerce and our various trading relationships did the exact same thing. We are going through this together with our partner nations. Also, we had an incredible debt-to-GDP ratio going into the pandemic, and if we expect to come out of the COVID recession with relatively similar economic activity, we will have to invest. I genuinely believe that everybody agrees with that. I think that is why everybody, at the end of the day, supported the measures. They recognized that it was important.

I believe that because of the measures we took and because of the spending that was authorized by the House, we will be in a better place when we come out of the pandemic in a few months. Our economy will come roaring back and we will see the debt-to-GDP ratios return to what they were before. We will also see unemployment return to some of the historic lows that we previously had. Why? It is because when we went through this, we did it in the right way. It cost a lot of money, there is no doubt about that, but we did it in conjunction with our global partners and did it in the responsible way according to the vast majority of economists.

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I hope that after my run of 75 consecutive sitting days, this will not be my last opportunity to speak. However, I know I have had my fair share of time over the last 75 days, so if it is, I am entirely content with that. I look forward to questions.

• (1320)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I did not hear the member use his favourite word, according to Open Parliament, which is “Conservatives”, so I want to congratulate him for being able to avoid the rhetoric.

I am grateful that he talked about some things of substance in the budget bill, particularly child care. The federal government has a \$30-billion plan for it. There has been a lot of interest and a lot of feedback on that in my riding. A lot of people are concerned about the costs that are going to be shared with the provinces. People are looking at the finances of the provinces and asking how on earth the provinces will be able to afford their portions of this.

Can the member comment on that?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, it would be a mistake if we tried to develop a national plan that was completely done by the national government. It is indeed something that will be done through collaboration with the provinces. The first stop in this exercise needs to be Quebec. We should have a real thorough look at how it has been so successful at this, and then try to see how we can apply this model to other provinces, respecting the fact that everything is different from province to province to territory.

There is a great opportunity here, and I think the provinces will have to be partners in this. They will have to want it too, which is why it will take negotiations and discussions with the provinces.

To answer the member's question, I do not know what the exact cost will be, but I do know that it is something the feds want to do. If the provinces want to do it, I am sure we can find the solution.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to congratulate our colleague because he is his party's sole representative across the aisle, in the actual House, of course. There are Liberal members who we will not recognize when the Liberals decide to resume sitting in the House.

My question for my colleague is the following: Concerning child care, can he guarantee that Quebec will obtain the full amount that it is due?

• (1325)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I do not know. I guess that will come out in the discussions with the provinces. The formula will be set up through negotiating with Quebec and the rest of the provinces, such as Ontario and Alberta, wherever it may be. If we can replicate Quebec's success, I certainly would not want to try to change the program considerably. We know something already works successfully in Quebec, so I agree that we should be looking at that and having those discussions. If the outcome the member is suggesting is determined to be the best course forward, then I suggest that is what we need to do, if it is why Quebec has been so successful at this.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity now to thank you in public, although I know I had a chance to speak with you privately last week to thank you for your years of service and gentlemanly conduct in the House of Commons. It has really been appreciated by all of us.

To the member for Kingston and the Islands, we have heard repeatedly about the senseless cut in CERB payments that the Liberals have brought in, but there is a similar senseless cut to other pandemic supports. One is very important in my riding: the seasonal agricultural worker program. The federal government has been providing \$1,500 per worker to pay for extra costs, including from the two-week quarantine and charter flights from Jamaica, Mexico and Central America, because there are no public flights. These costs are not going down any time soon, yet this benefit is being cut in half right now, to \$750.

I wonder if the member could comment on where the sense in that is.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, it is important to recognize that these programs were never designed to be there forever. There needs to be a transition away from them. There needs to be a transition back to regular life, so to speak, that does not depend on these programs specifically.

There will be some industries that are affected for quite some time. A good friend of mine is an audio engineer who works at a lot of big concerts and conventions. His industry was one of the first to be hit. He went from having six months' worth of work ahead of him to having absolutely nothing in 48 hours, and it will be one of the last industries to come back, later on. He is equally worried about these kinds of supports and what the changes are going to mean.

Will we have to continue to revisit this and look at new opportunities to support people? I think that is the fair thing to do, and I hope we will be able to consider the people who will be impacted by the pandemic for longer than others.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me say, and not in a back room in a private conversation, that you are awesome. Thank you for your service.

To the member for Kingston and the Islands, the demographics in this country are getting older, and we know that means there will be less of a tax base for governments, both provincial and federal. We also know that there has been criticism, even from the member's own party. Mark Carney has said publicly that this is not a growth-oriented budget and so has David Dodge, both former governors of the Bank of Canada. We need to see more investments for the long term that make us more productive, but unfortunately it seems that the government is only focused on consumption today.

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I agree that making sure people have supports during the pandemic is important, but why is the government always fixated on giving people money for things that will not build long-term value in the way that we need for growing this economy to help support public services, like health care, that we all depend on?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I could not disagree more. There is a reality, and I spent a lot of time talking about child care, for example. That is not about just giving people money right now to deal with their children; it is a long-term growth strategy.

The member asked how we are going to get more people into the economy. I submit that one of the ways we are going to do that is by unleashing the economic potential of the many people who are stuck at home taking care of their kids. That is not a bad thing, because a lot of people want to do that, but there are a lot of people who would also like to be working.

To the member's point specifically about how we deal with the labour shrinkage, it is in the budget. Child care is one way. However, it is not something that will work when we start spending the money. It is going to take years to get to a point where the labour force has the injection. To that point, we need to be investing in ways and in places that are going to help our labour market later on.

• (1330)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague why the Liberals absolutely do not want to provide stable and adequate funding for health care systems by increasing health transfers.

Health care systems in Quebec and the provinces have reached the breaking point. Cuts in health transfers have left them with insufficient funding. In the meantime, the Liberal government is meddling in Quebec's jurisdictions with its spending power.

Why not increase health transfers, as Quebec and all the provinces are asking?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I do not think my intervention would be complete without a question from the Bloc Québécois about health transfers. It is my understanding, at least from what I have heard the Prime Minister say in the House over the last several months and from discussions out there in the public, that it is the intention of the government to revisit this issue. Could it have been done in this particular budget? I think everything that has been going on with the pandemic, as we get through it and focus on it, has made it more difficult to do. However, there is an opportunity, as we move into the future, to have those discussions.

I know that people within our party are talking about it. I certainly hear it a lot from the Bloc Québécois, and I hear it from the Conservatives. I think there is an opportunity here, but it was perhaps too challenging to accomplish in this budget in addition to all of the other stuff that needed attention.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise on behalf of the good people of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola. Let me in-

form you, Mr. Speaker, that you will have a much more enlightened speaker because I plan on sharing my time with the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London, who, I am sure, will do a fantastic job.

From a parliamentary perspective, we live in dangerous times. I say that because I would like to take us all back to 2015 and a comment that this Prime Minister shared with Canadians. “[W]e are committed to delivering real change in the way that government works”, said the Prime Minister. He followed up with, “It means setting a higher bar for openness and transparency, something needed if this House is to regain the confidence and trust of Canadians.”

When we look at the actions of this Prime Minister today, it is profoundly obvious that this PM had absolutely zero intention of honouring those words to Canadians. In fact, as is so often the case with this Prime Minister, it is all just words. The actions are always at odds with reality. Look at where we are here with this omnibus budget bill from a Prime Minister who had promised he would not use omnibus budget bills, promised he would not use prorogation, and promised he would deliver a balanced budget, cast in stone, in 2019. He also promised openness by default.

I could go on and on, but we are not here today to debate the character of this Prime Minister. We are here to debate the omnibus budget bill, Bill C-30, a bill that the finance minister has repeatedly stated, if it were not to pass, would be the single greatest threat facing Canadians. Honestly, the finance minister said that multiple times in question period. Here we have a government that tells us we do not need a budget for over two years, and suddenly not having a budget is the greatest economic threat facing Canadians. What unbelievable arrogance that is.

In reality, this budget is really about furthering the Liberals' electoral chances. I would submit it that does not do so. It is not in the long-term best interests of Canadians. However, in my view, this is a Prime Minister who will always place his needs and those of his powerful friends and insiders ahead of the needs of everyday Canadians.

People should not just take my word for it, but read very carefully the many criticisms of this budget bill. They come from prominent people not accustomed to criticizing Liberal government budget bills: Parliamentary Budget Officer, Yves Giroux; former Bank of Canada governors, both David Dodge and Mark Carney; and even former senior Liberal adviser Robert Asselin. They have all provided well-articulated concerns over this budget. To summarize them, ultimately this bill proposes to spend money that the government does not have to spend and, according to these critics and many other experts, does not need to spend.

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However, that is what this Prime Minister does. He believes he can spend his way out of any problem or circumstance, but that in itself creates problems. Let us look at our communities' local downtown. If they are anything like the communities in my riding, there are increasingly more help-wanted signs out there. A huge number of small and medium-sized business owners have said they cannot get people to work.

I am going to share something with this place. Recently, my Summerland office was contacted by a woman, and we will call her "Nathalie". Nathalie is very concerned about her brother, whom we will call "Doug". Doug has a trade. Unlike some trades, Doug got very busy during the pandemic. Last fall, Doug decided to quit his job so he could collect the CERB. Granted the system was not supposed to work that way, but it was, by design, set up so people like Doug absolutely could quit their job and still collect it. At the time, Doug told his family it was just for the winter months and he would go back to work in the spring. Over the winter months, Doug began drinking. His drinking led to the loss of his place. The family now says Doug lives in a recreational vehicle. He collects the Canada recovery benefit and spends most of the time drinking. Doug now refuses to return to the workplace. Doug's position is that he paid the government EI and taxes for years and now he is owed this money, and not working while he is collecting benefits is his way of getting even with the government.

● (1335)

I am not suggesting for a moment that everyone collecting benefits is in Doug's situation, but speaking with many who work with individuals in addiction and recovered, many will share privately just how damaging the CRB has been and how it has derailed many recovering addicts. The problem remains that the Liberal government has absolutely no exit plan that ultimately will help people like Doug return to the workforce.

Indeed, according to the Prime Minister, people like Doug do not exist. Some will say if only employers paid more, we would not have this problem. However, in Doug's case, he had a trade that provided net take-home pay of \$60,000. Doug can make much more money returning to work, however, the \$2,000 a month he collects now is enough money that Doug can choose not to work.

I come back to all those help-wanted signs. A local small business owner told me his small business could survive the pandemic, but he was less sure it could survive the government assistance programs like CRB. I am not raising this to be partisan, I am raising this because this budget by design extends all of these benefits into September and it does this by design because the Prime Minister wants to go into an election where everyone is still getting paid those benefits. He wants to use the payment of these benefits as an election issue. That is ultimately what the bill proposes; that and massive amounts of spending that even former Liberals and friendly experts have said is excessive and largely unnecessary.

However, when it comes to winning power, we know that the Prime Minister is capable of basically anything. We know from his many promises in 2015, he will say basically anything. We know from his governance, from prorogation to multiple Liberal filibusters, to being found in contempt of Parliament, he is capable of

doing anything to remain in power. Indeed, Bill C-30 is just another example of this.

Is there seriously a person in this place who does not believe that Canada needs an exit plan to get Canadians back into the workforce? I am starting to think that maybe there are some who believe we can continue on this current path that the Parliamentary Budget Office has repeatedly told us is not sustainable. Do we listen? Bill C-30 suggests we are not listening. Indeed, even raising these issues is rarely done.

We all know that there are people like Doug out there who are struggling. This budget fails people like Doug. This budget fails the many small business owners who need Doug back in the workplace. Let us hope that he can rejoin the workforce. His sister Nathalie blames the government programs. She pointed out EI, as one example, never used to work this way. She asked how long can the government continue to pay people benefits that they do not qualify for. It is a fair question, yet I do not hear any member of the Liberal government ask this question.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has raised it. Various ministers have promised to address it, but when the opposition has raised it, they never do. We all know that the EI system ultimately has to be sustainable and currently it is not sustainable. The government has no plan to address this. This should trouble all of us because ultimately we need to defend the integrity of the programs that Canadians depend on. We are collectively failing to do that.

It is just not responsible. This is ultimately what troubles me so greatly about Bill C-30. It is great for a Prime Minister trying to stay in power, however, it maximizes short-term political gain for long-term pain that will be felt by future generations of Canadians.

Somehow in this place, we have drifted away from long-term thinking, of building a foundation for the success and prosperity of future generations of Canada. Worse, we have seen this movie before, as it was the former Liberal governments that made some very difficult and unpopular decisions, but necessary decisions. Many of what I refer to as traditional Liberals, at least in my riding, wonder where the Liberal Party has gone.

Before I close, I will leave with one final note. When the finance minister introduced this budget, she told us that we must "build a more resilient Canada; better, more fair, more prosperous, and more innovative".

● (1340)

We should all ask ourselves who has been governing this country for the past five years to have made Canada so unresilient, so unfair, so unprosperous and so lacking in innovation. We all know the answer to the question. This budget bill, Bill C-30, simply offers more of the same.

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Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola is a real champion for the wine industry, which is very important in the Okanagan, and has a private member's bill that could help the wine industry. I am worried that, with the constant rumours about an election, that private member's bill will not make it onto the Order Paper in this Parliament.

I would like to give the member the opportunity to talk about the situation that we have seen with the wine industry losing the excise tax exemption through a WTO challenge. The government has a promise of funding in this budget, \$101 million over two years, but now we hear it has back-loaded that promise so that only a third of the money will come in the coming fiscal year. This is a time when the wine industry has really been suffering, like a lot of sectors.

I am wondering if the member could comment on that decision by the government.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, obviously small family wineries, small craft breweries and artisan distillers are hurting. The foot traffic is gone, tourism has dropped, people are not buying from them and they are often going to liquor monopolies, so this is a big issue.

My Bill C-260 deals with trying to get around provincial liquor monopolies. I will let the member know that the leader of the official opposition gave a speech to the Penticton and Wine Country Chamber of Commerce where the question was asked: What if this bill dies on the Order Paper? Guess what, we are going to be campaigning on this so that we can bring some resiliency and opportunities to that industry.

In 2015, I said that the Liberals would say anything, then disregard what they said, do what is right for them and not the long-term interests of Canadians. They are doing the same thing to the wine industry, and it is wrong.

• (1345)

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is lots of talk in this budget about training for new jobs, green jobs, jobs that are not here yet. Does the member have any idea what specific jobs the government is talking about that people will be retrained for? In my province, people want to know where these new jobs are, how they are going to get started and what these training programs are going to do for them in the near future, not looking out five years.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, this is one area where the government continually talks a game about innovation and skills. Kevin Page, former parliamentary budget officer, is now heading up the University of Ottawa's Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy. It is a think tank that analyzes these issues. When the government first came to power, it was presented with a report from the think tank that showed that for years it has been funding employment skills training with tens of billions of dollars and it has never been reviewed. When we look through it, and I met with the expert who penned the report, there are no metrics. The government continually adds more rhetoric and more money, but there are never any results.

That is the big problem. We are not thinking in terms of the long-term interests of Canadians. With our demographics and the pan-

demie debt, we have to start asking the tough questions. We cannot let the Liberal government and the Prime Minister slide by with nice words and a quick wave. My community deserves better than the government is offering.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, I get to speak to you while you are in the Chair. To anyone who is tuning in right now, I wish all the best to the Speaker in the Chair right now. I know that the next chapter of your life will be very fulsome. It has been wonderful working with you. Hopefully, we will be able to work together again in September.

I will continue with some of my thanks. I know so many people are involved in making sure that this chamber can run. I am thinking of all the House staff, the interpreters about whom we have heard so much, making sure we are not popping in the mike, the technical support folks for the hybrid virtual Parliament who have been very busy, and the table staff, especially one of my favourites, André Gagnon. I have always said that he is going to be stuck in my living room forever, because one of my favourite photos is of him and me at my second swearing in. Thanks to all of the great people working in our House and making sure the democracy of Canada continues.

It truly has been a great pleasure serving in the 43rd Parliament, 2nd session, as the deputy House leader for the Conservative Party. There has been a lot of learning to do and a lot of procedural things, as well. All of us are working together to get that done.

I thank my colleague who spoke before me, because when we talk about results, that is something we really focus on. I would like to see results. When I first got here in 2015, we would talk about the government. We would talk about what we had done in government for nine and a half years, and some of the positive changes that we saw here in Canada. Some very good legislation was put forward. Every single time I was on a panel, I recall that the words used against me were, "Ms. Vecchio, that's rich." Those were the words of our Liberal government members, all of the time: "That is rich," any time we asked for something to be justified or asked for verification on things.

The government just does not want to answer. When we see an omnibus bill like this budget implementation bill, we should not be surprised. When we try to have debates, we should not be surprised when we do not get answers. I know that shortly we will be going into Question Period where that will continue.

Government Orders

In this Parliament specifically, we have seen things, such as the WE scandal, prorogation and Bill C-19 being done wrong. I want to focus on that. As of yesterday, Bill C-19 was reported back and tabled in the House of Commons. The fear that I have, and the fear that I think so many other Canadians should have, is that we are putting forward bills that have no witnesses coming to talk about these things. When we wanted to discuss Bill C-19, there was a motion to have important organizations representing everyone from seniors to people with disabilities look at this legislation and ask what it means. We were looking to speak to chief electoral officers who were on the ground and could talk about some of the things we needed to do.

What would a pandemic election look like in London North Centre or London West? I am looking at the member of Parliament for London West right now. What would it look like for London West? What would it look like for Elgin—Middlesex—London? I am seeing that special member look at me right now. I would like to thank her for all of the work that she has done. It has been great having a person beside me in London West who is part of the government and who has always ensured that when I give her a call, she knows what is happening in Elgin—Middlesex—London.

On behalf of all the constituents of Elgin—Middlesex—London, on behalf of my municipalities, I know I can call that member and say that we need an announcement, and the member for London West will ensure that announcement is made. If it is sitting on a minister's table, she is one person I know who can get it done. I really appreciate all of her hard work.

Moving on, when I am talking about some important things, I see that we are truly not doing what we should always be doing. We talk about due diligence. Last night, I got to listen to the member for Winnipeg North talk about the Conservatives and how awful they are. Although the word "corrupt" was not being used, he loved to use the word "obstruction."

I will tell Canadians what obstruction looks like. Obstruction looks like 101 days in a filibuster when we are talking about prorogation of the government. That is what obstruction looks like. I love looking at the member, because he is laughing. I think it is because he knows exactly what I am getting at. He knows. He has been in politics for over 30 years. He knows how to wing this. He knows when we are playing these games, and we know that when the member for Winnipeg North is coming to a committee, the plan is to filibuster. When some of the greatest speakers who can speak 700 or 800 times in Parliament are brought in, we know the government is bringing in the big guns to filibuster. I would like to commend my colleague for Winnipeg North because that is exactly the type of work that they are able to do.

• (1350)

We have seen committee reports delayed. As the former chair of the status of women and as the former shadow minister of the status of women, I am really concerned that the defence committee could not table a report. Why it could not table a report, I think, has to do with the obstruction in committee. There has not just been obstruction in the Procedure and House Affairs committee. There has been obstruction in the committees for defence, ethics and any other committee in which the reports and information going forward are

not to the liking of the government. That is just the type of thing that I have been seeing.

I do a lot of outreach as well in my riding. When reflecting on this budget, what do we see and what is important? I like to go out and speak to my constituents. We do a lot of householders. We do a lot of mailers and get a lot of information back. I would say that we probably got the most information back ever from replies to our last householder. We looked at that data. Do not worry. We were not using Liberalist. We actually looked at this data in our own office to see what my constituents were saying. I did not send it off to somebody to ask them to please look at it analytically and then let us know, while targeting my voters. I actually wanted to hear what they have to say. It is not just about how I am going to get their vote the next time. I want to be sure that I am serving them with a purpose.

However, 66% of our respondents believe there should be an increase in health care funding to the provinces. The government can talk about the funding put forward through this pandemic when it comes to health care. It did have to put some forward, but why? It was not prepared for a pandemic. It had taken some of the money and it had taken some of the programs. We know that the system to alert us of a coming pandemic and its impacts was not there. The information we should have been able to receive was not there because of some cuts and things they were doing while thinking that it was not important.

Sixty-six percent of our respondents believe there needs to be more money put into this health care system, but in this budget we do not see an increase in health care. We can see some things when it comes to pandemic spending, but as the former speaker talked about, we need to look at long-term plans as well. They cannot just be short-term. They cannot just be about how we get people voting for us today. It is about how we can provide good lives and better opportunities for them.

Coming from a farming community, one thing I always talk about is sowing the field. How do we prepare the field so that people can be the best crop possible? How do we encourage great growth? I look at all of these programs coming forward from the government and I am very concerned. What do we see for these people moving forward? I look at my son, who is 27 years old, and know that if he were to try to purchase a house in Elgin—Middlesex—London and put down the \$20,000 he has been able to save, it would get him nothing. Why? It is because we have seen a 46% increase in housing prices in my area alone.

Those are some of the things that I think the government needs to tackle, along with the fact that we see inflation going higher and higher. That inflation is going to impact us greatly, especially if the interest rates go up.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS***[English]***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, my congratulations to all the graduates of 2021. They are resilient, and I hope the challenges they have faced during their education will help them be flexible and creative as they continue on their life's journey. Enjoy the summer.

COVID-19 is not over yet. As we reopen, we need to remain vigilant to the threat that the variants pose to public health. It is also important to acknowledge that many people and businesses are still facing financial insecurity and the stress that comes with it.

The pandemic has shown us what is possible when we unite to face an emergency. We need that same approach to transform our economy, to put people and the planet before corporate profits. The climate emergency and biodiversity crisis demand nothing less.

I am committed to this work, and I pledge to work collaboratively to get it done. Together, we can do this.

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● (1400)

CLASS OF 2021

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my most sincere congratulations to all 2021 graduates in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie.

Happy graduation to the students of Sault College, Algoma University, École Notre-Dame-du-Saul, St. Mary's College, Korah Collegiate, Superior Heights Collegiate, White Pines Collegiate, the alternative and adult learning centres, and, of course, all the amazing grade eight graduates.

This has been a challenging year to be graduating, but these graduates have shown incredible perseverance and should be very proud of their accomplishments. I know that I am, as are their parents, relatives and friends.

Whether they are entering the workforce or returning to school in the fall, I know that the next chapter of their lives will bring great things for them.

As a reminder, the federal government has invested record-breaking dollars into the Canada summer jobs program, creating over 580 youth job opportunities locally, so visit the Canada Job Bank online for more info.

For the 2021 graduates, who are outstanding members of the community, I wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

I look at my own children who want to buy houses. The rates for getting a mortgage are awesome, but how can they buy houses when the prices start at almost half a million dollars? How are they ever going to get into the housing market and out of renting? I think that 55% of renters have been paying more in the last six months than they were before. How are people able to move forward and go up the housing ladder? How will they be able to go from being renters to being home owners and into those next homes for retirement? How will they be able to do that? I just do not see the path, unfortunately. I am very concerned with that.

We have 73% of respondents who were concerned about Bill C-10, which we voted on last night. At about 1:30 a.m. we saw that some amendments went through. We also saw the bill pass, unfortunately. I can tell colleagues that in my riding of Elgin—Middlesex—London this was an issue about which I heard from tons of my constituents. They said they did not want Bill C-10, and that they believed it needed to be amended. The amendments we put forward did not, unfortunately, go through.

Finally, 86% of respondents were concerned about the level of debt in this budget. These are the types of things I talk about.

● (1355)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I reflect on standing committees, the potential within them is fairly significant. Some standing committees perform exceptionally well and produce fantastic reports for Canadians.

I am wondering if the member could provide her thoughts on another situation in which we can do fine work if we take out the partisan politics. I am not reflecting on a specific committee, but generally speaking, would she not agree we can see some positive work come out of standing committees when the partisan politics are put to the side, for a little while anyway?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Speaker, I am actually also looking right now on my screen at the Chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. I am the former chair of the status of women committee. Last July we met on July 7 or July 8, I believe, before prorogation. We had a standing committee that worked really well together. It was a minority Parliament so we had a variety of different views. The member for London—Fanshawe was on the committee and we had members from the Toronto area. It was a really good mix.

The report we would have tabled right before prorogation was fantastic, but it has a lot to do with what the interests are. We know in some committees there are topics we really want to work on and then there are committees that are a bit more partisan, so I absolutely agree with the member.

It is always a delight to work with the member for Winnipeg North. He keeps us going.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London will have three and a half minutes for questions and comments when the House next gets back to debate on the question, should she wish to take them.

*Statements by Members***PARLIAMENT HILL**

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is something rotten on Parliament Hill. We have the Centre Block renovations that have become a big, black hole for Canadian taxpayers, with billions of dollars blown through already, over budget, delayed and literally just a big hole on Parliament Hill, and the Liberals are just getting started.

It is now being reported that the once proud national symbol is being “green washed”. The Liberals want to cancel our centennial flame, symbolizing Canadian unity, which has been using Canadian natural gas since the start. The Liberals now want the flame to burn on garbage instead. They would rather truck in garbage dump gases from Montreal than use clean Canadian natural gas.

When will the Liberals stop turning our national symbols into garbage? Canada is not a garbage dump, and the Liberals need to stop treating us like one.

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[*Translation*]**FRANCOPHONE ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION IN OTTAWA**

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of speaking virtually to express my appreciation to the members of the Association pour l'intégration sociale d'Ottawa, or AISO, on the occasion of their annual general meeting, on June 14.

The association is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, and I wanted to thank its members for the essential services they offer in our community. The theme of their AGA was “Our strength is the foundation that brings us together”, a theme that is perfectly aligned with the values they convey in offering services in French to francophones with intellectual disabilities.

In this way, AISO plays a leadership role in promoting and teaching our beloved French language. In the last three decades, it has proven that all we need is a vision and some leadership to accomplish great things.

I wish the whole AISO team a happy 30th anniversary. I hope they keep up the good work.

* * *

TORNADO IN MASCOUCHE

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am still in a state of shock after learning that a tornado struck the heart of Mascouche, in my riding. It took the life of a man, Jacques Lefebvre, and left devastation in its wake.

I would like to extend my condolences on behalf of the Bloc Québécois and myself to the family and friends of Jacques Lefebvre. The whole region is there for them in this time of mourning. My thoughts go out to the 50-some families affected who, today, must deal with the damage and, in some cases, the rubble. I wish them courage.

I invite all the residents of Mascouche and the region to stand together in the days to come. Their friends, relatives, neighbours and

fellow residents have a lot of challenges and work ahead of them. Let us be attentive, generous and kind to one another in the wake of this tragedy that we never thought could happen in our riding.

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[*English*]**MEMBER FOR KANATA—CARLETON**

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to thank the people of Kanata—Carleton and all Canadians. They have inspired me with their tenacity, their generosity, their compassion and their care. We are seeing it even today, with the number of Canadians who are stepping up to get vaccinated so they can look after each other.

My mother's favourite saying was, “It's not happiness that makes you grateful, it's gratefulness that makes you happy”, and we have so very much for which to be grateful.

It is quite an honour to stand here and to thank people for their commitment to a better Canada. If we acknowledge our shortcomings, if we know that we can do better, if we are willing to work hard and if we are willing to let love, kindness and care guide the way, we cannot get it wrong.

I thank them all, and I appreciate everything they have done to make this an even better country. We will just keep going.

* * *

● (1405)

[*Translation*]**LABOUR**

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as Parliament is about to rise, allow me to thank the Chair, all the staff of the House and all my colleagues. It has been impressive to see how adaptable and resilient we are.

This government must now find solutions so that our businesses can emerge from this crisis and share in the economic recovery. The labour shortage is alarming, and this government needs to stop making excuses and put tools in place, such as speeding up and relaxing immigration of workers. Businesses are the backbone of our economy; it would be a shame if they were hit by another crisis in the form of a labour shortage.

The inefficiency of this government can be seen in its inability to find solutions. We must value work, not encourage passivity. I am urging this government to give a boost to Canadian businesses, which are threatened with bankruptcy. We simply need to give them access to labour; it is not complicated. Let us not forget that our businesses are what create economic prosperity, not this ethically deficient, centralizing Liberal government. This government needs to act now.

*Statements by Members**[English]***PETER REGAN**

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, each member of Parliament is able to serve because of people who freely give of their time for a cause larger than themselves. That is the kind of person Peter Regan was.

Last week, Peter passed away as a result of acute myeloid leukemia. He is survived by his devoted wife Lissa; daughters Amy, Sarah, Mary and Leah; his grandchildren Sydney and Thomas; and siblings Shelley, Sue, Judy, John, Mark, Jeff and Shannon.

Peter was dedicated to his family and friends from across Canada and the United States, including his London Knights every Friday night gang, the London Football Referees' Association, the Fanshawe Optimists, his Bell Canada guys, former North London Soccer and London Minor Football teams.

I met Peter seven years ago as a candidate pursuing my party's nomination. The first volunteer to put signs into the ground and the first to take them out, Peter was genuine and kind. People like him are seldom talked about. They ought to be, because they help to make Canada exactly what it is.

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GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has failed Canadians. My constituents in Peace Country are fed up with politicians who claim one thing to get elected and then impose an Ottawa-knows-best, one-size-fits-all fantasy solution to real-world problems.

Peace Country residents have been hit hard by the Liberals' ongoing attack on Alberta's energy sector and the tripling of the carbon tax, and they cannot afford the hyperinflation the Liberals are currently manufacturing. My constituents want representation that actually cares who they are and what they believe, and the effective solutions they have. It is time for a government that will not pit one group of Canadians against another.

Canadians are the solution; they have always been that. Canadians deserve a government that will encourage creativity, innovation, opportunity and prosperity rather than inhibit it through government control and unnecessary regulations. It is time for a government that will respect the people and will be focused on building a future for every Canadian, not just politicians and their friends.

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ISLAMOPHOBIA

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, our country witnessed a horrific tragedy. The Afzaal family, enjoying an evening walk together, became the victims of an abhorrent act of hate and terror that demonstrated the destructive and deadly consequences of Islamophobia. The reality is that this cowardly attack was not an isolated incident.

From London to Toronto to Quebec City to Edmonton, Muslim Canadians have continued to be the subject of Islamophobic at-

tacks, targeted simply because of their faith. Muslim Canadians are hurt, they are angry and they are demanding action.

To the growing Muslim community in my riding of Winnipeg South, which is home to elders, parents, young adults and children who make our neighbourhoods a vibrant place to live, I want them to know we stand with them. I commit to listening to them and to demanding better for them.

It is the responsibility of each one of us to fight against Islamophobia and racism, and to root it out of our communities once and for all.

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● (1410)

REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

Mr. Kenny Chiu (Steveston—Richmond East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year, schools across the country received \$2 billion in funding to see COVID-19 safety measures implemented before the school year began, including schools within SD38, the district where I once held the honour of serving as a board of education trustee.

This year, schools are still facing uncertainty as the pandemic continues. I must bring to the government's attention that vaccines for people 12 years or older alone are not enough. Richmond schools require enhanced sanitization and staff to disinfect high-touch areas. They also need support for essential health and safety supplies and PPE, including child-sized masks and hand sanitizer.

As well, with learners having been greatly impacted by the isolation, mental health supports for students and staff are also critical. There is still work to be done to prepare our nation for reopening and to ensure our children and youth have a safe return to school this fall.

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FORT EDMONTON PARK

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to congratulate Fort Edmonton Management Company for the completion of the Fort Edmonton Park enhancement project, a \$160-million project sponsored by the Government of Canada, the Province of Alberta and the City of Edmonton. As both a board member and an Edmontonian, I am proud to have played a small part in seeing this project come to life.

Oral Questions

Recognized as the largest living history museum in Canada, Fort Edmonton Park will reopen on July 1 with an upgraded utility work, an expanded 1920s midway, a new front entry plaza and, most important, the Indigenous Peoples Experience. This one-of-a-kind transformative experience will immerse our guests in indigenous customs and traditions and highlight the inspirational stories of first nations, Métis and Inuit peoples who have resided on these lands for hundreds of thousands of years. The breathtaking and interactive exhibit tells the story of four seasons and the 13 moons, and is designed to be truly diverse and an inclusive representation of Canada's first peoples.

I look forward to the impacts it will have on my community, the surrounding area of Edmonton and the rest of Canada.

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ATTACK IN LONDON, ONTARIO

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at the request of rabbis in Hamilton and leaders of the Jewish community, I rise today and share an excerpt from their statement of solidarity with the Muslim community after the attack in London. They say:

Once again, the Jewish Community of Hamilton recoils in horror upon learning of the deplorable act of murder perpetrated in London yesterday. We are no less sickened to learn that the murder was a racially motivated, premeditated Islamophobic attack, carried out solely because the victims were Muslims....At this incredibly painful and frightening time, Hamilton's rabbis and its Jewish leadership reach out to our Muslim brothers and sisters and to their sheikhs and imams, extending our empathy, solidarity and support. We cry with you and we mourn with you. We yearn for a day when every human being, whether Indigenous, Muslim or Jewish, Hindu, Sikh, Atheist, Christian or other, can proudly live in this country true to her or his beliefs without a drop of fear. And we pledge to work with you, shoulder to shoulder, to bring this about....We pray for the recovery of the injured child, and that the memories of the murdered ones always be for a blessing.

In tears and hope

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[Translation]

RAÏF BADAWI

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the face of human tragedy, the only thing worse than inaction is promising to act and then doing nothing. That is what the federal government is doing to the family of Raïf Badawi, who has been imprisoned in Saudi Arabia for nine years.

His wife, Ensaf Haidar, wrote to the Minister of Immigration and the Prime Minister this morning, reminding them that all members of the House, including the minister and the Prime Minister, agreed that Canada should grant citizenship to Raïf Badawi. She also reminded them that the Quebec National Assembly and the Senate also support that request. Everyone is calling on Ottawa to take action.

The saddest part of her letter is that Ms. Haidar expresses doubt, perhaps for the first time, that her husband will be able to serve his full prison sentence before Ottawa finally takes action. I still believe this government is better than that. It is not too late. The government needs to honour its promise and make Raïf Badawi a citizen.

• (1415)

[English]

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the pandemic has laid bare the state of our institutions. There is no governor general because of scandal. Eight senior leaders of the Canadian Armed Forces have resigned or have been forced out. We have military procurement systems that cannot procure, and we have payroll systems that cannot pay.

We have a government that thought it appropriate a year ago to introduce legislation that would have suspended the powers of Parliament over taxation and spending until the end of this calendar year. We have a government that prorogued Parliament to shut down committee investigations. We have a government that continues to defy four orders of this House and its committee to hand over documents related to serious breaches at the Winnipeg lab, which is now preventing this Parliament from doing its job.

The government is in contempt of Parliament. The government does not deserve another mandate. The government must go.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my thoughts and prayers are with three beautiful, innocent children who were attending a birthday party on a warm summer night. What should have been a happy occasion, filled with children's laughter, quickly turned to tragedy when a one-year-old, a five-year-old and an 11-year-old were hit by gunfire. Our community is outraged by this brazen, disgusting and horrific attack. We are grateful two of the injured children have been released from hospital, while we keep a little girl who is in critical condition in all our hearts.

Firing a gun anywhere at any time in our communities is unacceptable. We cannot tolerate violence, especially when it threatens the lives of children in our communities. The perpetrators of this heinous crime must be brought to justice. We thank 23 Division of the Toronto Police Service for working non-stop to find those responsible. We must strengthen our efforts to end gun violence and heal our communities.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the sexual misconduct scandal within the Canadian Armed Forces and the Minister of National Defence's indifference have gone from a crisis to a tragedy.

This morning the ombudsman spoke about political interference, the absence of ministerial responsibility and cover-ups by the Liberals. When will the Prime Minister take responsibility for his actions?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are fully committed to making structural and cultural changes at the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, and we have already taken steps to do so.

We appointed Lieutenant General Jennie Carignan as chief of professional conduct and culture. We also recently appointed Louise Arbour to conduct an independent investigation into the handling of sexual misconduct.

In budget 2021, we committed to allocating more than \$236 million to combat sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces. We will continue to do what is necessary to ensure that everyone who serves in the armed forces is protected and supported.

[English]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the defence ombudsman said that the sexual misconduct cover-up in our military has gone from a crisis to a tragedy. He said the government's actions and failures have eroded trust in our military.

Unlike the Prime Minister, the Conservatives have a five-point plan to secure our future and to restore accountability to Ottawa and institutions like our military. Rather than ask a question to have the Prime Minister read something back to me, I just want to say to Canadians, we will clean up this mess in Ottawa.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the day we came to office in 2015, we have been focused on creating a fairer, more just Canada for everyone and that means standing up for women's rights. That means moving forward on fighting sexual harassment and discrimination in workplaces, including the Canadian Armed Forces. It means reconciliation. It means doing the hard lifting that had not been done over 10 years of a Conservative government.

That is exactly what we have been focused on for the past five years. We have made significant progress, but absolutely, there is much more to do. We will continue to do the hard work of delivering for all Canadians.

* * *

• (1420)

ETHICS

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only hard work the Prime Minister has been delivering on is for his friends. Yesterday, we learned the Prime Minister forced almost all Liberal MPs to give taxpayer dollars to his lifetime friend Tom Pitfield. Mr. Pitfield is not just the Prime Minister's buddy; he is also married to the former Liberal Party president. It certainly pays to be a Liberal insider in Ottawa these days.

We know of at least 149 contracts given to Mr. Pitfield. Can the Prime Minister assure the House that no more government contracts went to him?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as all members in the House know, it is critical for members of Parliament to keep track of their constituents' concerns, the matters they bring to their attention and the issues that need to be addressed. All politicians do that. All members of Parliament do that.

We have a data management system that is entirely separate from the functioning of political parties. That is something that continues to matter, and we have followed all the rules and principles that guide the separation of politics from the work for constituents.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only thing the Prime Minister keeps track of is how his friends and insiders are doing, from SNC-Lavalin to WE to Mr. Pitfield.

Mr. Pitfield is the Prime Minister's lifetime friend. He stood in the Prime Minister's wedding party. They even took an illegal trip to a billionaire's island together.

Canadians cannot afford more of this insider dealing and corruption. Can the Prime Minister assure the House that he never personally approved a contract with Tom Pitfield or Data Sciences?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, throughout this pandemic, we have been focused on supporting Canadians who need help, and that is exactly what we have done. Whether it was the millions of Canadians helped by the Canada emergency response benefit or the expanded EI, or whether it was the workers in small businesses we have been able to support with the wage subsidy, our focus through this pandemic has been on being there for Canadians, and that is exactly what we have done.

While Conservatives have nothing to do but try to sling mud and see what sticks, we are going to stay focused on Canadians. Let them focus on me. I will focus on people who really need the help right across the country.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will see if this sticks.

There is a contract from the Prime Minister, in this pandemic, to his good friend Mr. Pitfield. His office also ensured that 148 other members of Parliament gave taxpayer money to the Prime Minister's lifetime friend. In the midst of a pandemic, Mr. Pitfield runs a Liberal list. People need to be on a Liberal list to be a judge in the Liberal government's Canada.

Will the Prime Minister apologize today for putting the interests of his friends ahead of the interests of Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Conservatives will never let the facts get in the way of a good political attack, unfortunately. Canadians deserve better than that. Fortunately, we have a government that is entirely focused on that.

Oral Questions

In terms of managing the needs of our constituents, MPs across all different parties use database management systems to support Canadians. I can assure members that we are following all the rules in keeping those databases separate and, indeed, ensuring that House resources are used for constituency business and not political purposes. The other parties cannot say that the same way.

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[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Prime Minister is announcing measures at the border without thought to the consequences of his ad libbing.

This time, he is loosening health guidelines for people who are fully vaccinated, but not for their children, who will still have to quarantine. There is also no easing of restrictions for people who contracted COVID-19 and who are not allowed a second dose, nor for vaccinated international travellers. From start to finish, it is confusion and ad libbing.

Has the Prime Minister learned nothing during the year and a half of the pandemic?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, what we have presented is a gradual and responsible plan to reopen our borders.

Starting July 5, we will allow every fully vaccinated traveller to forgo quarantine in order to facilitate a gradual reopening. We will have other measures to announce in the weeks to come, as Canadians get vaccinated, because our decisions are always based on the need to ensure, first and foremost, the health and safety of all Canadians—

• (1425)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is not terribly clear for those who did not have to quarantine.

The Prime Minister is telling us that everything he is announcing now will no longer be valid as of July 21. On July 21, in the middle of summer, when no one is watching the news anymore, Ottawa is going to again change the rules and the way the border is managed and create even more confusion.

We need clear rules. We need simple rules that have been agreed upon with Quebec public health. There are more variables in the way the borders are being managed than there are variants in the world.

Can the Prime Minister explain how he is making reopening the borders even more confusing than closing them?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that the leader of the Bloc Québécois wants simple answers, but we are in the midst of a complicated pandemic. We are going to have to look at how vaccination efforts in Canada are going, what is happening with the variants across Canada, the new cases that are cropping up in various regions and what is happening internationally.

We will continue to proceed with a responsible reopening plan in partnership with the provinces and territories to ensure that we keep Canadians safe and healthy every step of the way. That is what people expect.

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the military ombudsman stated that vested political interests complicate his office's ability to do its work. This is outrageous.

He goes on to say that when the Liberal government refuses to listen to his office's recommendations in order to advance political interests, its self-preservation or career advancement, then members of the defence community suffer. Specifically, women suffer because there continues to be a climate that is conducive to sexual misconduct against women.

What is it going to take for the Prime Minister to fix this?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since we arrived in power in 2015, we have been completely and totally committed to structural and cultural change in addressing sexual assault, all across Canada, including in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Recently we have taken concrete actions on top of previous actions to address this, including naming Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan as the chief of professional conduct and culture, appointing Louise Arbour to conduct an independent review of the treatment of sexual misconduct, and committing over \$236 million in budget 2021 to combatting sexual misconduct in the CAF.

We will do more. We will continue to work hard on this to end the culture of acceptance and tolerance of misogyny, and—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Burnaby South.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the choices that this government and this Prime Minister are making. In a few weeks, the Prime Minister is going to cut assistance for people who need \$800 a month, but he is not doing anything to prevent tax evasion by the ultra-rich. That is a choice.

Why is the Prime Minister turning a blind eye to tax evasion by the ultra-rich while cutting assistance for people who need it?

*Oral Questions***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the start of this pandemic, we promised Canadians that we would be there with all the help they needed for as long as it takes. That is exactly what we are doing.

We hope that the budget will be passed in the House by tomorrow so that we can continue to provide assistance to Canadians who need it in the coming months. I hope the NDP will support us.

We will continue our work to combat tax evasion and tax avoidance because everyone needs to pay their fair share of taxes.

* * *

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have come to expect the same thing from the Liberal government: constant scandals and ethical breaches and that Liberal insiders will always get the inside track.

Now it has come out that Liberal MPs are funnelling taxpayer dollars to the Prime Minister's close friend Tom Pitfield, and for what? The Liberals do not even know. This could not fit the Liberal MO any better.

Who coordinated this scheme for Liberal MPs to cut cheques to the Prime Minister's buddy?

● (1430)

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, is that the same guy who tried to shut down Parliament a couple of weeks ago? He is part of a group that refused to work longer hours to help Canadians. They filibustered important work we are doing for Canadians, and what are they doing now? They are just trying to change the channel. They should stop wasting time and help us help Canadians.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the government House leader holds me in such high esteem that after he shut down Parliament during a pandemic and his members supported the pro-rogation and filibustered across all kinds of committees, he wants to talk about me instead of talking about the fact that he and his colleagues are funnelling taxpayer dollars to support Liberal Party back office and black ops. As we have seen before, whenever there is a racket to be run in the government, we can be sure that those closest to the Prime Minister are involved.

Will the Prime Minister tell Canadians who gave the order for Liberal MPs to funnel taxpayer money to the PM's pal?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there they go again: personal attacks on well-respected individuals. They keep doing that. Why? They want to hide their failure. They refuse to work. We remember a couple of weeks ago when it was 10 a.m., when people go to work, and the Conservatives decided they had worked enough and should go home. They refuse to work longer hours to adopt important legislation and they filibuster. If they do not want to help, they should get out of the way and let us help Canadians.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence is under fire again. This time, the military ombudsman, Gregory Lick, who reports directly to the minister, had this to say about the minister's failure to act on military sexual misconduct: "When leaders turn a blind eye to our recommendations and concerns in order to advance political interests and their own self-preservation or career advancement, it is the members of the defence community that suffer the consequences".

Will the minister face reality, quit putting his own career ahead of the women and men in uniform, do the right thing and resign?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite continues to play political games. As he very well knows, from the time that I joined and the time that I left and currently, what I am doing is making sure we look after our troops. We know we have a lot more work to do. The work we began in 2015, we are going to get it done. Where the member opposite cut, when he was the parliamentary secretary for national defence when the Conservatives were in government, we invested. We have a lot more work to do, and we will get it done.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know there have been two military ombudsmen who have said the defence minister has failed, and the defence minister refuses to acknowledge the anger of the victims, military members and his own ombudsman. The ombudsman was clear about the defence minister's role in fanning the flames of the current crisis. He said:

...the actions of the Minister of National Defence, senior government and military officials have bitterly proved this point. The erratic behaviour of leadership defies common sense or reason. The concept of Ministerial accountability has been absent.

Has the minister finally gotten the message? For the good of the Canadian Armed Forces, will he please, please resign?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I got the message way back when I was serving during the previous government, when it cut the type of training that was absolutely necessary to prevent this type of work. When I got into politics in this party, we worked very hard to make sure that we can create an inclusive environment. It does not take just words; it takes actions, and we have been working very hard. We know that we have a lot more work to do. We are willing to get it done.

Oral Questions

With the work that Madam Louise Arbour will be doing, and many others, we will eventually come to a place where there is absolute inclusivity. We know there has to be work, and I ask the member opposite to stop playing politics and support our work.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Defence is in hot water again.

The military ombudsman, Gregory Lick, who reports directly to the minister, had this to say about his failures to act on sexual misconduct in the Canadian Forces: “When leaders turn a blind eye to our recommendations and concerns in order to advance political interests and their own self-preservation or career advancement, it is the members of the defence community that suffer the consequences.”

The minister continues to put his own interests ahead of those of Canadian Forces members. When will he resign?

• (1435)

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite and his party can continue to play political games and continue their mudslinging and attacks. We will remain focused on survivors. We have a lot more work to do. As I stated, we have appointed former Supreme Court Justice Arbour to conduct an independent external review, with a mandate that includes looking at a more robust independent reporting mechanism that meets the needs of survivors.

We will get this done. We are not going to take any lessons from the member opposite or the previous government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the defence minister does not seem to grasp the seriousness of the problem. He refuses to even acknowledge the anger of the victims, the military and his own ombudsman.

The ombudsman was clear about the minister's role, saying that he is the one who has been fuelling the problem. According to the ombudsman, “The erratic behaviour of leadership defies common sense or reason. The concept of ministerial accountability has been absent.”

Does the minister understand that he has failed again? Will he do the right thing and resign?

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will stay focused on supporting survivors. We know that we have considerable work to do, but we also have started a lot of work. We passed Bill C-77, whereas the previous government let it die on the Order Paper. We have also committed \$236 million in budget 2021 to end sexual misconduct. We will get it done.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is both sad and striking to see that nobody on the other side of the House has the wherewithal to defend the minister.

The defence ombudsman lashed out today. He said he was fed up with the fact that reports of sexual misconduct in the army are being shelved. As he put it, quote, “When leaders turn a blind eye to our recommendations and concerns in order to advance political interests and their own self-preservation or career advancement, it is the members of the defence community that suffer the consequences.” The ombudsman added, “It is clear that inaction is rewarded far more than action.” He said that this cannot persist.

What will it take for the Prime Minister to fire his Minister of Defence and put him out of his misery?

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we look forward to a further review of the ombudsman's report. That said, we are taking further action to eliminate sexual misconduct, including committing over \$236 million in budget 2021. As I stated, Justice Louise Arbour will be conducting an independent review to make sure that we create a more robust independent reporting mechanism that meets the needs of survivors. She will provide recommendations that we are committed to implementing. We know that we have a lot more work to do and we are willing to get it done.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is pathetic. I agree with the ombudsman: this cannot persist. The ombudsman warned us that the system is broken, that the minister is not listening and that he is dismissing the ombudsman's concerns.

The ombudsman warned us that people in the army who file complaints face retaliation from their superiors. The ombudsman warned us that the federal government commissions reports and then systematically shelves them. The ombudsman repeatedly accused the minister of protecting his own political interests rather than the victims.

Given everything we know, how can it be that the Minister of Defence is still in office this afternoon?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois should take a step back and watch what it says.

We are talking about a man who dedicated his life to his country, a respected veteran, a man who is transforming how the Canadian Armed Forces work, a man who is focused on instituting a culture of zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment, a man who deserves our trust and respect.

The Bloc Québécois should look itself in the mirror and stop resorting to such petty attacks.

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SAFETY**

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is disobeying four binding orders of the House and its committee. The situation is getting worse by the day. Through its disobedience, the government is verging on defying the rule of law.

What hope do we have as a democracy to counter the rise of authoritarianism if our own government undermines our democracy and the rule of law?

• (1440)

[English]

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again we see Conservatives showing no shame in playing politics with national security. In fact, we have provided documents to two separate committees: one in a way that is measured for taking into account national security preparations, and the other a fully unredacted release of documents to NSICOP, where members and the committee itself have all of the national security measures in place. Conservatives should care about national security and stop playing politics.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, why do Canadians send 338 of their fellow citizens to this chamber if its decisions are ignored? Why do we spend \$400 million a year on Parliament if our votes do not mean anything? Why are we spending billions of dollars on the buildings in this precinct if the processes and procedures here do not amount to anything? Why do we vote to adopt orders if the government is going to ignore them? When will the government show some respect for Parliament and follow the order of this House to produce the documents related to the breaches at its Winnipeg lab?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as stated already, the documents have been provided to two separate committees.

I have a question for the member opposite. Why does he refer to the work of NSICOP when it suits his needs in committee to prove a point, but when he is playing politics and it no longer suits him, he throws the integrity and the work of NSICOP under the bus? Canadians see through these partisan games and understand which party is willing to put national security at risk for a little bump in the polls.

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HEALTH

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, wow, that was awkward.

The Liberals have a panel of scientists that provided clear advice on benchmarks for lifting federal COVID-19 restrictions. Families who are separated across the border, tourism operators, and hotel, airline and airport employees all need these benchmarks in order to work and have hope. Many countries around the world have already done this. There is anger in the community that the Liberal government has not provided these benchmarks yet. I have a very simple question: When will the Liberals provide benchmarks for lifting federal COVID-19 restrictions?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only awkward thing is the Conservatives' policy when it comes to border measures. On social media, they say "tighten the border measures". In the House, they say "loosen all restrictions" without any basis in science or evidence.

The approach we are taking is a cautious one. All Canadians are very excited to see life start to return to normal. Canadians have stepped up to get vaccinated and followed local public health measures, and we are not going to sacrifice that work based on the political games being played by Conservatives. We are going to stop the spread of COVID-19 and save lives, and we are going to do so based on science and evidence.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the answer from the parliamentary secretary was really disrespectful to families who are separated across borders and to airline and airport employees, who just want a plan. They want benchmarks, and there is science to support those benchmarks. In fact, the government's own expert panel provided these benchmarks.

The hotel quarantine program is not scientific. It is not based in any fact. People need hope. I am asking the parliamentary secretary to take the concerns of these groups really seriously, to resist the urge to provide that partisan response, and just explain to Canadians when the Liberals will provide benchmarks for lifting federal COVID-19 restrictions—

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we have taken the concerns of Canadians seriously throughout this pandemic. It is the opposition members and their own caucus who cannot seem to get their story straight when it comes to which measures they want to follow.

We are guided by science and evidence every step of the way. Throughout this pandemic, we have had to adapt and adjust as the virus changed. We have done so to keep Canadians safe and save lives.

While the members opposite want to play politics, we are taking this virus seriously and have put in place a cautious approach to make sure the hard work all Canadians have done is not lost. That is what our government is committed to. We are taking care of Canadians. The Conservatives continue to play politics.

Oral Questions

• (1445)

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, imagine Canada recognizing the asylum claims of refugees, only for them to be told their children must wait patiently in an environment where they are at risk. The processing times for dependants of asylum seekers is 39 months. Right now, from Gaza alone, there are at least 10 refugees in Canada who have been separated from their loved ones for over two years. The Canadian Council for Refugees is calling on the government to uphold the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child with a six-month processing target. Will the minister immediately issue temporary resident visas to get them to safety and reunite them with their loved ones?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since forming government in 2015, we have doubled the number of refugees in comparison to the last Conservative government. We have introduced and expanded pathways for Yazidis and survivors of Daesh, guardian angels and Afghan Sikhs. This year, we have already extended protected status to roughly 20,000 people. That is nearly double what the Conservatives did in their last year of government in 2015, in half the time.

I am proud of the work this government has done in upholding human rights through our asylum systems and we will continue to do that.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada has been in mourning since 215 children, victims of Canada's genocide, were found at the Kamloops residential school. First nations are pushing to bring their children home, but the Liberals are nowhere. They are recycling old announcements and expecting first nations to investigate genocide themselves. The current Prime Minister pretends he is a human rights champion globally, but here in Canada he is part of the problem with respect to human rights. When will he drop the empty symbolism, listen to first nations, establish independent oversight and provide adequate support, including bringing in the RCMP as called for by the Pimicikamak Cree Nation?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians have been heartbroken since we learned of the remains at the former Kamloops residential school. We are working with all of our partners and this morning we were able to announce \$4.88 million for the FSIN to be able to begin its work. The engagements must be indigenous-led, community-based and survivor- and family-centric, as well as culturally sensitive. That is what the community wants and that is what we are here to support.

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SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my constituents in Guelph are proud of our local small businesses and entrepreneurs. Budget 2021 sets us up for a strong, inclusive and sustainable economic recovery, ensuring that we are supporting local businesses through our actions. Just yesterday, the Minister of

Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade announced the shop local initiative. Can the minister inform the House how shop local will help promote consumer confidence and provide growth for local small businesses?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his strong advocacy for small businesses in Guelph and indeed across Canada.

Our government knows that small businesses are the backbone of the economy and will be critical to our recovery from COVID-19. As the economy begins to open safely, our \$33-million investment in the shop local initiative will encourage Canadians to shop at their local businesses, supporting those entrepreneurs and helping them recover more quickly.

From day one we have been there for businesses every step of the way throughout this pandemic, and we will continue to support them in this recovery.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the job market gives us the worst of both worlds. On one hand, there are another half a million workers out of work. On the other hand, there are half a million vacant positions. According to a Statistics Canada report, there are more unfilled positions now than before the pandemic.

Why did the government implement policies that prevent the unemployed from working?

• (1450)

[*English*]

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have a long and storied history of accusing Canadians of being lazy. I remember, as an Atlantic Canadian, when Stephen Harper described our culture as one of defeat and tried to pass policies that would not support middle-class Canadians during their time of need. That has characterized the Conservative approach to the management of the pandemic and the economic losses that have stemmed from it.

Canadians can rest assured that, from the beginning of this pandemic to its end, we will be there for them in their time of need. The member's leader opposed programs that helped keep food on the table for nine million Canadians and kept five million workers on the payroll. We are here for Canadians, and we have their backs until the end.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member's heart bursts with so much generosity that he had no problem with the original CERB, which kicked people off benefits the second they dared earn more than \$1,000. That is not compassion.

Our people want paycheques, but what we are learning today is that we have the worst of both worlds. Not only are there half a million more people without jobs, but there are half a million jobs without workers. The Liberals, of course, have mismanaged the labour market policy to block Canadians from job opportunities.

Why are they preventing Canadians who want a paycheque from getting one?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning of this pandemic, the Conservatives have opposed our emergency supports that were designed to keep workers on the payroll and help families keep food on the table and a roof over their heads. In fact, that member held a press conference so that he could declare Conservatives do not support big, fat government programs. His leader has spoken at length about his opposition to the CERB, which helped feed nine million Canadian families. Last night, the Conservatives voted against measures that were going to continue to support households and business and, indeed, ensure that Canadians going forward would have a source of funds so they can earn paycheques.

I will not take lessons from the Conservatives when it comes to economic management in an emergency. This government has had Canadians' backs and will until the end of this pandemic.

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GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is still playing catch-up with the rest of the world because of the government's hapless vaccine procurement. Small businesses still do not know if they are going to lose a second summer season, and the government has not produced a pathway to normalcy, especially for small businesses that depend on an open border for tourism.

I do not know how many times we have had to ask, and maybe today is going to be the day: Will this government finally table a real plan for a safe, permanent reopening?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, evidently the member opposite is not aware that Canada is first in the G20 and the G7 for the percentage of population with one dose of vaccine. We have delivered 36 million doses to the provinces and territories, and 76% of eligible Canadians have had one dose. We are going to have 50 million vaccines in this country before the end of June and 68 million before the end of July.

I do not think that is hapless work. That is work focused on Canadians, and we will keep doing it.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

PENSIONS

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government promised seniors an increase in their pensions, and rightly so, since many of them struggled during the pandemic.

However, to everyone's surprise, it decided to give it only to those 75 years of age and older. Through its lack of logic, the government is creating two classes of seniors.

What does the government have to say to Colette in Saint-Georges, who is 68, and to many other Beauce residents who are struggling financially?

When will the Liberals do the right thing and make 65-year-olds eligible for the same increase?

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are well aware that seniors have different needs and are more likely to use up their savings, have disabilities and need more hospital care, all while health care costs are rising.

Half of all seniors 75 and older have a disability, of which half are severe. Fifty-seven percent are women and four out of ten are widows. Our plan will help us address these pressures, while delivering on our promise to increase old age security for those 75 and over by 10% in July 2022.

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EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, people who are suffering from illnesses like cancer do not have the energy to worry about their finances.

However, that is exactly what happens when the EI system fails people who are suffering in the middle of their treatment. Benefits are sometimes needed for up to 50 weeks, which is why the Bloc Québécois introduced Bill C-265. All parties, including the Liberals, supported it in committee. The only thing missing is for the government to give the royal recommendation to the bill.

Will it grant the royal recommendation and finally ensure adequate support for people who are sick?

● (1455)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect and deserve to have an employment insurance plan that is flexible and meets their needs. Employment insurance sickness benefits are an important support for Canadians who have to stay home from work because of an illness or injury.

Workers who receive major treatments or who need more time to heal will benefit from the measure in budget 2021 to extend EI benefits from 15 to 26 weeks. This extension will provide nearly 169,000 Canadians every year with additional time and flexibility.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government is offering half of what sick people need. Not everyone needs 50 weeks of benefits to recover from an illness, but limiting benefits to 15 or even 26 weeks means leaving those who are suffering the most out in the cold, and the government knows it.

That goes against the values of every member of the House. I am appealing to the government's sense of compassion. Will it give Bill C-265 the royal recommendation so that we can pass it at last and tell sick people that their elected representatives are on their side?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for workers undergoing major treatment or needing more time to recover from an illness or injury, that gap from when their benefits run out to when they are well enough to return to work is a financially stressful time.

That is why, in budget 2021, we are extending EI sickness benefits from 15 to 26 weeks. This extension will provide nearly 169,000 Canadians every year with additional time and flexibility.

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[English]

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on August 3, 2014, the Prime Minister publicly committed that he would support a humanitarian initiative led by Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish named Heal100Kids, to get 100 Palestinian children from Gaza to Canada for medical treatment. Since then, the Liberal government has ignored repeated requests for follow-up and help. This type of inaction and broken promises, saying one thing to get elected and then not following through afterward, is something that Canadians have seen time and time again from the current Liberal government.

When will the government stop ignoring Dr. Abuelaish's request for help and follow through on the Prime Minister's own commitment to provide these children with the assistance they need?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see the member opposite, for the first time, stand up on behalf of Palestinian children, because until now in this House he has been constantly asking the government to defund Anera, which, as he knows, provides education for 500,000 Palestinian children. In fact, this government has been sure to provide services that will protect and uphold the human rights of Palestinian children, and we will continue to do so. I am glad to see the member opposite, for the first time, showing concern for Palestinian children.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in a June 2020 industry committee meeting, a witness from CSIS highlighted how today's spies wear "lab coats, not just trench coats". The Liberal government is withholding documents concerning two federal scientists connected to the Chinese military,

one of whom oversaw virus transfers to the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Canadians deserve answers.

Will the Liberals finally release documents this House has demanded and ordered four times, or will the cover-up continue?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, only the Conservatives can accuse a government of a cover-up, when we actually provided all of the documents to two separate committees. One was with redactions to protect national security and another in a completely unredacted form. It is unfortunate that the Conservative members did not trust their own committee representation on that committee. I served with them; they did good work and it is a shame that Conservatives are more focused on innuendo and conspiracy theories than doing the job of parliamentarians in this House and protecting the national security of all Canadians.

• (1500)

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is continuing its cover-up by preventing us, the parliamentarians, from getting all the facts about the firing of two scientists from the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg.

Yesterday, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons even insulted the law clerk and parliamentary counsel by stating that he did not have the necessary training or expertise to assess the documents we requested.

Will the Liberals respect the will of the House, or will they brandish the threat of a hasty election in the hope that this will all blow over?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague forgot to mention that we provided different options, which you are currently exploring.

The government obviously recognizes the fundamental role and rights of Parliament and parliamentarians, but it also recognizes the importance of protecting our national security and keeping certain things secret.

Therefore, we must find a solution. Unlike my colleague, who is trying to play petty politics by finger-pointing, we are providing options for you to explore. I hope that we will be able to work together.

* * *

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the pandemic highlighted the disparities that persons with disabilities face in terms of their health, financial security and social well-being.

Fortunately, our government was there to protect the financial security of Canadians with disabilities through programs like the one-time payment, CERB and the disability portion of the Canada emergency student benefit. We also presented the first disability inclusion action plan.

Can the minister update the House on what our government is doing to support Canadians with disabilities?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Alfred-Pellan for his work on behalf of persons with disabilities.

Since 2015, our government has taken historic measures to create an inclusive Canada for persons with disabilities. Our 2020-21 budget focuses on measures that embody the “nothing without us” principle. We are investing in accessible communities, training and job creation, students with disabilities, and inclusive child care services.

This morning, we introduced a bill to establish the Canada disability benefit. This important bill will help reduce poverty and provide financial security for Canadians with disabilities.

With an inclusive approach, everyone wins.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday on the issue of gun violence, after the tragic Etobicoke shooting that seriously injured an 11-year-old, a five-year-old and a one-year-old, the Minister of Public Safety stated that his government's approach to banning firearms owned by law-abiding citizens would curb such violence, yet his government introduced Bill C-22, which weakens penalties for gun crimes by eliminating mandatory minimum sentences.

Can the Minister of Public Safety please explain how weakening penalties for gun crimes somehow reduces gun crime?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to be very clear, we promised Canadians that we would strengthen gun control. We are in the process of doing that. We know that the Conservatives have promised the gun lobby that they would weaken gun laws, and I believe that is a very serious mistake.

I also want to be clear that ensuring we eliminate the systemic and structural racism that exists throughout the criminal justice system is another way to improve public safety in our communities. It would ensure that all Canadians are treated in a just and fair way, and are given opportunities to participate fulsomely in our communities and in our society. Success for everyone in Canada is an important part of our strategy for keeping Canadians safe.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I represent a border community, I hear daily from families and business owners

who need to cross the border. This requires a 14-day quarantine, a three-day lockdown and standard fare, all at their own expense. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister enjoys 12 hours in a posh hotel of his choosing at the taxpayers' expense. There is one set of rules for regular Canadians and another for him and his entourage.

When will the Prime Minister present a plan to safely reopen the borders?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are all incredibly excited as we start to see life post-COVID. That is precisely why we have started to release or adjust some of the border measures, but we are going to do this in a cautious, responsible manner to ensure that all of the hard work and all of the sacrifices that Canadians have made are not lost. We are so grateful that Canadians continue to step up to get vaccinated and follow local public health guidelines. By doing so, we are going to get through this. We are going to save lives.

We are going to follow the science and evidence to make sure that Canadians are safe.

* * *

● (1505)

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my riding of Red Deer—Mountain View is now almost fully open, despite the Liberal government's total failure to address the COVID-19 pandemic. We have succeeded because we are Albertans. Not only is Alberta now leading the way when it comes to vaccinations and reopening our economy, but we are poised to lead the way for an economic recovery across Canada providing the Liberal government gets out of the way.

Why does the Liberal government ignore Alberta's leadership role and continually punish it with draconian measures like Bill C-69?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every step of the way the federal government has been supporting the provinces and territories in order to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. In terms of PPE, we procured 2.7 billion items of PPE for the provinces and territories, and 40% of those contracts by dollar value are with Canadian companies, including companies from Alberta. We have procured over 100 million vaccines, 50 million of which will have arrived by the end of June. The Conservatives take credit for our vaccine procurement on one hand and they criticize our procurement of PPE and vaccines on the other. Which one is it? I would like to know.

Oral Questions

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is 2030 and I want to remind Canadians that the Conservatives were at the top of the mountain claiming that we would not get vaccines for years. The Leader of the Opposition and the health critic stood in this place and said we would not be getting vaccines for years: until about 2030, I believe. This is the same party that did not believe that we would meet the targets that we are now exceeding. Let us get to the point and let us get the record straight.

Can the Minister of Public Services and Procurement tell the House how her hard work was able to deliver a well-thought-out vaccine plan, and update us on where we are in the process?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the opposition criticizes and then takes credit for our vaccine procurement, I am working on getting millions of doses into Canada as early as possible. This week alone, we are receiving 5.2 million doses from Pfizer and Moderna. We are on track to receive 50 million doses by the end of June and more than 68 million doses by the end of July. Canada continues to lead the world in vaccines because of hard work, and that is what I will continue to focus on.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first nations in B.C. are announcing their intention to take back control of resource stewardship on their traditional territories. Many of these territories contain ancient, old-growth rainforests and watersheds that are critical to our planet's biodiversity and important in fighting climate change. The nature legacy program's budget and priorities are not nearly enough to support indigenous-led initiatives to protect ancient, old-growth stands.

Will the Minister of Environment and Climate Change commit to providing the necessary resources and work with first nations that wish to create a conservation economy that protects these critical ecosystems?

• (1510)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government has made historic investments in protecting nature. Over the course of the past number of years, both marine and terrestrial, we have piloted, in partnership with indigenous peoples, many indigenous conservation protected areas as part of that conservation agenda. It is extremely important on the path forward. We have committed to 30% protection by 2030 and are working very closely with provinces and territories, and with indigenous peoples across this country, to ensure that we are doing what science tells us we must, which is protect biodiversity and stop the decline that has been happening over the past number of decades.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Derek Sloan (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, last week I hosted a parliamentary press conference

on the censorship of Canadian doctors and medical experts. Their testimony was truly shocking.

Unfortunately, Facebook stopped my livestream in mid-conference. Despite this, the full press conference is now the most-viewed video in history on CPAC's YouTube channel, with over 500,000 views. However, Facebook and Twitter are still restricting the sharing of this video on their platforms.

Given the importance to democracy of Canadians seeing official parliamentary functions, does the minister denounce this censorship by big tech?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the dissemination of misinformation regarding this pandemic, I think the member opposite should understand his role and responsibility as a parliamentarian, and the trust that his constituents place in him.

This pandemic is serious. It requires a serious response. I would urge him to follow the rules. If Facebook would not even allow what he is saying to be put up, perhaps he should rethink his choices.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion, which is consistent with the unanimous report that the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development tabled in the House: That the House call for dialogue between representatives of the Tibetan people, His Holiness the Dalai Lama or his representatives, the Central Tibetan Administration and the government of the People's Republic of China with a view to enabling Tibet to exercise genuine autonomy within the framework of the Chinese constitution.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

[English]

Mr. Derek Sloan: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As I mentioned in my question, I had a parliamentary press conference that was censored by Facebook. People have reached out to me to say that they are unable to share it. That is problematic. Anything that goes on in the House should be able to be shared freely by Canadians.

I would like to seek unanimous consent for the following motion: That the House recognize that the House of Commons itself and the Parliament of Canada are a bastion of democracy and free speech; that members of Parliament enjoy special parliamentary privileges overseeing their ability to speak freely in Parliament, to discharge their duties freely and without constraint; that any Canadian seeking to share digital content of parliamentary functions should be able to do so freely and without constraint; that the government must strongly defend the rights of parliamentarians against the outside interference of social media companies such as Facebook and Twitter; and I call on the government to recognize that any potential suppression of information or censorship of parliamentary events, such as official press conferences, must not be allowed to happen and to officially sanction Facebook and Twitter for their actions.

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

An hon. member: Nay.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister of International Development may want to correct her comments. She said some things that were misleading to the House. She suggested that I had not ever previously raised the plight of Palestinian people from a humanitarian perspective. I will draw her attention to my intervention at committee on June 3 of this year as well as a speech I gave in the House on June 12 of—

• (1515)

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt. I believe that is debate to correct information.

An hon. member: It was misleading the House.

The Speaker: Order, please. I want to remind hon. members, whether they are in person or virtual, to please take into consideration what they are saying. We do not want anything inflammatory said that is going to cause problems in the House.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had technical difficulties and could not complete my S.O. 31 as a result. I would ask for unanimous consent to do it now.

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member's request for unanimous consent will please say nay.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, in the past, you have not required unanimous consent to allow a member redo his or her statement. I expect you would apply the same logic this time.

The Speaker: I do not have a problem with it. The hon. member asked for unanimous consent. If he wants to retract that, I will allow him to go ahead.

Mr. Greg Fergus: I would be happy to retract that, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Since there were technical difficulties, we will allow the member to go ahead.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Mr. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, approximately 3,000 families in Canada are affected by amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS. Every year, 1,000 Canadians die from this disease.

Sometimes, we can put a human face on these statistics. That was the case five years ago when we lost our dear friend and colleague, Mauril Bélanger, to ALS.

[English]

It sadly became the case again for me this past weekend when my friend Daniel Rousseau passed away from ALS, leaving in mourning his loving family, Kelly and their three teenaged sons.

Daniel was an exceptional man. He never, not once, succumbed to self-pity, but rather exuded gratitude. He and his family have been models of grace from the early diagnosis of ALS right to his passing last weekend.

[Translation]

Daniel and Kelly advocated for the need to give Canadians fair, fast and affordable access to treatment. That is why I am rising today during ALS Awareness Month to honour the memory of my friend Daniel and to recommit to working for a future without ALS.

[English]

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to clarify the record. The Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations in question period talked about \$48.8 million being given to Saskatchewan first nations. That number is incorrect. It is in fact—

The Speaker: That is beginning to turn into debate. A point of order is for referring to one of the Standing Orders and how it is contravened. Members often forget that and we get caught up, and that is fine. I thought I would point that out to remind hon. members.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1520)

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from June 21 consideration of the motion that Bill C-6, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy), be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: It being 3:17 p.m., pursuant to the order made on Monday, January 25, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-6.

[Translation]

Call in the members.

• (1530)

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

*Government Orders**(Division No. 175)*

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison	Lambropoulos	Lametti
Albas	Alghabra	Lamoureux	Larouche
Alleslev	Anand	Lattanzio	Lauzon
Anandasangaree	Angus	Lawrence	LeBlanc
Arnold	Arseneault	Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Arya	Ashton	Lehoux	Lemire
Atwin	Bachrach	Liepert	Lightbound
Badawey	Bagnell	Long	Longfield
Bains	Baker	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Baldinelli	Barsalou-Duval	MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Battiste	Beaulieu	Maguire	Maloney
Beech	Bendayan	Manly	Marcel
Bennett	Bergeron	Martel	Martinez Ferrada
Berthold	Bérubé	Masse	Mathysen
Bessette	Bibeau	May (Cambridge)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Bittle	Blaikie	McCrimmon	McDonald
Blair	Blanchet	McGuinty	McKay
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Blois	McLean	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Boudrias	Boulerice	McLeod (Northwest Territories)	McPherson
Bratina	Brière	Melillo	Mendès
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings	Mendicino	Michaud
Carr	Carrie	Miller	Monsef
Casey	Chabot	Moore	Morantz
Chagger	Champagne	Morrissey	Murray
Champoux	Charbonneau	Nater	Ng
Chen	Chong	Normandin	O'Connell
Cormier	Cumming	Oliphant	O'Regan
Dabrusin	Damoff	O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Dancho	Davidson	Pauzé	Perron
Davies	DeBellefeuille	Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Deltell	d'Entremont	Poilievre	Powlowski
Desbiens	Desilets	Qaqqaq	Qualtrough
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Ratansi	Rayes
Dong	Dowdall	Regan	Reid
Drouin	Dubourg	Rempel Garner	Robillard
Duclos	Duguid	Rodriguez	Rogers
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Romanado	Ruff
Duval	Dzerowicz	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)	Sahota (Brampton North)
Easter	Ehsassi	Saini	Sajjan
El-Khoury	Ellis	Saks	Samson
Erskine-Smith	Fergus	Sangha	Sarani
Fillmore	Findlay	Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Finnigan	Fisher	Schiefke	Schmale
Fonseca	Fortier	Schulte	Serré
Fortin	Fragiskatos	Sgro	Shanahan
Fraser	Freeland	Sheehan	Shipley
Fry	Garneau	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Garrison	Gaudreau	Simard	Simms
Gazan	Généreux	Singh	Sorbara
Gerretsen	Gill	Spengemann	Stanton
Godin	Gould	Ste-Marie	Tabbara
Gourde	Green	Tassi	Thériault
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Therrien	Trudeau
Hardie	Harris	Trudel	Turnbull
Holland	Housefather	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Hughes	Hussen	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Hutchings	Iacono	Vaughan	Vecchio
Ien	Jaczek	Vignola	Virani
Jeneroux	Johs	Webber	Weiler
Joly	Jones	Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
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Khalid	Khera		
Koutrakis	Kram		
Kusmierczyk	Kwan		
Lake	Lalonde		

NAYS

Members

Barlow
Benzen
Bezan
Bragdon
Chiu

Cooper
Diotte
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Gallant
Gladu
Harder
Jansen
Kmiec
Kusie
Lloyd
Lukiwski
Mazier
Morrison
Patzner
Rood
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Dalton
Dreeshen
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Genuis
Gray
Hoback
Kitchen
Kurek
Lewis (Essex)
Lobb
MacKenzie
McColeman
Motz
Redekopp
Saroya
Shields
Sloan
Steinley
Stubbs
Tochor
Vidal
Vis
Warkentin
Williamson
Yurdiga

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

[English]

ETHICS COMMISSIONER REPORT IN RELATION TO MEMBER FOR DON VALLEY EAST

The Speaker: Pursuant to subsection 28(9) of the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons, Appendix I to the Standing Orders, the hon. member for Don Valley East, who is the subject of a report of the Ethics Commissioner previously tabled in the House, has the right to make a statement. The member shall not speak for more than 20 minutes and there will be no period of questions and comments.

I now invite the hon. member for Don Valley East to address the House.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to comment on the recently released report of the Ethics Commissioner. My intention is not to comment on his conclusion and recommendations, but rather to help put the situation in context.

The past many months have been difficult, to say the least, for me and my family. They have indeed been a struggle, and I am grateful to family, friends, colleagues and individual Canadians who have supported me through this ordeal.

I would like to thank the thousands of supporters who have believed in me and encouraged me to stay strong. I would also like to thank the various multi-faith groups and ecumenical groups that I have worked with, the constituents of Don Valley East and the numerous well-wishers for their support. As well, I would like to thank the senators and MPs who have stood by me and guided me.

Government Orders

As I read through the report, something very obvious jumped out at me. It gave me reason to pause. With the encouragement of many Muslim scholars and ecumenical friends, I have decided to speak in the House.

The Ethics Commissioner's report states, "Ms. Khatri was not considered a family member for the purposes of the Code." He says the evidence gathered is that "Ms. Khatri is in fact her foster sister", and that Ms. Khatri is neither my biological nor adopted sister.

He further goes on to state:

Ms. Ratansi did not appear to have furthered her own private interests or those of a member of her family since the Code does not include siblings in its definition of "family members."

She submits that the documentary evidence provided shows that there is no legal bond between her and Ms. Khatri, including for the purposes of the By-law...[and the] relationship falls outside the applicable definitions in the Code and the By-law as presently worded.

Further on he states that the code is ambiguous and that "as a principle of natural justice, the applicable provisions should be given their narrow meaning." He also states:

...if the provisions defining 'immediate family' are not clear and unequivocal, then any ambiguity should be resolved in favour of the person who is the subject of the inquiry.

I accept Ms. Ratansi's...claim, as well as her argument that Ms. Khatri, as her foster sister, may not legally be considered as her sister or, by the same token, qualify as a member of her "immediate family" within the meaning of the By-law.

However, since I refer to Ms. Khatri as a sister in keeping with Islamic cultural practices and my father's personal wishes, he concludes that, despite all evidence to the contrary, she is a sister.

Many Muslim scholars, my interfaith community and members of the Muslim community have called me and asked me to provide some reference to Islamic practices.

What does Islam teach about the treatment of orphans?

Calling someone a "brother" or "sister" is a dignified way of referring to other Muslims who are not related, especially when dealing with orphans. My moral and ethical conduct is underpinned by these Islamic values and practices, and as such, I believe that when we house an orphan or a guest of any denomination, that human being is accorded the same dignity and treatment as that of a brother or sister and is addressed as such. This is particularly important in the case of orphans. It maintains their dignity and avoids social taboos.

Anyone who has interacted with Muslims knows that one is referred to as a sister or a brother as part of Islamic ethos. Therefore, my supporters felt that, within the current context of Islamophobia and a misunderstanding of Islam, I should provide some insight into Islamic norms.

Privilege

• (1535)

The community members have also proposed that decision-makers at different levels of Parliament be sensitized to the culture, traditions and ethos of Islam, which, as an Abrahamic faith, is not well understood. I hope the information I impart will enable people to make informed decisions in the future.

To help understand how important it was for my father to inculcate the Islamic ethos, I will quote some Hadiths, or sayings, of the holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. He said, “The best house among the Muslims is one which contains an orphan who is well treated. The worst house among the Muslims is one which contains an orphan who is badly treated.”

The prophet goes on to say, “One who looks after the orphan, whether he is his relative or not, he and I would be together in paradise like this”, and he brought his index finger and middle fingers together.

I found similar sentiments being expressed in the Old Testament and the New Testament saying that God has mandated that caring for the orphan be an important act of charity and a holy duty.

In Islam, an orphaned child has a very important place. There are multiple verses of the noble Quran where the almighty Allah talks about treating orphans. One has to look at chapter 2, Surah Al-Baqarah; chapter 4, Surah An-Nisa; and chapter 17, Surah Al-Isra, where Allah enjoins upon believers to be kind to the orphan and look after them as their own children, to be a merciful father toward the orphan, and to be good to orphans and never treat them harshly.

In societies in which the values of the Quran are not observed, this concept may be foreign. It is therefore important to appreciate how Muslims view the treatment of orphans. Believers take the issue of the treatment of orphans very seriously as Allah prohibits subjecting orphans to harsh treatment and condemns those who mistreat them.

My late father instilled in us these very important Islamic values, including treating every human being as a brother or sister in faith or in humanity, showing compassion, always maintaining the dignity of another human being, and ensuring that we strive to improve the situation in life of orphans and bring them up as decent individuals. This is who I am. I will not demean anyone's dignity.

Calling Ms. Khatri a sister is a privilege that I cherish and that Islam has taught me. I would never give these Islamic principles up, no matter the misinformation, the slander and the media circus. Despite Ms. Khatri's agreeing to provide the Ethics Commissioner with proof of her relationship to me, I would like to personally apologize to her for the indignity this particular incident has caused her.

As for those who slander, there are many verses in the Quran and in all Abrahamic traditions that say that, for those who slander and throw ridicule, God will throw it back to them.

A further lesson provided is that of the eagle and raven. The raven is the only bird that dares to peck at the eagle's neck. However, the eagle does not react. It does not fight back. It does not spend time and energy with the raven. Instead, it opens up its wings and begins to fly higher in the sky. The higher the flight, the harder it is

for the raven to breathe, and the raven eventually falls to the ground due to lack of oxygen.

• (1540)

We as parliamentarians face many ravens, internal and external. As we try to do our jobs to better the lives of our constituents and Canadians, let us be like the eagles and fly high and avoid the temptation of the slanderous ravens. I encourage members to stop wasting time with the ravens. Just take them to our height, and they will fade away. I have personally taken this advice very seriously. As I continue to serve my constituents, I know that the ravens will lose oxygen and fade away.

My sincere hope is that this short exposé to Islamic practices and cultures will enable us to be better parliamentarians and put our words into practice. We as Canadians claim diversity is our strength, but when faced with diversity, we have yet to learn how to incorporate it into our decision-making process. I hope that my speaking here today may in some small way contribute to changing this, and, in the future, that if anyone is ever in the same position as I was, they will be judged differently.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for La Prairie on a point of order.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED NON-COMPLIANCE WITH AN ORDER OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to come back to the question of privilege raised yesterday by the House leader of the official opposition, who alleged that the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada did not fully comply with the order adopted by the House on June 17.

This question of privilege is quite appropriate. We are of the opinion that the order of the House was not followed in its entirety and that the House must act accordingly. It is time for it to act.

Last week, law clerk and parliamentary counsel Philippe Dufresne sent a document to the Standing Committee on Finance regarding the committees' power to send for papers, since the committee was finding it difficult to get documents from KPMG on its study of tax havens. This letter from Mr. Dufresne provides some thoughtful clarifications on the question of privilege we are discussing today. Regarding the refusal to produce the documents, he said, and I quote:

Government Orders

Only the House of Commons has the disciplinary powers to deal with this type of offence. The disciplinary powers of the House include, for example, the power to reprimand a person who is not a Member (*House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, 3rd ed, p. 983, n. 164). In cases where the author of or the authority responsible for a record refuses to comply with an order issued by a committee to produce documents, the committee essentially has three options. The first is to accept the reasons put forward to justify the refusal (*House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, 3rd ed, p. 986). The second is to seek an acceptable compromise to obtain the information with certain measures in place. This could entail putting measures in place to ensure that the record is kept confidential while it is being consulted, such as in camera review, limited and numbered copies, and/or putting in place arrangements for disposing of or destroying the copies after the committee meeting (*House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, 3rd ed, p. 986, notes 180, 181, 182). It could also include having proposed redactions to the documents provided to the Committee or to my Office for review before any information is made public. The third option is to reject the reasons given for denying access to the record and insist on the production of the entire record (*House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, 3rd ed, p. 987). If a witness does not provide requested documents, the committee's recourse is to report the matter to the House (*House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, 3rd ed, p. 983, n. 165; p. 987, n. 183). Once seized with the matter, the House takes the measures that it considers appropriate (*House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, 3rd ed, p. 983, n. 166; p. 987).

The letter from Mr. Stewart's lawyer was tabled in both official languages in the House this morning. Mr. Stewart has no intention of complying with the order of the House for the time being, which brings us back to the third option I just mentioned.

The House has already considered what action should be taken against the Public Health Agency of Canada as a result of Mr. Stewart's refusal to table the unredacted documents before the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations.

The order adopted by the House on June 17 was adopted by a majority vote, and therefore the point of order raised by the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons is inappropriate. The Chair must rule on the solution, the remedy to be applied with respect to the documents that were requested but have still not been tabled in the House.

I will not repeat all the rulings and precedents that the House leader of the official opposition referred to yesterday. However, I would like to come back to some of the fundamental issues he raised about the importance of decisions that are made by the House, and I quote:

If the House does not respect its orders, who will respect the laws adopted by the House? Who will respect the regulations adopted by the House? Who will respect the political decisions made after debates, albeit spirited ones, but decisions that were voted on by the individuals who were duly elected by the public?

Therefore, we ask that you take one of the conclusions proposed yesterday by the House leader of the official opposition.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I thank the hon. member for his comments. The Chair will certainly take note of that as a supplement to yesterday's remarks and come back to the House if necessary.

* * *

• (1550)

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Par-

liament on April 19, 2021 and other measures, be read the third time and passed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 12 minutes.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am happy to speak from the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Ta'an Kwach'an Council. As tomorrow is the last day that Parliament will sit before the summer, I want to thank all Yukoners, again, for the great honour they have provided me to represent them. It is a very eclectic riding, which makes it an even bigger honour. With 14 unique first nations, we are dealing with over 50 countries in immigration. It has the largest icefields outside the polar caps; the highest mountains in Canada; the world's greatest gold rush; the greatest poet, Robert Service; and the great painter, Jim Robb. Most important, the people are very caring, which is why it is such a great honour to represent them.

I will not use all my time. The budget is so important and we need to get it done quickly, which I think members realize. I will talk quickly and try to limit what I have to say to some highlights.

First, the \$3.8 billion toward 35,000 more affordable units is very important. I made a number of big announcements related to housing, even before the budget. It is very exciting for my riding.

Another big investment is the \$3 billion to extend sickness benefits from 15 to 26 weeks. There are also flexible EI provisions to help people through the pandemic, which are being extended until the fall of 2022.

The Nutrition north Canada subsidy program is being expanded. It provides nutritious foods to those in the Arctic and remote communities as they cannot get food for a reasonable price. That is very exciting.

I could spend my whole speech just on climate change. I am sure no one objects to the money, \$17 billion we have provided and the support to the resource sector for mining, forestry, etc. to transition to a clean economy. I am sure no one objects to the zero-emission technologies like hydrogen that we are supporting and renewable energies. There is a big tax cut to clean energy technology producers. Hopefully with that \$17 billion we can also help get mines that are off the grid in the very remote areas like my area off diesel.

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Another area I could spend my whole speech on are the \$18 billion for indigenous people. People will remember the Kelowna accord and the historic \$5 billion proposed by Paul Martin, one of the greatest prime ministers in history. This is \$18 billion. I will just mention two items of the many. One is over \$4 billion for indigenous infrastructure. Another area is community policing and safety.

I want to give a big-shout out to Chief Doris Bill of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation as well as Gina Nagano and the Selkirk First Nation. They have provided some great leadership, and innovative and very successful community policing.

I am very happy with the IRAP expansion. It is one of the most successful programs in Canada, and more than in any other government's history, and harnesses industrial research excellence. For NGOs and charities, where there are seldom things in budgets, there is a social financing fund of \$200 million; a Canada community revitalization fund; \$50 million for getting ready for the social financing fund, and even a social bond. Looking at those and the green bond of maybe \$5 billion on the first issue, NGOs and charities will also be eligible for the small business financing fund.

I think everyone in rural Canada too is pretty excited about the recent announcement of the rural transportation fund. I am very happy that the declining debt-to-GDP ratio makes it possible for us to help so many people and businesses that are in need.

I want to move on to the north. On top of everything else, there are things that are particularly exciting for us in the north. One is the new exciting community revitalization fund for main streets, farmers markets and other gathering spaces that underpin local economies. There are \$500 million to help people in these rural communities. If someone is in a little village, a hamlet, a town or a small NGO, this is specifically for them. They should start getting those applications ready for this brand new community revitalization fund.

What is really exciting for the northern half of Canada, is the very large northern travel allowance deduction. Before this, only people whose employers gave them a travel allowance and put it on their T4 slip could access it, but now all northerners will be able to access to it, which is very exciting.

• (1555)

The biggest employer in my riding is tourism as a private sector employer. The historic, first-time ever \$1 billion dedicated to tourism is very crucial and exciting. There are \$200 million for small festivals, small cultural events, heritage celebrations, local museums and amateur sporting events, which is perfect for my riding. We have a lot of those. For the bigger cities, there is also another \$200 million for all the same events but in bigger cities. The \$500 million tourism relief fund will help tourism businesses adapt their products and service, and meet public health requirements.

Then specifically in my riding is mining, which is the biggest GDP since the gold rush. Its biggest ask was help for hydroelectricity. The finance minister came through with \$40.4 million for hydroelectricity studies and for preparation in the north. Also, the Yukon government has one of the most effective climate change plans, and we are giving \$25 million to that.

A lot of people probably do not know that all five species of Pacific salmon: chinook, sockeye, coho, chum and pink, come into the Yukon through the Alsek-Tatshenshini drainage, or the Yukon River, the longest salmon run in the world, 2,000 miles. Therefore, historic amount of \$647 million for salmon is very exciting. In fact, I had a first nations organization contact me a couple weeks ago, happy that the consultations had already started with it.

The northern trade corridor fund is essential for infrastructure for the north, \$1.9 billion in the budget for that of which the north get 15%. Considering we are less than half of 1% of the population, this is tremendous support for the north as are funds for the polar continental shelf for Arctic research.

The work to lower credit card interchange fees and to have those fees the same for small businesses as large businesses is music to our ears as is the \$146 million for women entrepreneurs. We have a higher average in Yukon of women entrepreneurs.

The critical mineral strategy, which I do not have time to go into as much as I would like to right now, is very important, again, mining, which is so important to our economy in the north. Mines like Victoria Gold are a very big support.

There are small business financing changes, with working capital lines of credit now being allowed, and lending against intellectual property, which would be great for our large NorthLight Innovation Centre. The digital adoption program would bring us into the new economy, with many young helpers for businesses, potential zero-interest loans and grants to help transition.

To get into the new economy, we have a plan. I am glad the Conservatives are onside for a long-term prosperity growth budget, which is exactly what this is, with money for food security; indigenous and women entrepreneurs; an artificial intelligence strategy; the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research; a quantum strategy; the Photonics Fabrication Centre; business-led R and D through colleges; Mitacs for 85,000 placements; CanCode; the net-zero accelerator; the clean-growth hub; support for Measurement Canada; strategic innovation funds; Elevated IP; the strategic intellectual property program review; innovation superclusters; data in the digital world; Stats Canada data gaps; and support for the Standards Council of Canada.

I think most people in this place and the other place know how important it is to get this budget through, and that a number of major supports are going to expire in eight days, including the wage subsidy and the rent subsidy. There are 447,000 employers that have accessed the wage subsidy; five million people in Canada need it to put food on the table, and 192,000 organizations for rent subsidy. The Canada recovery benefit will be extended for 12 more weeks, and the Canada recovery hiring benefit would not be able to go ahead without it.

People realize the importance of getting this bill through. Those programs will expire in eight days if we do not get this through today or tomorrow. Even the Conservative member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes said yesterday that a number of our expenditures were great, like the County Road 43, recreation projects like the new arena in Prescott, the Vincent de Paul project in Brockville, with affordable housing for seniors. They will ask for many more government funds for Gananoque, Westport, Rideau Lakes and North Grenville.

• (1600)

For all these reasons and with these important investments, I hope all parties will support this bill that would help so many workers who are still in desperate need and so many businesses that need support to get through the last part of this pandemic, to ensure these programs do not expire and all the initiatives that can get help us into the new, modern digital economy to create even more jobs. Eighty per cent of jobs have already been brought back, but much more needs to be done.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, the budget references rural and remote communities. I have a very large rural riding and so does the member. I am wondering if he wants to comment further about what this budget would do or, in my opinion, would not do for rural and remote communities. Maybe he has something he would like to share with the House that will benefit rural and remote Canadians.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Madam Speaker, I emphasized in my speech things like the new community revitalization fund, \$500 million for small villages, hamlets and NGOs. There has not been a fund like this recently to which small organizations will be able to apply. The rural transportation fund is brand new and exciting for rural Canada. There are some agriculture initiatives like food subsistence funding. The increase to the northern food security program is very exciting. There will be hydroelectric generation for far more remote areas. Remote air transport in the north is helpful right across the country to keep small communities connected that de-

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pend on it for their supplies. The regional development agencies have helped thousands of businesses in remote Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to hear from the parliamentary secretary that there is a fund for rural, remote and northern regions.

The problem with federal funding is that it uses the same approach from coast to coast to coast, as they like to say. Every region has different needs, especially rural, remote and northern regions.

Will this funding take a one-size-fits-all approach, or will it be at least somewhat tailored to the circumstances of each region?

Will the regions be empowered to take charge of their destiny, influence the program content and have access to the types of funding they need from the different types of programs?

[*English*]

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Madam Speaker, to my understanding, the answer is yes. This is going to be a very flexible program that will be targeted at those who have less access. There is up to 75% support for it. It will help with the needs of small communities. With the RRRF approvals by the regional development agencies, there are 7,000 projects in Quebec and over a million jobs have been created, and 173,000 businesses have the CEBA loan grants. The regional development agency in Quebec is a reason for the money being provided to regional development agencies, as it is totally in tune with the local economy and the people. Instead of the direction coming from Ottawa, it is received by local employees.

• (1605)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague especially for talking about the climate crisis. Earlier our colleague from Cowichan—Malahat—Langford talked about indigenous communities in B.C. that were announcing their intention to take back control over resource stewardship of their traditional territories. Many of these territories have ancient old growth rainforests, watersheds, estuaries and headlands that are critical for our planet's biodiversity and are absolutely essential when it comes to fighting climate change.

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In this budget, \$2.3 billion were budgeted for the nature legacies program over five years, which is clearly not enough. Seven times that was spent to twin the Trans Mountain pipeline. To support indigenous-led initiatives and indigenous protected areas to protect ancient old growth rainforests and the watersheds, the government needs to commit more resources. Instead of quantity in terms of size of lands or protected areas, it needs to look at really important climate mitigation pieces and quality, instead of just quantity.

Does my colleague agree that the government needs to provide more resources and work more closely with indigenous communities, the provinces, local governments and stakeholders to create a conservation economy that protects these critical ecosystems, much more than it committed in this budget?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Madam Speaker, of course we support the very important role indigenous communities play in protecting the environment. As the member mentioned size, we are protecting record amounts of land and water. Also, there are record amounts of funding to support the nature funds he mentioned, which support the increases of protected areas to the record levels they are at now and will continue to be.

In the fall economic statement, I believe, is our mandate to increase indigenous guardians because of the important role they play. I do not know what happens in other ridings, but in my riding of Yukon, almost all the indigenous communities are really showing leadership on climate change and accessing our program to help indigenous communities get off diesel. They have wonderful projects to get off greenhouse gases with wind, solar and biodiesel. They are really showing leadership, and that is why we are happy to support them in any way we can with the funds we are providing.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know that in the member's riding lots of workers in tourism have not been able to get back to work yet. I would like to know if the member supports the cut in CRB by 40% that is going into place on July 1. What kind of incentive does it provide for those people? They have not been able to get jobs. There are no jobs available, so why cut their benefits?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his very thoughtful work in Parliament which I am well aware of.

I answered that question for a colleague yesterday. What I forgot to say was that in all the tourism supports to get people back to work was the new \$700 million fund for small businesses. I also mentioned that 80% of jobs lost in Canada during the pandemic are back now, but as people move back, the various supports for businesses and individuals will start to go down.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know my friend has been a long-time, passionate advocate for the north. Even when I was in opposition, I can recall having discussions with him. The environment is very important to him. He made reference to that.

Could he expand upon why, from his perspective, the environment is so critically important to northern Canada?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Madam Speaker, it is especially important for the north because the north, as I have been saying for two decades now, is experiencing climate change three times more than the rest of the world. Some of the species our indigenous people depend on are moving or dying out.

New pests and diseases are coming in, such as spruce budworm, which hurts the forests. It is very important for the north to have adjustments and innovation related to climate change. There are some specific funds that first nations are involved in. A couple of days ago we announced some great projects where they are adding traditional knowledge to scientific knowledge to come up with a plan for the future, so they can adapt to these critical changes to the environment that are happening in the north.

● (1610)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister thinks he has discovered a cornucopia of cash. In the last fiscal year he ran a deficit of \$354 billion. From February 2020 until February 2021, the Bank of Canada increased the money supply by, guess what, \$354 billion. The Prime Minister thinks this is great: It is easy money. He is starting to get addicted to this idea of cash flying out of printing machines and new coins being machine-gunned off the top floor of the Bank of Canada building, only a few minutes from where we stand.

I raise this today because there is a very interesting debate that is not happening, for which the deadline is quickly approaching, about the Bank of Canada's inflation target. Starting in 1991, the bank and the government signed a deal that inflation would be targeted between 1% and 3%. They called it the "monetary policy framework": These are sleepy, boring words that may impact the financial health of Canadians more than anything else that happens here in Parliament. That deal to target inflation renews every five years. It comes up for renewal on October 24 of this year. The Prime Minister has made it clear he is going to call an early election during the summer, meaning that if he were to win he would be able to impose a brand new rule about inflation without Canadians having anything to say about it. I suspect that 99% of Canadians do not even realize this is up for debate, but here is why it matters.

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If the Prime Minister were to change the bank's mandate this coming October, he could begin to permanently fund larger shares of government spending with printed Bank of Canada cash even if it leads to above 3% inflation, as we have right now. That would have been impossible prior to the pandemic. Based on agreements with the bank, we as Canadians were protected from undue price increases and unacceptable and unjustifiable money creation, but with the renewal of this agreement, about which there has been absolutely no debate in the House of Commons or at the finance committee, the Prime Minister may be able to carry out the biggest unapproved tax increase in Canadian history: the inflation tax.

What is the inflation tax? It is very simple. When the Bank of Canada creates cash to fund the government, it provides the government with a new revenue source. Last year, cash newly created by the Bank of Canada was the single-greatest source of revenue for the government. It was not income tax, the GST, tariffs or even borrowing from private sector lenders, but new cash creation that constituted a \$303 billion source of revenue for the current government. The Prime Minister might like to see this go on into the future. The problem is that, like all taxes, it increases costs for Canadians. This tax would be paid in the form of higher prices. The price of housing went up by 30%. The prices of food, lumber, automobiles and transportation have all broken recent records. That is naturally what we can expect when the government floods the marketplace with cheap money. When money is cheap, everything else suddenly gets expensive.

We might ask if it is viewed as a tax by the experts. Let me quote the experts. I will go through them one at a time.

In a 1978 lecture, Nobel prize-winning economist Milton Friedman stated:

There has never been in history an inflation that was not accompanied by an extremely rapid increase in the quantity of money. There has never in history been an extremely rapid increase in the quantity of money without inflation....

● (1615)

This is why Dr. Friedman wrote, in his exhaustive study entitled "A Monetary History of the United States, 1867-1960", that "inflation is everywhere and always a monetary phenomenon". He also said that "inflation is taxation without legislation", thereby violating the basic principle that Parliament should approve every single tax before government is able to apply it.

Some might say that this is just a classical economist view. Let us take a look at John Maynard Keynes, who is obviously not a classical economist. He said:

By a continuing process of inflation, governments can confiscate, secretly and unobserved, an important part of the wealth of their citizens. By this method they not only confiscate, but they confiscate arbitrarily; and, while the process impoverishes many, it actually enriches some.

This has been demonstrably proven. Inflation does benefit the extremely wealthy. That is why, in the last year of inflationary money printing, we saw a large increase in economic disparity between the rich and the poor. In the first six months of the central bank's money-printing bonanza, the 28 richest Canadians got 32% richer. That happened while our economy was tumbling by \$120 billion.

Where did they get all the money from? The bank created cash, which inflated the assets of the super-rich while devaluing the wages of the working poor. This is one of the reasons we have the principle of no taxation without representation: It is not simply to approve the quantity of taxes, but the composition of taxes. Quantity refers to the dollar value. Of course, that was gargantuan last year, but composition refers to who pays it.

We know that the poor overwhelmingly pay the inflation tax. In fact, the governor of the Bank of Canada conceded that point to me when he came before the finance committee. He said the poor pay more in inflation because they deal more in cash. They are not able to hold their limited wealth in inflation-proof assets, like gold, land, stocks, bonds, etc. Therefore, the very small amount of money they have gets nibbled away by this silent thief we call inflation.

No one in this chamber would be able to get re-elected if they stood in their place and voted for an increase in taxes on the working poor and used the money disproportionately to inflate the wealth of the super-rich. That is why no such vote was held. The government simply passed that process on to the Bank of Canada to let money creation do the dirty deed on its behalf.

I will return to Dr. Milton Friedman, a Nobel Laureate, who said, "Inflation is the only form of taxation that can be levied without any legislation." He was, of course, speaking as an economist. I will show the deliberate choice that the inflation tax has made and that has done so without the parliamentary approval of Canadians. I will show it by referring to the undeniable empirical evidence that Dr. Friedman produced.

He showed that, in the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany and Brazil, there was a perfect correlation between the rise in the consumer price index and the increase in the money supply for each unit of economic output. In other words, in all five of those countries on four continents, inflation rose almost perfectly in line with the growth in the money supply. That is empirical evidence proving beyond a doubt that when we create cash, we raise prices to the benefit of the rich and at the expense of the poor.

Modern financial sector experts say the same. HSBC's senior economic adviser, Stephen King, wrote in *The Financial Times* last year that "inflation and taxes are, in many ways, simply two sides of the same coin". He further said that this is because "higher-than-anticipated inflation serves to redistribute wealth away from private creditors, pensioners for example, to public debtors. At this point, we come full circle: the distinction between the printing press and taxes begins to break down."

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● (1620)

Warren Buffett, the greatest investor of all time, said:

The arithmetic makes it plain that inflation is a far more devastating tax than anything that has been enacted by our legislature. The inflation tax has a fantastic ability to simply consume capital. It makes no difference to a widow with her savings in a 5 percent passbook account whether she pays 100 percent income tax on her interest income during a period of zero inflation, or pays no income taxes during years of 5 percent inflation. Either way, she is "taxed" in a manner that leaves her no real income whatsoever. Any money she spends comes right out of capital. She would find outrageous a 120 percent income tax, but doesn't seem to notice that 5 percent inflation is the economic equivalent.

Let us say that a widow has \$100,000 of savings. If she earns 5% on that, and if inflation is 5%, then she gains nothing. All of her savings income is vaporized by inflation. That would be the equivalent of the Parliament of Canada passing a bill effectively taxing her at a rate of 100% on all of her savings income, something we would never do but yet something that ultimately happens because the central bank does it without politicians being held accountable.

Mr. Buffett's business partner, the famous Charlie Munger, said:

I think democracies are prone to inflation because politicians will naturally spend excessively, they have the power to print money and will use money to get votes. If you look at inflation under the Roman Empire, with absolute rulers, they had much greater inflation, so we don't set the record. It happens over the long-term under any form of government.

Onward to John Kenneth Galbraith, a famous Canadian economist on the left, who said, "Nothing so weakens government as persistent inflation."

Other international economists, Nouriel Roubini and David Backus, wrote, "Note that since the government, by printing money, acquires real goods and services, seigniorage is effectively a tax imposed by the government on private agents. Such a seigniorage tax is also called the inflation tax." They go on to explain what impact that tax has, particularly on the poorest people.

This is not simply an opinion. This is a mathematical fact backed up by some of the most renowned economists on planet earth, many of them winning the Nobel Prize for their work, many of them having done hundreds of years of empirical research that proves the taxation effect of inflation. These are the insights of some of the world's best-ever investors. They all concur that inflation, when created by central bank money creation, is nothing more than a tax.

This kind of a tax has been mostly done by the worst possible leaders. We think of Henry VIII, for example. They used to call Henry VIII "Old Coppernose", and that is because, despite the fact that he inherited a monstrous fortune from his father, and I do not know if that reminds members of anybody, he spent the cupboard bare. He kept running out of money, and the British pound, which was literally a pound of silver, was becoming more and more scarce to him.

He needed more coins, but he did not have enough silver to make them all, so what he did was melt down the existing coins and reconstitute them by making them of copper but putting a tiny, thin layer of silver around the outside. He had his face, of course, on the coin because he was an egomaniac, and his face pointed outward from the coin; it was not a profile picture. Because his nose protruded on the coin, it would rub against the inside of pockets and money sacks and the silver would rub away, leaving nothing but a

red copper nose. Everybody would know that King Henry had given them a fraudulent, fake silver coin by virtue of the fact that his nose was red. We often say politicians' fibs can be exposed through the length of their nose. In the case of Henry VIII, it was the colour of his nose.

● (1625)

In fact, he did undergo the mass debasement of the currency. Originally, when he took reign, the British pound was 92% silver. It dropped to 75%, then 50%, then 33% and finally to 25% by 1551. His successor brought it down further. The result was, ultimately, that the amount of silver in each coin dropped by about 87%, and guess what happened to the prices. They rose by about 75%. Things got more and more expensive. Life got better for him. Of course, he was known for having the king's disease, gout, which people get from massive self-indulgence, orgies of food and drink. Therefore, life was very good in the king's court because he had created all of this fake cash that enriched him and his friends, but it was terrible for the peasants and the common people who actually did the work of the land. They got poorer and poorer as their money got more and more worthless.

That is the inflation tax, so this Prime Minister of ours teaches us nothing new. This is not a new concept. In fact, if we look throughout history on these matters of economics, we see that leaders make the same mistakes over and over again. As Kipling would say:

That the Dog returns to his Vomit and the Sow returns to her Mire,
And the burnt Fool's bandaged finger goes wabbling back to the Fire—

Therefore, we get burned again and again by making the same mistakes of our predecessors.

That brings me back to the Bank of Canada. The bank recently has been talking about all kinds of different things that have nothing to do with its mandate. For example, the former governor Stephen Poloz regularly commented on things that were completely out of his domain, inappropriately commenting on social policy when he proposed government takeover of child care. That is well out of the realm of the Bank of Canada's mandate. We have seen recent comments by governors and deputy governors of the Bank of Canada on everything from fiscal policy to environmental policy to a whole plethora of things that find their place nowhere within the bank's mandate. Even on the bank's website, Paul Beaudry, a deputy governor, talks about, in his words, "the great reset", whatever that means. He believes this is part of the Bank of Canada's mandate, and of course it is not.

The worry is that the bank will simply become a political instrument for the agenda of a left-wing government, trying to do undemocratically what it could never convince Canadians to support democratically.

Canadians would never support a massive tax increase on the poor in order to fund the ideological fantasies and the enrichment of the super rich and the super elite. That is why we in Parliament have to reclaim our powers, the powers that have been invested in this chamber and in its predecessor chambers in the mother Parliament for 800 years: that governments, including central banks, cannot tax what the commoners have not approved; that the principle of responsible government remains; that Parliament reigns supreme; that citizen goes before state and commoner ahead of Crown.

• (1630)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is almost like déjà vu. I have heard this before from the member because it was not that long ago when he was up on a matter of privilege, arguing why it was a privilege issue. I responded in part by saying that it was not a matter of privilege, but that in fact the member could be talking about it on Bill C-30. Voila, here we are on Bill C-30 and the member is at least relevant to the debate.

Would my friend across the way not acknowledge, at the very least, that his theory is based on the fact that the government had a need to support Canadians during a pandemic by investing billions of dollars into direct support through programs like CERB and the wage subsidy program, along with a number of other programs? Is he advocating on behalf of the Conservative Party that we should not have done that?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, once again, we have an example of a Liberal judging his success by how expensive he can be. If we look at the other countries that responded to COVID, they managed to deliver better results. They managed to deliver better COVID outcomes and lower unemployment with significantly smaller deficits. In fact, we have the largest deficit, as a share of GDP, anywhere in the G20. In fact, we had a bigger deficit last year, as a share of GDP adjusted for inflation, than we did in World War I, in the Great Depression and in the great global recession.

What the government is building us toward is a debt crisis. It has massively inflated the housing market by flooding the mortgage system with printed cash. It is now creating consumer price inflation, and our \$8.6 trillion of household, corporate and government debt will "debtinate" if interest rates rise before our debt ratios come down.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport-Côte-de-Beaupré-Île d'Orléans-Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his statement. There was a lot packed into it.

After the pandemic and a major global crisis that has affected much of the world, the economy is obviously destabilized. There is therefore a temporary imbalance and adjustments to be made.

I think that we are entering a period of adjustment. There are not that many ways of addressing this imbalance and trying to make adjustments. We can inject new money, hoping to stimulate the creativity of our country, of our Quebec and our Canada. We can in-

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vest in innovative economies to find our balance in the national and international economy. We can also apply austerity measures to limit fluctuations as much as possible.

Contrary to what you said, if the government did things wrong, does that mean that you support austerity measures?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the member that she must address her comments to the Chair. I am certain that her question was not intended for the Chair.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question.

The problem is that all of the other parties measure success as a function of how much it costs. Personally, I measure results based on people's quality of life. For example, Taiwan, Singapore and Australia spent far less than Canada and had far fewer COVID-related deaths. Moreover, their unemployment rates are far lower than Canada's.

It is true that the Liberals' approach is the most expensive among all the G7 countries, but that does not mean that we received the best product. If someone pays more for a car, that does not mean that it is a better car. Personally, I want value for our taxpayers; I want the best outcome for the lowest price. That is the Conservatives' approach.

[English]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while 53% of Canadians are \$200 away from being unable to pay their bills, Canada's 44 billionaires have accrued close to \$80 billion in pandemic profiteering, and 87 families have hoarded more wealth than 12 million Canadians. Since 2015, the CRA's program to combat tax evasion by individuals worth more than \$50 million has resulted in zero prosecutions and zero convictions, despite having 6,000 audits, yet this member and his Conservative colleagues joined the Liberals to vote down our NDP wealth tax.

Does the member, having referenced the working poor in relation to tax fairness, not agree that the government needs to finally close the flagrant tax loopholes and finally begin to aggressively prosecute those who hide their wealth offshore in tax havens in order to avoid paying their fair share to Canadians right here today?

• (1635)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, yes, we do support going after people who do not pay what they owe, especially the richest. The member is quite right: The richest are making off like bandits when it comes to tax evasion in this country, despite the rhetoric from the other side.

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However, I would point out that it is actually not profits that are most enriching the wealthy; it is capital gains. It is the monstrous increases in capital gains that have resulted from flooding the economy with \$350 billion of new Monopoly money. That money has gone into asset price inflation, making the rich vastly richer and creating a kind of aristocratic feudal economy, as opposed to a free market, bottom-up economy.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very informative and well-researched intervention on inflation. From meeting with manufacturers, importers and retailers, I have heard a lot about a number of new regulatory burdens that have either just come into effect or are about to come into effect and concerns about pricing, product availability and Canada's competitiveness.

I am wondering if the member could speak to how regulatory burdens may affect inflation.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, they can affect it very drastically. For example, I think the member has been looking into new appliance regulations that would make the appliances that Canadians buy far more expensive than the same appliances that are available south of the border, even though we live in an integrated market for those same products.

By the way, big corporations do not pay the cost of regulations; they pass it all on to their workers in reduced wages and on to consumers in higher prices. In fact, many of the biggest companies love regulation, because they can use it to shut out their competition by making it more and more difficult and more and more expensive for other entrepreneurs to get into the field.

What does that mean? Less competition always means higher prices for consumers and lower wages and fewer career opportunities for workers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the historical part of the speech made by my colleague from Carleton, the part where he spoke about the value of currency under Henry IV, if I remember correctly.

I see that my colleague has some appreciation for history. Sovereignists were teased a lot about the “Lévesque dollar”, which was supposedly worth 70 cents. However, in recent decades, there were times when we would happily have taken that 70-cent dollar.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about today’s “Trudeau dollar”. Can he tell me how much the “Poilievre dollar” would be worth if he were minister of finance?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would like to remind the member that he is not to use the names of sitting members in the House of Commons. I hope he will make an effort to follow the rules from now on.

The hon. member for Carleton has one minute to answer the question.

[*English*]

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, the member did not use my name. He simply mentioned the official name of the currency that I am going to create in the future. If the Bloc Québécois opposes that currency, then I will be able to say that it was a Bloc member who suggested that the Conservatives create a currency bearing my last name. It would be a currency that maintains its value, that workers would appreciate and that would enable them to buy more. That is the best idea I have ever heard here in the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, Telecommunications; the hon. member for Vancouver East, Housing; the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove, Housing.

• (1640)

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to talk about Bill C-30, the budget implementation act.

I realize this will probably be my last speech before an election. Before I get to the budget, I would like to acknowledge that it is an honour to represent the people of Markham—Unionville in Parliament. When I first came to this country over 45 years ago, I barely spoke English and never imagined representing my community on the town council, let alone in Parliament. I want to thank my community for its continued support.

COVID-19 will be an event people will talk about for generations. A virus ground the whole world to a halt and killed millions. No government was truly prepared, and politicians were put in a position where they needed to make important calls quickly instead of waiting years to address the problem. In some countries, politicians rose to the occasion and worked with one another to help their country overcome the pandemic. In other countries, governments kept people in the dark about the pandemic, denied there was a problem and turned every decision into political showmanship. It is clear that Canada was in the second category.

In this budget, the Liberal government is planning to double down on many of its terrible ideas. Instead of focusing on what Canadians need to get back on their feet, the Liberals are looking for ways to spend on their priorities. Of course, those priorities always include making Liberal insiders a boatload of money. So far, the consultant and lobbyist business has never been better for people with a connection to the Prime Minister. The Liberals' priorities are adding billions of dollars to the debt that we cannot afford.

We know that when Liberal MPs defend their Prime Minister's spending spree, they like to slip into technical terms that make it hard to follow. I am going to try to do the opposite and make my points easy to follow.

Government Orders

When I came to this country, I pinched every penny. I was an Indian teen with almost no English, and finding a job was not easy. Every dollar I spent mattered. I made a lot of tough decisions in those days about what I could go without. That meant a lot of cheese sandwiches.

When I started my family, I had to continue making tough decisions. We could not spend more money than we earned. I remember sitting down with my wife Roopa multiple times and deciding to save for the children's education or for rainy days rather than taking a vacation. For us, education was the most important thing. That education included teaching my children about budgeting.

I believe that the hard decisions I made with Roopa at the kitchen table paid off. My eldest child, Rohin, is a physician now, and I could not be more proud of his success. The savings I put aside when he was still a baby helped him afford his medical education. His wife Preoli is a dentist with a very similar story.

My other son, Tarun, went to university and now works in the provincial government. He also used what he learned in school in business. My daughter Shalin was recently accepted into a law program. All of these events proved to my wife and me that saving had been the right choice. We had gone without many of the things we wanted, but we had the money we needed when tuition was due for our children.

• (1645)

I know that Liberals hate it when Conservatives compare balancing the budget with balancing the household. The Liberals say that it is much more complicated than that. While the federal budget is more complicated, the basic facts remain the same.

When money is borrowed, someone is on the hook for it. That may come as a shock to some members of this House. Every time there is a vote in this House to spend money, I think about who pays. Years ago when people talked about the budget, they would say that the government should overspend in the bad years to stimulate the economy, and in the good years the government should pay off the debts. That way, the next time things took a turn for the worse, there would be money ready to stimulate the economy again.

The Liberal government has abandoned that way of thinking. It wants Canadians to believe that no government has to pay anything back, that through careful planning the government could juggle the debts forever and have all the benefits of overspending with none of the drawbacks. It is a terrible plan.

COVID-19 proved that governments need to have room to spend. Without government support, many Canadians would have been bankrupted by COVID-19. I know that even with some government support, many small businesses did not make it.

The pandemic has raised our debt to new heights. When we vote on spending money in Parliament, we need to remember that we must be ready for the next crisis. That means not spending more than we can afford now.

The Minister of Finance has said:

Canada is a young, vast country, with a tremendous capacity for growth. This budget would fuel that. These are investments in our future and they will yield great

dividends. In fact, in today's low-interest rate environment, not only can we afford these investments, it would be shortsighted of us not to make them.

That it would be "short-sighted of us not to make them" is an interesting statement. I wonder if the Minister of Finance can name a time when spending more than we have was short-sighted. The Liberal government seems to believe that more spending is always necessary. Just look at the promise the Prime Minister made in 2015: that the budget would be balanced in no time, with just a couple of small deficits and then smooth sailing. The promises of responsible spending have been nothing more than hollow words.

I am going to get back to who pays. Most Canadians probably do not realize how much Canada is paying for its borrowing. Even with low interest rates, it is well over \$20 billion. The Prime Minister's plan to add more to our national debt than all previous prime ministers combined will grow the interest payments to new heights.

The Prime Minister told everyone that budgets balance themselves. If he is still under this belief, let me assure him that this is not the case. When we do nothing to tackle the debt and spending, things get worse. People are told to avoid these sorts of debt traps in their personal life. The Liberals think adding historically high debt is responsible. Their plan requires Canadians to think that debt is a problem far into the future, that Canadians will be okay with giving debt to the next generation. For me, that is unacceptable.

I came to this country for a better life. I knew this was a place where people could raise a family and have their children succeed. The last thing I would want to do is hand them a debt bomb that they and their children will need to deal with.

When I talk to Markham residents, I hear the same thing. People work very hard so that their children will have a better life than they have. They do not want to set up their children for hard times.

• (1650)

A debt crisis always ends in hard times with either tax hikes or cuts to services, or both. The new taxes in the budget are puny compared to the spending. To raise the money needed to put a dent in the debt, the Liberals would need to double some of these taxes every year.

Liberal tax hikes make it more unaffordable to support a family. Canadians cannot afford to pay more. Some people think inflation is a solution, but that is a mistake. It is a tax on everything, and it will make it even harder to borrow money.

Government Orders

The other option of cutting services has been done before. In the nineties, the Liberal government, in the middle of a debt crisis, went to the bank to borrow money, but no one was interested in lending it to them. To get their books in order, the Liberals took a chainsaw to government spending. One of the things they cut was the health care spending. The effects of those cuts are still felt to this day. Does anyone think health care in Canada can take another cut? I do not.

I was shocked, like many Canadians, that health care was not a huge part of this budget. Emergency rooms across the country were stretched to their limit over the past two years. Essential surgeries were put off because hospitals were COVID-19 hot spots. It takes a long time to deal with the backlog of the procedures.

The provinces need help from the federal government to address health care, but the Liberals do not seem to care. This mess can be fixed. The way to get ahead of the debt problem is to get the spending under control now. The government cannot kick this problem down the road.

This budget and plan for the future will create more problems and make life more difficult for Canadians in the future. That is why I will be voting against this budget.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, let me say to the member for Markham—Unionville that I have heard his story. He came to this country. He has been everything from a labourer, to a salesperson, to an entrepreneur. He is also a husband and a dad, and his values are Canadian values. When this gentleman stands to talk about what value for money is, folks in my area would agree with this member. We cannot always be spending more than we have, and if we are, we have to think of the next generation.

Could the member point out one thing that the government needs to do better on in regard to its budgeting?

Mr. Bob Saroya: Madam Speaker, it is simple, and it is the borrowing. Borrowing in our personal life is no different than that of the government spending. It is just like anybody bringing in \$200,000 a year who keeps spending \$300,000 a year, year over year. How long will it be until the bank comes to knock at the door?

Yes, we do need to spend money. Yes, we do look into the small and medium-sized businesses. Yes, we have to make sure they are taken care of, but in the meantime, we must keep in mind balancing the books at the end of day. We want to make sure that government spends what it needs to spend and balances the books at the end of the day.

• (1655)

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Madam Speaker, I really did enjoy my hon. colleague's comments. He spoke about the importance of government spending when necessary and having the ability to pay off the debt so it can, in fact, spend. I am wondering if he could talk to us about good debt versus bad debt.

Mr. Bob Saroya: Madam Speaker, there is good spending versus bad spending. In the beginning of the pandemic, the Liberals were announcing 10% for the small and medium-sized businesses. We fought with them to make sure we allowed them 70% of their

wages on rent and other things. That was good spending and those were good debts.

I read in the newspaper that they are creating \$446 billion in debt and, on their priorities, 87% of the debt money is not going toward the right priorities, which are small and medium-sized businesses.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I hear this argument a lot from Conservatives about the amount of debt, and Conservatives like to equate it back to—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: If the member for Carleton would let me speak, I will ask my question.

Conservatives like to equate a government budget to a household budget. However, the reality is that they cannot be compared, and that is not comparing apples to apples.

The reality is that, if the Conservatives want to make a better comparison, the member needs to consider the fact that, when we have an economy that is continually growing every year, notwithstanding the fact that we have had challenges over the last year, it would be like saying that a person's household income continued to grow every year and therefore the size of mortgage they could take on would grow every year.

As long as the country's economy is growing at a pace that is fast enough to take on that debt, it is entirely acceptable. Members do not need to take my word or the Liberals' word for it, because, indeed, that is what Conservatives did. That is why, between Mulroney and Harper, 14 out of 16 budgets ran deficits, because they recognized that.

The member for Carleton can check it out. There were actually two surpluses, and they were on the back of Paul Martin. Those were the only two surpluses during an extremely long time.

So, can the member not realize that there is a difference between household debt and debt that is being taken on by—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Markham—Unionville.

Mr. Bob Saroya: Madam Speaker, it is the same thing. A debt is a debt, even if borrowing against Canada. Every Canadian household is on the hook for this \$446 billion. The money needs to be paid back. The money the government is printing is on the people. Every family will owe \$78,000, as the government borrowed that kind of money.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will remind members that having side conversations while somebody is speaking is not very polite. I would ask members to listen to the answers to the questions they have asked.

We will continue with questions and comments.

The hon. member for Surrey—Newton.

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Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate my friend on the other side for his success and his family's success for being successful parents, and I want to congratulate his family.

On the other hand, when I look at this, I have a similar situation to him. We might not agree on some of the policy decisions that are made, but certainly he is one of my favourites on the other side.

However, as he talked about education and the families who needed that money to send their children to school, to universities, my question to my hon. friend is this: Did the Prime Minister make the right decision at that time? Instead of putting the cost on the family credit cards, the government took the decision to support those students with \$1,500 a month, families that need it the most with \$2,000 a month, and businesses with the wage subsidy and \$40,000 for start-ups.

• (1700)

Mr. Bob Saroya: Madam Speaker, I thank my friend on the other side. He absolutely makes sense. There is that good debt when we were fighting to pay \$1,500 to students and many other things.

However, we are more concerned with the 87% of the total debt created. Where did that money go? It was to the government's own priorities, but we will probably find out when we get to be government next year.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member's interventions in this debate.

As a country, we are facing a number of things. Obviously, we are dealing with a pandemic, but we also need to be thinking about our aging demographics and the fact that so many people are going to need things such as health care, which puts more pressure on our tax base to be able to pay for all the spending that is going on now.

It is more important than ever that we build productive infrastructure and make investments for the long term. Would the member agree with that?

Mr. Bob Saroya: Madam Speaker, as I said in my speech, there is not much in this budget for the future. We know the population is aging, and we need much more money. As we have seen in the last 18 months, the hospitals were COVID hot spots. Surgeries were delayed and, in some cases, are still delayed.

When Stephen Harper was in the government, we increased the health care sector year over year, but from these Liberals there is nothing in the budget for health care.

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member should be incredibly proud of that intervention, his family, and all he has done and brought to this country.

I have a simple question for you. How concerned are you for those kids of yours, with the massive amount of debt the government is accumulating?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the hon. member that he is to address questions through the Chair and not to the individual member.

The hon. member for Markham—Unionville.

Mr. Bob Saroya: Madam Speaker, I am not only concerned about my kids, I am also concerned about all Canadians throughout the country. The debt created by the government is \$446 billion and another \$437 billion from the last 149 years. All our future generations are on the hook. I really feel sorry for them, and the government should look into balancing the books.

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Question.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division, or that the motion be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, I would like to request a recorded division.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made on Monday, January 25, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 23, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

* * *

CANADIAN NET-ZERO EMISSIONS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

MOTION THAT DEBATE BE NOT FURTHER ADJOURNED

Hon. Mona Fortier (Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in relation to the consideration of Government Business No. 9, I move:

That the debate not be further adjourned.

• (1705)

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period.

The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am terribly disappointed with the conduct of the government, and Canadians should be as well. The Liberals rushed their Bill C-12 through to committee. The committee decided that it did not want to hear from Canadians and ignored the majority of the briefs. The MP for Saanich—Gulf Islands, as well as members of the environment committee, were quite frankly ashamed to see Canadians ignored. Now, the government, because of its absolute mismanagement of the House calendar, is coming and invoking closure.

S. O. 57

I cannot believe the New Democratic Party is going to be supporting this, but I wanted to ask how the government can justify using closure on a bill of this magnitude and denying the ability of parliamentarians on both sides of the House to hold the government to account.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, climate change is an extremely important subject, and we should all understand that. It is important not only that we have credible targets and plans, but that we have a commitment to achieving what science tells us we must, which is net zero by 2050.

This government has worked collaboratively with opposition members to come up with a strengthened bill that is best in class with respect to how these bills work around the world. We are very proud of this legislation. Certainly many Canadians desire to see it go forward, and while the Conservatives have delayed across the board a whole range of legislative options, it has been very much apparent from our side that we want to get it through the House to ensure that it is in place.

With respect to being ashamed, I would say that I am ashamed as a Canadian that there is a party in the House that is still unable to convince its own members that climate change is real.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Mégantic, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very disappointed in how this government is governing. We were understanding during the pandemic, and the opposition parties worked with the government to implement exceptional measures.

However, it is not our fault if the government did a poor job of managing its parliamentary calendar and finds itself at the end of the session with dozens of bills to rush through. It is not giving us enough time to debate them, and that is just what is happening with Bill C-12. We were hurried along in committee and did not get to improve it like we should have.

Why did the government not simply table it sooner?

• (1710)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question and for being so concerned about climate change, which is a very important issue.

The government supported a Bloc Québécois amendment calling for a five-year review of the act and also included several elements of Bill C-215 in Bill C-12.

Canadians think it is very important for us to go ahead with this bill. We committed to passing a law to assure Canadians that all future governments will be required to meet the 2050 net-zero targets.

[*English*]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, this bill is not the legislation we would have written. However, it is stronger than it was and we believe that it should be passed into law.

I believe I just heard the minister state that Bill C-12 is best in class when it comes to international climate accountability legisla-

tion. The message we heard very clearly from some of Canada's most prominent environmental organizations at committee was that the bill did not measure up to the best examples of climate accountability around the world.

I wonder if the minister could provide some rationale for his statement. What evidence does he base his “best in class” statement on?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley for his constructive approach to working collaboratively to ensure that we are moving forward on a bill that I think we all agree is very important.

With respect to my statement, this bill has an enormous number of accountability mechanisms in it. Not only does it require progressively more stringent targets on the pathway to 2050, but there will be a range of progress reports, some of which were brought forward through amendments by the environment committee. There are reports with respect to what has been achieved, and requirements to essentially do more if we are short of our goals. There are third party accountability mechanisms through the environment commissioner. There is also now a milestone mechanism for 2026 to ensure that accountability starts tomorrow. That is all appropriate, as it should be, and it is a very strong piece of legislation.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, Greta Thunberg has said that net zero by 2050 is “surrender”, and without tough near-term targets, we are abandoning our children and grandchildren to an unlivable world. Bill C-12 still lacks a 2025 milestone, which was established in the COP decision document that Canada signed on to, and all experts agree that 2030 is too late.

The NDP and Liberal amendment for a 2026 interim greenhouse gas emissions goal is not a milestone year, but provides a window to review progress or the lack of progress. Why did the government reject the Green Party amendment that the plans and targets must be based on the best available science?

• (1715)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, it is very important that we are guided by science. We are guided by the science and guidance of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which has indicated that countries need to achieve the net-zero target by 2050 if we are to keep the rise in average global temperature to less than 2°C, with a focus on 1.5°C. That is exactly what we are doing.

We established and announced our new target only a couple of months ago, and we announced it alongside those of our G7 partners. The G7 is now aligned with science on net zero by 2050, which is aligned with science relative to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It is extremely important that we are taking the steps we must take to ensure that our children will inhabit and inherit a livable world. I agree with what the member said.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the minister's efforts in bringing forward this legislation. I think it is very reflective of what Canadians in all regions from coast to coast to coast want to see of the government. They want us to have ambitious goals and strive to achieve them.

Can the minister reinforce why it is so important that we see this very progressive piece of legislation move forward? Ultimately, I know that the residents of Winnipeg North, and indeed Canadians as a whole, want a government that is serious about the environment.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, this is part of a comprehensive approach to addressing climate change. Of course, part of it is establishing a near-term target and a plan to actually meet that target. This government has done that and provided a plan to achieve our goals. We are the first government in Canada that has provided a detailed pathway, and I would say that our climate plan is one of the most detailed plans that exist anywhere in the world.

Of course, we need to have a forcing function on governments going forward to ensure that they are continuing to be transparent and accountable to Canadians on the pathway toward what science tells us we must achieve, which is net zero by 2050. We will never again have a government in this country like Stephen Harper's, which had a target and never had a plan. There will be a forcing function going forward, and it will ensure that all political parties and all governments take this issue seriously.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are here debating closure on a very important topic. It is top of mind for all Canadians. As we have already heard other members say, the bill was rammed through committee and the government did not consider all the reports at committee. I am on the natural resources committee. We have been hearing from numerous witnesses across multiple studies that the government does not even have complete data on the amount of carbon that we sequester here, and there does not appear to be any commitment to make sure we are getting that data.

What is going to be done to make sure this will be achieved as we move toward the path that the government is ramming through on Canadians?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, there were a couple of questions there. Canadians are anxious to see progress made. We lost 10 years under Stephen Harper, when nothing was done to address the climate issue, and it is important to keep going given that we must make rapid progress between now and 2030 if we are to achieve net zero by 2050.

S. O. 57

With respect to carbon issues, there are methodologies under the IPCC that focus on how we account for various kinds of carbon sequestration and for carbon emissions, and they are done on an international basis, as they must be to ensure that there is comparability between states.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois does not agree with the use of closure. This is nothing new.

The minister said earlier that the government had accepted amendments proposed by the Bloc Québécois. Let me just set the record straight. We tabled only one of the 33 amendments, and the Liberals still found a way to vote against it.

The Bloc Québécois opposed the clause mentioning targets because it was outraged by the fact that the Minister of Canadian Heritage told the House and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change told the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development that they would include quantified targets in Bill C-12, yet they did not keep their word.

The fact remains that Bill C-12 was tabled in November and reached the committee in mid-May. If they thought it was urgent, why did the minister and his government not speed up the process? They had all of December, plus the period from February to May, to do that.

• (1720)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question.

The Bloc Québécois amendment provided for a five-year review of the act. We also included several elements of Bill C-215 in the bill.

There are a lot of things we agree on. Of course climate change is a crisis. We must fight climate change, and we have to act very quickly, because we do not have much time to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We want the bill to include measures to fight climate change that will be binding on all future governments.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, the minister has spoken many times about the importance of the climate crisis and the importance of taking action, yet here we are, just one day before the House rises for the summer, trying to get this important bill through the House.

The government controls the legislative calendar. This bill was introduced last November and only came to the environment committee in May. Could the minister explain how we got to this point at which the House is considering these extraordinary motions in order to pass this important legislation?

S. O. 57

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, as I have said, the issue of climate change is urgent. The House even adopted a motion some time ago saying that it was a climate emergency. There is a lot of agreement between most of the political parties in the House not only with respect to the need to act, but with respect to a number of the instruments that we need to use to act, one of them being this law.

Certainly we are focused very much on ensuring that this law is put into place so that it will be a forcing function on all governments going forward to ensure that we are taking climate change seriously. I have been very pleased to work collaboratively on this with the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley and the member for Victoria. It is important for us, before we finish our session, to ensure that it is in place.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, the minister said in the House at second reading of Bill C-12 that he was willing to work with all considerations from other parties. We asked for industry representation on the advisory board and he said he was open to that. Then he said that the Liberals were open to working with all parties regarding amendments. He also said that the Liberals supported a Bloc motion to have parliamentary review, which was not true. It was not something that happened. The Liberals voted against it. Today in the House, he said that there was an NDP milestone amendment, but the Green Party representative said this was not factual either.

Why are the minister and his party constantly in contradiction with the actual truth? Are we are having closure right now because they want to evade all accountability and pretend they are taking action on climate? Why does the minister always have to correct himself when he is found out?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, the hon. member needs to ensure that he has done his homework.

I can run through the industry representation on the net-zero advisory body. It includes Peter Tertzakian, the deputy director of ARC Energy Research Institute; John Wright, former president of SaskPower; Linda Coady, who is a vice-president at Enbridge; Gaëtan Thomas, former CEO at NB Power; and Dan Wicklum, who is the founding CEO of the Canada's Oil Sands Innovation Alliance. What the hon. member said in the House is therefore not true.

With respect to being open to working with others, we actually have demonstrated that. We worked collaboratively with other parties. The hon. member will remember that even though he said he was going to support this bill early on, he opposed it at second reading, which means he opposed the principle of the bill. That is not a very good basis for working together with respect to amendments. However, we found a manner to work collaboratively with other members on the committee to ensure that we strengthened the bill, and it is a very strong bill.

• (1725)

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise with some emotion and pride because my son, Léon, has just completed elementary school in Rouyn-Noran-

da. I would like to congratulate him, his classmates and the teaching staff at Sacré-Coeur school.

I have a question for the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I apologize to the hon. member for interrupting, but there is a point of order being raised on the lack of interpretation.

[English]

The clock has been stopped. We are checking on the translation.

[Translation]

The interpretation is working now and I invite the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue to continue.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: When I think of my son and of Bill C-12, I wonder: If one day he has the opportunity to sit in the House, will he be forced to participate in the same debates we are having today?

How does the minister, who I believe also has children, see the future of this debate if the fiscal anchors are not mandatory? Are we not letting this opportunity slip by? What concrete steps should we be taking for the sake of our children?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his son's success.

I do in fact have two daughters, which is perhaps the main reason I got into politics. I think this is a very important issue for all members in the House, but perhaps even more so for those with children.

We have worked very hard to have a very strong piece of legislation that will ensure that future governments understand the importance of climate change and continue to take action to fight it. I fully agree with my colleague.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, listening to the Conservatives, it would seem that they are totally surprised by the fact that we had to bring this motion, so that we could move along with things. The reality is that, if we are being fair, over the last several months there has been a continuous logjam of trying to put legislation on the agenda for various different reasons, whether it is filibustering over various points of order or not letting the House proceed with its normal course of business by using other procedural tactics.

The reality is that this bill, which was introduced in the fall, was debated. It passed second reading in April. It was then at committee. Committee has now reported back because of the programming motion. Now it is back before this House. Yesterday, the minister gave notice that this motion would be coming forward, so nobody should be surprised that this is coming forward today.

I cannot think of an issue that requires more immediate attention and disclosure than an issue with respect to the environment. Can the minister comment on how incredibly important it is that we deal with this now before the House rises for this session?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, this is extremely important. As I said, we are living in a climate crisis. It is critical that Canada have a plan to move forward, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and seize the economic opportunities that will come for countries that are thoughtful about transitioning to a low-carbon future.

We do not have a lot of time both between now and 2030, but also between now and 2050, because we are talking about a very significant change in how we make products, drive cars, do all kinds of different things. It is absolutely critical that we do that. I do think that the kinds of things that we have seen, unfortunately from the Conservative Party, in terms of delaying legislation, have led us to the point where we actually are forcing this conversation very quickly because of the crisis.

At the end of the day, I have been telling parents' groups, and I have been telling environmental organizations that if they want this to move forward, they have to talk to the leader of the opposition's office and tell them how important it is.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was intent on sitting out this debate, but having heard the previous speaker's comments about the filibustering, I could not stand for that.

I want to raise this through you to the hon. minister. What I heard from the previous speaker, quite frankly, is balderdash. If this was important to the hon. minister, then why did it take him until April to bring it forward, and why are they leaving it until this very last day to push it through?

● (1730)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, climate change has been an enormous priority of this government from the day that it was sworn in almost two years ago. We have developed the strengthened climate plan, which is the first plan that Canadians have ever had that shows in a detailed way how to achieve and exceed the existing target. We made additional investments in the budget. We have worked closely with our American colleagues and we significantly raised the level of ambition with the target that we established at the earth summit.

We are moving forward with a plan to address carbon emissions not just at 2030, but to 2050, with a net-zero target through this legislation. It is complementary to all of the work that we have done.

There is no higher priority for this government, beyond getting through this pandemic and supporting Canadians through this pandemic, than fighting climate change in a manner that is going to secure the future for our kids and ensure that we have a strong and thriving economy going forward.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, the minister continues the myth that this has been about Conservatives filibustering this bill. There was barely six hours of debate when they jammed this through to committee, and then the committee decided to accelerate it, so 70 plus briefs were not even considered before amendments. The minister favours an approach of not listening. Now he is putting down closure. He is actually stopping members of his own caucus from being able to talk about an important piece of legislation.

S. O. 57

Why does the minister have such contempt for the voices, other than those of his own government, in this chamber?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I find that a very odd line of questioning. This bill, as I understand it, has a majority support of members in this chamber. It is something most of the political parties in this House, with perhaps the exception of the Conservative Party of Canada, believe is important as a step forward in addressing it.

I was very heartened when the hon. member actually stood up at the beginning of this conversation and said they would support this bill. I was very disappointed when they then decided to vote against the principle of this bill, as I was extremely disappointed when members of their party voted to say that climate change was not real. It is unfortunate, and at some point the Conservative Party is going to have to get with the program in addressing climate change.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is absolutely staggering to hear the government say that we are in a climate emergency. It was an emergency in April, February and all the other months. We have been dealing with a climate emergency for a long time.

If this were so important to the Liberals, they would have put the bill on the agenda much sooner. I hear the NDP saying that they would not have written it that way. That is for sure, because it was obviously the Liberals who wrote the amendments that the NDP tabled in committee. It is because of the Liberal-NDP coalition that we are left to pass a bill that is limp and non-binding.

Now the government is telling us that if we are progressive, we must vote for the bill. We are being asked to vote for something that could have been better. Why did they not put it on the agenda sooner?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I should say that we have included several elements of Bill C-215 in Bill C-12.

However, Bill C-12 is much stronger than Bill C-215, which was introduced in the House by the Bloc. Bill C-215 aims for a target of 30% below 2005 levels. That is only a 30% reduction, whereas the targets in this bill are 40% to 45%, which is much stronger.

[English]

Mr. Paul Manly: Madam Speaker, two years ago this House declared we were in a climate emergency and it took until November for the government to table this bill, which, when read, looked like no more than a public relations document pretending to be doing something. There is no accountability in this bill; it is hollow. I could not support it at second reading, because there is no principle behind it.

When it came to actually getting it into committee after a very short debate, most of the briefs arrived after the amendment period was over. It made a mockery of listening to concerned citizens. There was no youth or indigenous representation and no climate science testimony. Not a single indigenous witness was heard.

S. O. 57

How often can the Liberals say they did not have time to consult indigenous people, while also saying that Bill C-12 respects UN-DRIP?

• (1735)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, to argue a lack of accountability mechanisms in the bill, I would just suggest to my hon. colleague that he read the bill again.

It is a legally binding process for the federal government to set climate targets and to bring forward plans every five years, three different progress reports between now and 2030, a 2030 assessment report that has to be tabled within 30 days of the 2030 national inventory report, an annual report detailing how the federal government is managing financial risks of climate change, each year the minister has to respond to the report of the net-zero advisory body and the Minister of Environment has asked, and the bill requires, the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development provide a report by the end of 2024. There is an enormous number of accountability mechanisms, and I just would ask my colleague to review the legislation again.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, I have a very simple question, and I would appreciate a clear, concise answer from the minister.

If this motion is carried, and Bill C-12 eventually becomes law, who will ultimately be held accountable for Canada meeting its greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, ultimately we live in a democratic society, and it is the government that is going to have to be held accountable for its ability to live up to the commitments it makes under this law.

What this law requires is an enormous amount of transparency and accountability through all of the measures I just mentioned, and it provides the information on which the voters of this country, who are the ones who will make the decision about how urgent and how important this issue is, as they rightly should in a democratic society, will make the decision.

As I said before, we will never again in this country have a government like that of Stephen Harper, which essentially set a target, pretended it was an issue, pretended it was important, but never had a plan and never made progress.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

The question is on the motion.

[*English*]

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

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

• (1820)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 176*)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Bachrach	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baker	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Besette
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blois
Boulerice	Bratina
Brière	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Cormier
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duvall
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Garneau	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hardie	Harris
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Julian
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)

McPherson
Mendicino
Monsef
Murray
O'Connell
O'Regan
Powlowski
Qualtrough
Regan
Rodriguez
Romanado
Saini
Saks
Sangha
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Singh
Spengemann
Tassi
Turnbull
van Koevorden
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wilkinson
Young
Zann

Mendès
Miller
Morrissey
Ng
Oliphant
Petipas Taylor
Qaqqaq
Ratansi
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota (Brampton North)
Sajjan
Samson
Sarai
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simms
Sorbara
Tabbara
Trudeau
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vaughan
Weiler
Yip
Zahid
Zuberi — 176

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif
Albas
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Beaulieu
Bergen
Berthold
Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas
Block
Bragdon
Brunelle-Duceppe
Carrie
Champoux
Chiu
Cooper
Dalton
Davidson
Deltell
Desbiens
Diotte
Dreeshen
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Fortin
Gaudreau
Genuis
Gladu
Gourde
Hallan
Hoback
Jeneroux
Kent
Kram
Kusie
Larouche
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Lloyd

Aitchison
Alleslev
Arnold
Barlow
Barsalou-Duval
Benzen
Bergeron
Bérubé
Blanchet
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boudrias
Brassard
Calkins
Chabot
Charbonneau
Chong
Cumming
Dancho
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Gallant
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Gray
Harder
Jansen
Kelly
Kitchen
Kurek
Lake
Lawrence
Lemire
Liepert
Lobb

Private Members' Business

Lukiwski
Maguire
Marcil
Mazier
McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Michaud
Morantz
Motz
Normandin
Patzner
Pauzé
Plamondon
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Ruff
Saroya
Scheer
Shields
Shiple
Sloan
Stanton
Ste-Marie
Stubbs
Thériault
Tochor
Uppal
Vecchio
Vignola
Wagantall
Waugh
Williamson
Wong
Zimmer — 149

MacKenzie
Manly
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean
Melillo
Moore
Morrison
Nater
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Perron
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Rood
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shin
Simard
Soroka
Steinley
Strahl
Sweet
Therrien
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Wilson-Raybould
Yurdiga

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

Ms. Lenore Zann (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.) moved that Bill S-205, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (Parliamentary Visual Artist Laureate), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill S-205, which seeks to create the position of Parliamentary Visual Artist Laureate. This would be an officer of the Library of Parliament, similar to the current Parliamentary Poet Laureate's position. The mandate of the Parliamentary Visual Artist Laureate would be to promote the arts in Canada through Parliament, including by fostering knowledge, enjoyment, awareness and development of the arts. In this bill, the arts are defined as drawing, painting, sculpture, print-making, design, crafts, photography, videography and filmmaking.

Private Members' Business

I would like to thank the sponsor in the Senate of this bill, Senator Patricia Bovey, for her work in moving this legislation to the House. I would also like to acknowledge the artist Peter Gough of Nova Scotia, who was the originator of this wonderful idea. Sadly, Peter passed away before he could see his idea become a reality. However, there are many other incredible artists in Nova Scotia and across Canada who I am sure will be happy to see this bill move forward and honour his memory and the work of Canada's arts community.

Bill S-205 is based on the same concept, as I said, as the Parliamentary Poet Laureate. The Commissioner of Official Languages for Canada, the chairperson of the Canada Council for the Arts, and the president of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts have all provided their witness testimony about this important bill, as has the director of the National Gallery of Canada.

The position would have a two-year term with a mandate of promoting the arts in Canada through Parliament, including by fostering knowledge, enjoyment and development of the arts. I cannot emphasize enough or too greatly the contribution that Canadian artists make to our society, our collective well-being and our understanding of each other: lifelong Canadians, new Canadians, immigrants, first nations and refugees. The arts can break down barriers that exist between us, which is something we need today more than ever. Canada's artists have been illuminating what it means to be Canadian, where we have been and where we are going through many different media and from the views of many different cultures and regions. These are sometimes critical, but are reflective of who we are.

Over the past year and a half, we have been living through some of the most challenging times faced by our country in decades. The pandemic has forced us into isolation. It has led to loneliness and despair for many Canadians and for our youth, as well. I have to say our youth are looking forward to the day they can get out and enjoy the arts in person again and as my dear, departed niece, Maia, said to me shortly before she passed away this week, "What would life be without music? Life would be so depressing without music." I have to say that I completely agree with her. Throughout this pandemic, Canada's artists have been there to provide us with a bit of light and hope while we await a time to come when we can be together again as friends, families and colleagues.

The arts are also economic generators. As the third-largest employer in Canada, the arts and culture sector employs some 600,000 Canadians and contributes 7.5% of our GDP. Research has demonstrated that the arts contribute positively to our health, education and the environment, and I suggest we need more arts in schools. The arts are mental health programs. Members can ask any child to tell their story, and I am sure they would rather do it through drawing, through writing or even through drama and putting on a personality, than try to speak as themselves. Sometimes this is much easier for people to do.

Where would the tourism industry be without Canada's arts and artists? The arts are a universal international language and the lens through which other nations recognize us as Canadians. It makes us different from the Americans. The Americans have their own arts and culture, but we need to support ours so we are not drowned out

and so people can hear our own stories and our own voices, not just American ones.

• (1825)

The cultural components of international events are there not just to entertain but to show the world who we are, and we are very good at doing this. The Government of Canada has committed to restoring the cultural pillar to our foreign policy. We are depicting ourselves to the world through the arts, which on the international stage creates a greater understanding of who we are.

I believe it is time for our Parliament to have a visual artist laureate, whose works would preserve for posterity the events that grip us as parliamentarians and the work we do to make Canadians' lives better. I ask for members' support in making this initiative a reality. It is a tangible manner of thanking our artists for their contribution to Canadian society, especially during trying times such as these.

I would like to say the words of George Elliott Clark, our former parliamentary poet laureate. The poem is entitled "On the Proposal for a Visual Artist Laureate":

The blank page—the blank canvas is—
 Undeniably delicious—
 Like fog, which obscures, then reveals—
 What Hope imminently congeals—
 A fantastic architecture—
 Imagination born secure:
 What Vision—the I of the eye—
 Had dreamt, is What answering Why. . . .
 Rainbows erupt from paint or ink—
 And film sculptures light—in a blink;
 A needle, weaving, is lyric,
 And whatever is shaped is epic.
 Art's each I articulate,
 Whose vision ordains a laureate.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's preamble talks about the selection process and about having a visual artist laureate selected from a list of three names reflective of Canada's diversity. Why is it important for the hon. member to ensure that Canada's diversity is reflected within her private member's bill?

Ms. Lenore Zann: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the whole planet is made up of different stories, and people of different cultures view reality and view life from different perceptions. It is only by hearing and seeing and telling the tales of all of them that we see a whole beautiful earth and life. That is why it is so important to have diversity expressed much more than it already is here in Canada, so that more people can experience it and, hopefully, grow from that experience.

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport-Côte-de-Beaupré-Île d'Orléans-Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank our colleague from Cumberland—Colchester for her bill, which we here in the House appreciate.

I would like to ask my colleague if it would not be more advantageous, in terms of spreading the load, to have a committee of artists in Parliament who could reflect diversity better than a single person could, since a single person might be biased and influenced by their own perceptions. Perhaps a committee garner more universal support than a single person.

[English]

Ms. Lenore Zann: Mr. Speaker, that is a very thoughtful question, and I understand where the hon. member is coming from.

Here in Nova Scotia, we have an arts committee that the province has selected. Its members decide who gets which grants and things like that here in Nova Scotia. However, to be honest, art by committee is a very difficult thing. Each artist brings their own view and their own perspective to their work. We do not usually get 10 people, for instance, making a sculpture. We get one artist creating something themselves and then sharing that view with the world.

That is what this bill is focusing on: bringing a spotlight to individual Canadian artists. A different artist would be chosen every two years to have that spotlight and be able to share their works with Canadians.

Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Cumberland—Colchester for bringing this bill forward. As the mother of a visual artist who graduated from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, I am very proud and really happy that the member has done this.

Does the member think that Canadians really underestimate how the arts have impacted the people we are?

Ms. Lenore Zann: Mr. Speaker, I think that the population in general underestimates how much the arts influence their lives and how much they need the arts to connect. I mean, during the pandemic, what did people do? They watched television, watched series and read books. It was the arts that helped keep people together and kept them sane.

Sadly, in my own riding, there was the loss of the life of one young man, an 18-year-old who loved the theatre. He dropped out of school and was not able to do what he loved to do. It was his happy place, but it was taken away from him because of COVID-19. I say that more arts will help Canadians. The arts help us to stay strong and help us mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak in support of Bill S-205 and to affirm the importance of the arts for our national life and indeed for all people throughout all time in history. The appreciation of beautiful things and the enjoyment of them is fundamental to the human condition. It is part of what elevates our minds and develops our thoughts and creates space for our greater understanding of goodness and of truth, in unity with beauty.

I was thinking of jumping-off points for talking about this issue. I was reminded that in the Catholic tradition, today is the feast of St. Thomas More. St. Thomas More is known better for some things than for others, although he was a composite figure known for his many different contributions to politics as well as to litera-

Private Members' Business

ture. He is best known for how his career ended: He was executed for refusing to endorse the king's marriage. He did so on a point of principle and a point of conscience. Regardless of whether members agree with the particular stand he took, we can all admire the courage of a politician who takes a stand on a principle and understands that the things they believe in are more important than their career or even their life.

St. Thomas More was also a great humanist. He talked about justice. He talked about human dignity and spoke explicitly about the connection between the ill treatment of people and crime. His writings and comments on those subjects have been sources of inspiration and content for people across the political spectrum. Particularly on the artistic side, he was someone who was able to develop ideas and present political points, indirectly perhaps, in the form of beautiful literary compositions.

If members have not read it, I encourage all to read *Utopia*. This is where we get the concept of utopia as sort of a political construct. He wrote this relatively short book, *Utopia*, in which he imagined a voyage to a faraway country called Utopia, and he describes in detail the characteristics, the modes of interaction and the beliefs of this fictitious people. Of course, he was living at a time when it was difficult to make certain kinds of political points directly. As his later career demonstrated, if one believed in certain things and expressed those opinions, there could be very dire consequences, not just in today's sense of people being cancelled but of actually being cancelled.

He spoke about certain ideas and raised certain questions through this description of an imaginary society that operated according to different norms and different rules. There were many questions at the time, and there still are, about what he really meant in many aspects of this book. Was he describing an ideal society? On the other hand, there were things about that society that seemed to be different from things that he defended and advocated as a politician. Maybe he was not describing an ideal society; maybe he was simply trying to expand the creative imagination. He was trying to give flower to possibilities by creating a space in which it was acceptable to think about things that would have been seen as maybe too subversive if he had been commenting directly on norms or policies in his own country.

I think what *Utopia* demonstrates is the beginning of the tradition of trying to subvert established ideas through the subtlety that is possible through art when it is maybe harder to present those alternative concepts directly. There has since been this whole genre of utopian or dystopian literature, with dystopia, obviously, being the inverse of a utopia. There are many great modern works that pick up on this tradition and use this device of imagining another place, another time, another context to subtly comment on our current realities. Some of the works of Margaret Atwood, of course, are famous in this regard, such as *The Handmaid's Tale*. *The Children of Men* is another great dystopian novel that I have read recently, and I think it has a great deal of value in it.

Private Members' Business

• (1835)

The point I am trying to make is that art has value in and of itself. It is also a vehicle by which questions can be raised and thoughts can be provoked that are not as obvious, not as directly accessible through explicit political speech, and, indeed, possibilities can be opened that are unexamined otherwise or harder to argue for directly.

That can be the case perhaps because of direct repercussions for those who propose contrary ideas, but that can also be the case simply because certain concepts are so out of the mould that it is hard to envision what they would imply unless they are actually described in a more literary format. Thomas Moore is one example of someone who successfully provoked the creative imagination through art and literature.

We can see the value in Parliament creating this position of a visual artist laureate as appreciating our artists, as affirming the value of arts as a mechanism by which Parliament uses its position, its leadership role within the country to affirm the importance of the arts. However, it is also an opportunity to recognize, in our national life, so many of the conversations we have about the big challenging issues facing our country. Questions of justice, questions of human rights and questions of how we behave and respond to certain challenges can be proposed and shaped through art.

With that in mind, I am very supportive of the bill. It is one of many private members' bills before the House, some of which have come from the Senate, that do have great value and that Conservatives are pleased to support. From what I understand, Bill S-205, like Bill S-204, which we were speaking to last week, had the unanimous support of all senators. Like Bill S-204, it also has a great deal of support in the House. By all indication, I think all members will be supportive of the valuable provisions contained in that bill. It is one of those things hopefully parliamentarians can work together on across different important private members' bills as well as across different chambers to move these things forward.

In the context of the legislative timeline we have in front of us, unfortunately it looks like the Prime Minister is trying to malign the work of Parliament to create the impression that Parliament is not working. The reality is that this Parliament has worked substantially to move certain important issues forward; it just has not always worked in a way the government has liked.

One example the sponsor of this bill will be familiar with is the work being done at the Canada-China committee, a committee that was created even though the government did not want it created, a committee that undertook important studies, did important work on the situation in Hong Kong, a committee that has been part of discussions that have happened at other committees as well on recognizing the Uighur genocide, something that happened through the leadership of Parliament and not through the leadership of the government. Now we have a situation of Parliament asserting its rights to access documents. These are important cases of the leadership of this Parliament.

If the Prime Minister is critiquing Parliament, it has less to do with the fact Parliament is not working and more to do with the fact that, from his perspective, Parliament is working too well. Parliament is doing things the government may not like, but nonetheless

Parliament has been able to lead, oftentimes through the collaboration of opposition parties and sometimes working with individual members of the government as well.

Nonetheless, we are in the situation now as we approach the end of the spring session where it looks very much like the Prime Minister, in trying to malign the work of Parliament, is trying to position himself to justify calling an election. If that happens, of course, it will put important legislative initiatives that have not yet passed in jeopardy.

We should reflect on the fact that as we possibly come to the end of the spring session, in some cases, we have bills that have been passed in the Senate and are now in the House. If the House could find a way of dealing with them, it would allow us to move forward ahead of the spring session so those bills could become law.

• (1840)

As I have described, this is important legislation. It recognizes the profound role that arts play in our national life, the profound role of beauty in the human experience and also the role arts can play in provoking questions and ideas that might not get discussed otherwise.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport-Côte-de-Beaupré-Île d'Orléans-Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what a fantastic way to wrap up this session of the House.

The purpose of the bill is to create the position of parliamentary visual artist laureate, who would be tasked not only with producing artistic creations, but also with promoting the arts in Canada, through Parliament, including by fostering knowledge, enjoyment and awareness and development of the arts among Canadians. That is a noble task, but it is an ambitious one for a single person.

Visual art can be universal, and carries across languages. Visual art tells a story, creates, projects the real and the abstract. According to the Regroupement des artistes en arts visuels du Québec, and by its very nature, art is a reflection of human expression and is intimately linked to its time. As a result, it is an exceptional vector for dissemination and dialogue, offering the public opportunities for interaction, which are indispensable to the development of society. That is a nice definition. Although art is often seen as a mirror on society, just like it, it is interpreted according to the beholder's experience and history. This experience, our experience, tints our gaze with its colours, so that, where someone sees the ocean, another sees the sky; where someone senses solitude, another feels free; where one human sees the desire to exist or to remember, another may perceive hatred and even contempt.

Private Members' Business

Art is a powerful means of expression, and finding a person who can create it and express themselves without censure in a strong and pure work of art and in a context where everything is politicized is quite a feat. How can an artist express passion and neutrality, inspiration and representativeness? That is quite the challenge. Textures, colours, nuances, anything can be symbolic: positive for some, negative for others. Everything can be open to interpretation. Unfortunately, we have seen this on many occasions. Art commands freedom. While I am the last person to want to stop someone from creating and making a living from their creativity, the fact remains that the artist will shoulder heavy responsibilities.

As a committed songwriter myself, I know that using the right words is extremely important and has an impact on the listener. I once created a work where song met visual art. Entitled *Chansons sur toiles*, it won an award in Switzerland. It was a reflection, a mirror of the paintings of Charlevoix by Charlevoix artists. My songs were painted at that point in time.

Having met several visual artists, and being aware of the magnitude of the challenge involved in painting a song, I may have a better grasp of the challenge that awaits this person. Creating a visual expression of Parliament and of all the citizens it represents, often in a context of confrontation, or at least divergence, for everyone to see and absorb is not a simple task. The sad greyness of recent times that obliged us to remain unwillingly estranged from one another, unnaturally separated, only adds to the challenge the artist will have to face.

This being said, art has the power to move us, anger us, delight and amaze us again, and to make us think and evolve. All of this, as we see life from another perspective. We now understand just how much we need each other, how much every little gesture means and how intensely we feel the need to see each other again, embrace each other.

Art will undoubtedly reflect our emergence from the darkness. It does not often happen that every human being on the planet goes through the same tragedy, but the message of hope and love that will come out of this time will be all the more beautiful and grand. Art will have to reflect all this and more. It will have to guide us forward, focusing our attention on the values and hopes we all cherish, but not all for the same reasons. What influence will this artist have on climate change, for example, and on the different opinions expressed in Parliament?

• (1845)

How will the artist convey the fundamental difference between the Liberals' multiculturalism and Quebec's interculturalism, which is more innovative and more in keeping with reality, while remaining impartial? Rather than staying in isolation or feigning indifference, will they be free to express diversity, which is an impetus toward cultural sharing and exchange, in its most beautiful form, namely its uniqueness and recognition?

The artist will also be responsible for fostering and promoting the arts. They will have to find the right tone and then promote the arts, hence the importance, nay, the need for fairness. I do not know how much leeway and freedom they will have, given the obligation to do it through the Parliament of Canada.

Will they have to respect some historical or political criterion? This type of thing is very pervasive, and all communities must be assured that the work will be shown for what it is, for its cultural, social and historical value, and contextualized within the experience of every member of the community, rather than as one in a succession of specifically Canadian works that remain within the strict confines of Canadian values, which are sometimes imposed by the powers that be at the time.

No, the artist must be a person from Medicine Hat, with all that that entails, a Franco-Saskatchewanian, a Huron-Wendat, a Franco-Ontarian from northern Ontario, an Acadian, a Montrealer from Côte-des-Neiges, the Plateau or Hochelaga, a north shore resident or a Nisga'a, a person from Charlevoix, a Magdalen Islander, a person from Lac Saint-Jean or an Innu, with all the richness that every story, every root and every conviction carries.

That is why I have my doubts when I think about who could become the parliamentary artist and bear this weighty responsibility worthy of every virtue. Since the Bloc Québécois is certainly not against virtue, we hope that the artist will be up to this demanding task. What makes a nation belongs to the nation, and its expression belongs to its artists, who have different and at times opposite visions. That is exactly what allows a society to evolve upward.

That is why my humble reflections have led to this conclusion: limiting Parliament to a single signature, free as it may be in its personal interpretation, means giving the power of messaging to a single spirit, however open it may be. That can only limit the immense openness this Parliament needs to be able to express all of our various visions, for now and for the future. That is what I hope for Parliament and for the artist who will inhabit it.

• (1850)

[English]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Bill S-205 as a proud Hamiltonian and member of Parliament representing Hamilton Centre, which for generations has been an epicentre of the arts, a refuge, a place where artists have come to live, create, explore and indeed share their contributions with the rest of Canada. I am excited about this act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act to create a parliamentary visual artist laureate, and I am struck by the ways in which visual art has had an impact on my life.

Those who are familiar with Hamilton or have had the privilege of visiting our incredible city no doubt will have stopped at some time by the Art Gallery of Hamilton. Any child who went to school there would no doubt recall the trips to the Art Gallery of Hamilton. In particular, any small child, I can assure members, can spend hours at the permanent installation of the Bruegel-Bosch Bus by Kim Adams, if given the opportunity to experience it. In fact, any person looking at that installation could spend hours wondering, dreaming and interpreting its meaning.

Private Members' Business

There is so much in the arts that enriches our lives in society. As I walk around my own riding of Hamilton Centre, I am struck by the beauty, inspiration and indeed the stories that are told through our public art. There are barriers to art. There are certainly class implications to art and people's ability to access it in fair ways. Perhaps there was a time in our city when art was confined to places like the art gallery or other institutions that may not have been accessible to the public.

I think the opportunity to have a national parliamentary visual artist laureate speaks to our calls for open access to art, understanding that everybody, regardless of income or area code, deserves to have exposure to the splendour, the beauty and the stories of art.

I would like to take this moment to acknowledge some of the profound impacts that local artists have had on our city. There was a time, not too long ago, when Hamilton was an affordable place to live. Of course, that has changed over the years, but what remains are the artists who, over the last 10 or 15 years, decided to make Hamilton their home. There is a unique culture, a collectivist culture, within Hamilton, where artists take care of one another and create spaces that might not be present. I had the opportunity and pleasure of serving with the Hamilton Community Foundation in the transition from the idea of art as philanthropy versus art as a part of an actual built institution or forum within our cities, and I would like to thank my dear friend Jeremy Freiburger with Cobalt Connects for helping me provide some of that reference point.

I think about the ways in which a parliamentary visual artist laureate could set an example for the rest of the country and, as the previous speaker mentioned, give a snapshot of the uniqueness of the diversity within this country. I thought it important and I raised the question, when the sponsor from Cumberland—Colchester presented this private member's bill, about the importance of having this artist laureate be reflective of Canada's diversity, because it is often the case that when we go into these spaces, we do not just look for who is there; if we are coming from diverse communities, we often recognize who is not there. That is why her reference to our 2016-17 poet laureate George Elliott Clarke was so important to me, because I recall hearing some of his many works where he would speak truth to power in ways that might have been absent without his lived experience.

When I reflect on that and I look at the ways in which our neighbourhoods have been transformed by public art, the way in which there is a wonder in finding and discovering new pieces of art, whether they are murals on walls, whether they are from graffiti artists who have contributed to our community, or whether they are sculptures, any way in which visual art presents itself, I am deeply grateful.

- (1855)

For those members who know my community, there was a time when the public's perception of my neighbourhood was one of a stark industrialism, which has its own artistic beauty, but certainly is beautified by works of public art. I think about the ways in which those works are representative of our city, the ways in which this visual artist laureate could be representative of our country.

If I may take this moment, I would like to acknowledge the newly named executive director for Hamilton Artists Inc., my friend,

neighbour, multidisciplinary artist and filmmaker Derek Jenkins, and the newly named collective public programs coordinator, John Hill, who is an Oneida artist and who believes that art can give people the tools to imagine new and hopeful worlds. I love that. I love the promise that it brings, and I feel like that could encapsulate the promise that this private member's bill could bring.

We have so many talented artists in our city. I could spend an hour today pitching all the amazing people who would make incredible visual artists laureate. I think about the way they are connected to all the incredible community groups within our city, like the Coalition of Black and Racialized Artists, which has served a mandate to support and uplift the much-needed diversity within our arts and culture scene.

I think about the visual alchemist Stylo Starr, the world-renowned photographer George Qua-Enoo, the incredibly important and affirming work of Herstory Doll creator Queen Cee, or her husband, Leon 'Eklipz' Robinson, who has the distinct cultural legacy as a graffiti master, hip hop extraordinaire, poet, photographer, painter and filmmaker. In fact, I had the privilege of working with him on a project where he took small children and allowed them to create their own art in our incredible Gage Park, which remains there today, by the pump track, indeed a monument to the creative nature of our children and their ability, when they are connected through programs to art, to build beautiful things in our community.

I often also reflect on the ways in which some of my favourite works reflect the struggle that people have felt in this country, and I reference the Montreal mixed-media artist Kit Lang, whose work *Incendiary: Mary Joseph Angélique* reflects the historical and present-day truths facing the African Canadian diaspora in Canada; or the Hamilton-born artist Kapwani Kiwanga, whose contributions can offer a critique on settler colonialism; or the works of Syrus Marcus Ware, whose portraits commemorate the activists and the revolutionaries of our communities to ensure that Black, indigenous, racialized, queer or trans people, or people living with disabilities, are given safe and creative spaces. I think about Camille Turner and her perceptions of Canadianness and her performance in the persona of Miss Canadiana, which confronts the ideas of the Black body as being foreign or other.

The list goes on and on, about the incredible opportunity that this private member's bill provides the House of Commons today to honour, to lift up and to exalt the artists and the artistry that we have in this country, the multiculturalism and diversity that make this country unique.

In closing, I would like to thank the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester for bringing this important private member's bill and allowing me the opportunity to stand in the House today to share with the members just some of the many incredible artists we have from my city in Hamilton Centre.

- (1900)

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to speak today in support of Bill S-205, which calls for the creation of a parliamentary visual artist laureate.

I want to thank my colleague from Cumberland—Colchester for bringing this important bill to the House of Commons. I would also like to thank Senator Bovey for introducing the bill and for the role it would play in promoting the arts across Canada. Senator Bovey has had a long career as a promoter of the arts, and we would all be hard pressed to find anyone who matches her expertise in this field. She previously called for this in a bill introduced in the last session of this Parliament, as did Senator Wilfred Moore in 2018. Twice it has successfully passed the Senate and made it to the House, so let us work together to pass Bill S-205 in this House.

Similar to the poet laureate, this would be a non-partisan officer of Parliament in the Library of Parliament tasked by this institution with promoting the arts throughout the country by fostering knowledge, enjoyment, awareness and development of the arts. The position comes with a wide mandate, as the visual arts can include drawing, painting, sculpture, print making, crafts, photography, videography and filmmaking. The mandate would be to promote the arts in Canada through Parliament by producing or commissioning artistic creations. At the request of the Speaker of either House, he or she could produce artistic creations for use in Parliament or on occasions of state. The artist laureate could also sponsor artistic events and give advice to the Library of Parliament regarding the library's collection and acquisitions to enrich the library's cultural holdings.

Like other countries, Canada finds itself in a place where we are looking back at our history and reconsidering whom we choose to commemorate and celebrate. This is why I particularly appreciate the fact that the bill specifies that the final laureate must be chosen from a list that reflects Canada's diversity. If this bill is passed, over time we will find ourselves with laureates representing the many cultures that exist within Canada: anglophones, francophones, indigenous people, newcomers, men and women, and people of all backgrounds working in all mediums of the visual arts.

The arts community often runs on a not-for-profit basis and often needs the support of government institutions and grants. Our government provides funding for the Canada Council for the Arts, Telefilm Canada, the National Film Board, CBC/Radio-Canada and other institutions that cultivate our artists and bring them to the world stage. In 2017, the government announced an additional investment of \$300 million over 10 years for the Canada cultural spaces fund, more than doubling the program's annual budget until 2028. As well, budget 2019 included additional investments to support arts, culture and celebration through five Department of Canadian Heritage programs, and to support arts presentation. This is one more way we can show our support for the industry.

The pandemic has been difficult for the entire arts community. Museums and galleries had to close their doors, and artists' businesses slowed. However, many have embraced the new challenges that this represents and found new ways to deliver their programming online, and our government has been there to support many of them.

In my community, the Peel Art Gallery Museum and Archives, known as PAMA, features a variety of permanent and touring exhibits of paintings, photography, sculpture, historical artifacts, and also serves as the main cultural archives for our region. It showcas-

es historical and modern indigenous artwork, artifacts of local history, pieces by local artists and much more.

• (1905)

Last October, PAMA received a grant of \$100,000 so they would have the resources to continue their work in preserving our local heritage during the pandemic. It was also just recently announced that they would receive \$800,000 from the federal government to make much-needed infrastructure improvements to their facility.

In my community, there are many initiatives that promote the creation of arts by members of many diverse communities. The International Film Festival of South Asia is one such example. As the largest South Asian film festival in North America, IFFSA is an outstanding platform for local artists to showcase their talents. The festival is not only limited to movies. This festival has a deep social role promoting civic engagement and culture dialogue.

In my riding of Brampton South, the arts sector is also supported through other federal initiatives such as the Canada summer jobs program. Summer jobs in the arts are supported through the Beaux Arts Brampton gallery, right in downtown Brampton, and the Arts and Culture Initiative of South Asia. Perhaps artists who come up through the Peel Art Gallery, or any of these other local programs, would one day find themselves as the parliamentary visual artist laureate.

Art, in all its forms, has the potential to be both a reflection of a society and a reflection of its strength and weakness. It is a manifestation of our hopes and dreams, as well as our daily struggles. Through paint or stone, artists do not just open themselves up to us, they open us up to ourselves.

I am looking forward to not only the passage of this bill, but also the great works of art that would be promoted by our nation's future laureates.

• (1910)

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to speak. I must admit, I need to thank the member for Richmond—Arthabaska. We are members of the heritage committee together, and he asked me if I would speak to this bill, which we support. He asked me if I would speak to it a bit earlier today. Without a lot of time to prepare, I thought it would give me a great opportunity to speak to what we have heard a lot about already today in this chamber, which is the importance and the power of the visual arts to inform, educate and heal. Many members have said that so eloquently already.

Private Members' Business

What I find interesting is that so far I have not heard, including from the other Conservative member who spoke on this topic already, about how the arts are important for telling our story as Canadians. They are important for living a full, self-actualized life. They are part of our growth and healing. As a Conservative, I also think it is crucially important we point out the importance of the economic impact of the arts.

I can give members all kinds of examples in my riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka. Parry Sound—Muskoka is a beautiful place with many beautiful vistas. It is visited by many thousands of tourists and cottagers every year. One of the things that is unique to Muskoka is the fact that we have so many artists who live in and around the beautiful lakes and trees that make up our landscape.

In fact, the Muskoka Autumn Studio Tour was one of the very first studio tours established in Canada back in 1979. There are dozens of artists, such as Catherine O'Mara; Janice Feist; Stan Tait, who makes jewellery; Miranda Britton, who makes jewellery; and Marni Martin, who makes beautiful tapestries.

These people do such incredible work, and they create such beautiful items, but they also created careers for themselves. They all work in this field, and they have had tremendous success. The Muskoka Autumn Studio Tour is a great example of why supporting the arts is also a really smart economic move. I point out that one example for my colleague from B.C.

I would like to point out as well that Senator Bovey from the other place presented this motion in the first place, and it has since been brought here. She pointed out the importance and impact of the arts sector on the economy. She reported that the GDP of cultural industries in Canada in 2017 was \$58.9 billion, or \$1,611 per capita, which is about 2.8% of national GDP. Those numbers are from 2017. It is a significant contributor to our economy.

I also think about the local artists in my region when I think about the importance of telling our story. I think back to one of the founding members of that Muskoka Autumn Studio Tour, Brenda Wainman Goulet, who sadly died suddenly a few years ago. I was the mayor of Huntsville at the time, and when I was asked by the family to speak at the memorial service, I thought long and hard about the work that Brenda Wainman Goulet did. She took the rugged granite of Muskoka and blended that with metals and created some of the most beautiful sculptures I have ever seen.

When it came time to beautify the front of a new theatre that was constructed in Huntsville, the Algonquin Theatre, we looked for an artist to create something special, a special statue in front of the theatre. Brenda Wainman Goulet created a bronze sculpture of Tom Thomson, the famous pre-Group of Seven artist who was famous for painting striking Canadian landscapes of the Canadian Shield. I have seen more people have their photo taken with that bronze statue in downtown Huntsville than anything else in town.

• (1915)

At the time of her memorial, I was thinking a lot about the importance of beauty. It brought me to thinking about something I had read years before called *Italian Journey*, which I am sure Mr. Speaker is familiar with. It is actually an edited version of the diary of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who was a very accomplished

young man in the 1700s. He had been appointed to Duke Karl August's privy council at the age of 25.

He was very accomplished. He oversaw the expansion of silver mining in the Duchy of Saxe-Weimar. He implemented reforms to the university there. He sat as a member of the war and highway commissions, all at the age of 25. He was a very accomplished young man. He was also instrumental in the planning of the botanical gardens and the reconstruction of the ducal palace, which is a UNESCO world heritage site today in Italy.

At the age of 37, though, Goethe was frustrated and feeling like something was lacking in his life. To recharge, he decided he would travel through Italy, and from 1786 to 1788 he travelled through Italy. He chronicled his experience, of course, in his diary.

He really yearned to understand what possible conditions there were in Italy that made it such a paradise. Italy was obviously well known at the time to be a beautiful place. He concluded that, with what seemed to be a limitless expression of art absolutely everywhere in Italy, beauty was not a momentary reprieve from the dreariness of everyday life. It was everyday life, and it filled his soul.

Art is good for the economy, and it is good for the soul. It is important for us to share and understand our stories, for generations to come to understand our stories, and to certainly understand in a meaningful way what we do around here. For these reasons, I think it is very important that we all in this House support this bill and the concept of a visual arts laureate for Parliament.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to highlight the fact that, despite the great importance we place on arts and culture, I find it unfortunate that we are debating Bill S-205, which seeks to create the position of parliamentary visual artist laureate.

At a time when the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons are going around telling the media and anyone who will listen that the Conservative Party is filibustering and blocking important legislation, here we are at 7:20 p.m. debating a bill to create an artist laureate position. Is this bill critically important to moving our country forward?

We know that the Prime Minister probably wants to call an election this summer. I just wanted to put on the record that, notwithstanding the importance we place on arts and culture, which are so important to society, I find it very odd that we are debating this matter today when the government is falsely accusing us of filibustering on all the other bills.

That said, I want everyone to have access to the arts. It is very important. Despite what some may think of us Conservatives, we are educated people, we travel and we visit cathedrals, monuments and museums. We are not totally stupid, far from it. However, we do not like being told that we are holding up critically important parliamentary business. With only 24 hours left in the parliamentary session, we are currently debating a bill to create an artist laureate position.

• (1920)

The Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 9—CANADIAN NET-ZERO EMISSIONS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The House proceeded to consideration of the motion concerning the proceedings on Bill C-12, An Act respecting transparency and accountability in Canada's efforts to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the good people of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola. There seems to be a bit of a sense of electoral urgency in the air, so let me just say that I have always appreciated the honour to be their representative, and I will always keep fighting for their interests. I am thankful also to my family, who allow me to continue that work.

If we hearken back just to the Government Business No. 9 debate when it originally opened up, we had the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment and me. I was interrupted part way through for the proceedings of this place. It happens all the time, so I do ask those watching at home to know I am continuing my speech. In essence, I was giving a litany of concerns raised by the committee process, which was hastened by the Liberals literally steamrolling through along with the NDP. It was a process whereby people who wrote in to the committee were not heard. There were no indigenous witnesses. In fact, even the Assembly of First Nations' brief, along with over 70 other briefs, was not translated and sent to the committee until after the period of amendment. This is something that has been raised by a number of people as being a concern, telling people they did not matter.

Returning back to my comments, I was speaking specifically about the need for different aspects to be included in the bill. I will just start where I left off.

[*Translation*]

What we wanted to do was to include in the assessment report a summary of the measures undertaken by the provincial governments to achieve the national emissions targets. Once again, that seems obvious. However, once again without any debate, the Liberals and the NDP rejected it. There were no reasons given. They just voted against it. Their changes would be to include only the key measures that the federal government was implementing together with the provinces. However, since the provinces will be doing many great things on their own, should there not at least be a record of them?

The Liberals truly believe that the provinces are subordinate to the federal government and that unless something is done by Ottawa, it is not important. That is not what we believe. A Conservative government would work with the provinces to reach our cli-

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mate objectives. We believe that the provinces are partners, not punching bags.

There is another problem that I am hearing a lot about, and that is how the big push towards transportation electrification is affecting our electric grid.

Now, I support electric vehicles. Our party included an electric vehicle mandate in our "secure the environment" plan. We are not against electric vehicles, but Canadians are questioning whether the grid can handle this change. That is why we proposed that the assessment report in the bill include an assessment of the grid's ability to deal with increased demand.

We cannot move forward if we do not have the full picture. This was another reasonable proposal that was rejected by the Liberals and the NDP. We persevered nevertheless.

• (1925)

[*English*]

A lot of concern about the bill, including from me earlier on, has been about the formation of the advisory group. A significant number of briefs, witness testimony and amendments from other parties were about this very topic. We came up with what we believed was a reasonable approach: Instead of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change appointing all 15 members, he would simply appoint six. Then the Minister of Finance would appoint three, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry would appoint three and the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations would appoint three.

This would allow a more whole-of-government approach and for different ministers to put forward the priorities from their ministries into the advisory body. Conservatives believed this was the best way to ensure a wide variety of voices, not a body that includes people devoted to destroying a way of life for many Canadians, yet, sadly, the Liberals and NDP rejected it. Why did I list all these changes and talk about why the Liberals and the NDP rejected them without even debating them? It is because I wanted to show how much of a farce this process was.

Everything I mentioned was thoughtful and reasonable. We did not come in with a "Liberals admit they are terrible and should resign" amendment designed to be defeated, no. We came in with good ideas that the Liberals and NDP refused to even debate or consider, all of this after the minister said he was willing to work with all parties. Yes, sure. It was not just the Conservatives affected by this bad-faith deal between the Liberals and the NDP. I have already mentioned how an identical Green Party amendment was defeated. By the end of the process, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands had started to withdraw her own amendments because it was clear the Liberal and NDP members were not even interested in listening.

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The Bloc Québécois put forward many great amendments, not ones that Conservatives generally supported, but thoughtful and productive. The Liberals and the NDP opposed them all without debate, except for one at the very end and the NDP decided to support adding a five-year parliamentary review. No one could have watched that process in committee and not be sickened by what they saw. The Liberals and the NDP not only rejected any suggestion that was not their own, but a great deal of witness testimony to boot.

Indeed, the few amendments the Liberals proposed and supported did not do anything. Many were just spelling out that the minister must do things that the minister could already do. The biggest joke of them all was an amendment that the target of net zero by 2050 did not mean net zero could not be achieved earlier, which zero people thought was the case, yet before we were called just as bitter as the Liberals, we voted for a couple of government amendments we thought were good. We came in willing to work in good faith. Unfortunately, the government and the NDP did not.

What did the NDP get for seemingly selling out to the government and agreeing to be its coalition partner in all of this? It was not much, as it happens. Basically, every environmental witness and brief stated there needed to be a 2025 target in the bill, a milestone target. In fact New Democrats themselves said that over and over in debate on the bill, but did they get that by making a deal with the government? No. Instead, they got a 2026 interim objective, which is not actually a thing in the bill and only exists in the NDP amendments as a topic that must be reported on.

In the bill, targets have teeth. They must have plans and reports. The interim objective does nothing. That is what New Democrats got for their undying allegiance in this. They also say that they got the advisory group to be more independent. What that really means is they simply added the word “independent” to the name. Seriously, that is all they did, just added a word. The minister still appoints all of them and decides what they will do unilaterally, but the word is in the title, so it must be true. It would be funny seeing what little the NDP members gave up in exchange for their loyalty if it was not so sad.

I am sure the NDP member will rise after me and proclaim New Democrats made the bill better, that they got the Liberals to make these nothing changes and that means they are doing really good work. The reality is that the Liberal government pulled one over on the New Democrats, gave them almost nothing and got their dignity in return. They will have to answer to their friends in the environmental movement for this sellout. I expect some of those meetings will not be pleasant.

● (1930)

That is how we got to where we are. The Liberals and NDP rushed the process, refused to listen to witnesses or briefs, refused to debate anything and refused to consider any ideas not their own, and that is just disgraceful. While we, the Bloc and the Greens were trying to debate, trying to do the thing we have all been elected to do, the minister accused us of filibustering the bill.

There were over 150 amendments and they were moving through at less than 10 minutes each. We were not filibustering, we were asking questions and debating, the kind of thing one would expect

to do at committee scrutiny. To the Liberals, I guess daring to ask questions is tantamount to heresy.

We saw what they did to Bill C-10, stopping debate and passing laws in secret. That is how they want this place to run: a rubber-stamp for their Liberal ideas. I reject that. My constituents sent me here to represent them and to try to make the country better, and yes, to debate.

Therefore, I did ask questions during debate, and it is not my fault the Liberals and NDP refused to. In the Liberal world, even asking questions is apparently now a filibuster, because how dare we question the member for Papineau, whose ideas are perfect as they are and should never be challenged no matter who someone is. Well, I will because that is what I was sent here to do. I will ask those questions.

Since I wrote my speech, we had a closure motion pass today. As I said, the process the government chose was to put forward a bill and let it drag along and drag along. I would have constituents ask about Bill C-12 and I would tell them the government just really has not decided to move it forward.

Suddenly Liberals get to the end of the session and they start remembering there is a bill they have to do. They rush it through committee, a process I have explained, as well as how difficult it was on the witnesses, and even for members. I am sure there are lots of things Liberals would have wanted to ask more questions on so they could do their job as backbenchers holding the government to account, but they could not. They agreed to a strategy and they stuck with the NDP faithfully.

Since then, this very night, the minister tried to say Liberals supported the Bloc Québécois in their parliamentary review. That was fundamentally out of synch with any sort of reality. It contradicts exactly the testimony we heard earlier. The closure motion did not just cut off debate for me but for all members, including those backbench Liberal MPs who maybe thought their constituents deserved to see their members of Parliament in action, asking questions, showing up to debate and putting forward their own ideas.

Let us be mindful, the House leader actually called the Conservatives out for filibustering a bill. We were asking questions, and he had the gall to say that we were holding things up. In fact, the Minister of the Environment a week ago Wednesday, wrote to different parties and asked us to finish the bill, which we were almost finished anyway.

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We finished it Wednesday night, waited to see what happened Thursday and nothing. Eventually, our chair for the environment tabled it Friday and then Liberals said that they wanted to debate it as early as Monday, so we expected it. Then we found out that Government Business No. 9 suddenly springs out of nowhere. It sounded like they did not even want to debate Bill C-12, they just wanted to have something on the Order Paper, maybe because they knew it would not be ready in time.

What I am saying is the Liberals are in control of the agenda. One of the few things the government largely still has control of is the agenda on this place. Despite all their talk about us filibustering, they did not bring the bill forward. In fact, we did not even debate debating the bill, as in this motion, Government Business No. 9, until yesterday, a full week and a half after the bill was tabled.

• (1935)

I hope I have impressed upon members tonight that the government has slowly tabled a bill that many witnesses did not support, and then decided to let it languish on the Order Paper. When the Liberals finally realized they had to get the engines hopping, they jammed it through with only six hours of debate. Then they jammed it through again at committee. Now they are jamming it through today, so that even Liberal members do not get the ability to hold their own government to account, let alone all other members in this place.

I am deeply dissatisfied with the government. Canadians should see that the Liberals, by their own actions, have used a process whereby Canadians do not feel heard and their representatives do not feel needed. This is a minority Parliament. No political party was given an absolute majority in deciding the views of all Canadians.

This is where we are supposed to debate ideas and to force compromise. Instead, the Liberals and the NDP have linked up and said that they do not need to hear from anyone else. During a minority, that is a shame. Shame on the government House leader and the Minister of Environment for doing so.

On this side of the House, we will call out what we see. On this side of the House, we will fight for ideas that help our environment and help us meet our targets on climate change, not simply talk about them and talk a good game. After an election, a Conservative government will do what is right on the environment and do right by Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I must say that I really enjoyed working with him on the committee. As he mentioned in his speech, some committee members truly wanted to improve this bill.

However, it is completely wrong to claim, as the minister did, that the Liberals voted in favour of a Bloc Québécois amendment, that they at least gave the Bloc something and accommodated the opposition. The only reason a single one of the 30-some amendments we proposed was adopted is that the Conservatives voted with us on the amendment, and I thank them for that.

I would like to know what my colleague thought about what the members of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development did to improve this bill.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. I think it is important to say that the Liberals and the NDP rejected a lot of ideas. The Bloc Québécois, the Green Party and the Conservative Party proposed many improvements to Bill C-12.

This bill was not perfect, no matter what the government believed. The opposition members from the Bloc, the Conservative Party and the Green Party are the ones who had a lot of positive ideas to protect the environment and to meaningfully address climate change.

• (1940)

[*English*]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the comments by the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, and I find his protestations somewhat disingenuous. I was at those committee meetings. I watched the member vote against the principle of climate accountability at second reading and then, at committee, vote against clauses 3, 4, 5, 6, 6.1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19. It is like the member is saying that he agrees we need to get across the river, but then he votes against wading, votes against swimming, votes against bridges and votes against watercraft.

Is the member in support of climate accountability, and will he be voting in support of Bill C-12?

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank my fellow British Columbian. I know why he is so uptight and upset. My speech has revealed the true face of the NDP in this Parliament. It has enabled the Liberal government and its rhetoric instead of taking real action.

I was in favour of this bill very early on, to the surprise of the member and I am sure of many in his caucus. However, the minister worked in bad faith with us, and the member worked with the minister to basically push through a process that pushed Canadians and expertise out.

As he is pointing a finger at me, he should be mindful that when he points his finger at someone, three fingers are pointing back. That is why the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley is upset. It is because he was part of a bad process and he enabled it.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, it sounds like the committee process was a real sideshow.

Government Orders

I talked to the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, who has attended 13 COP conferences and has been involved in the climate change movement for decades now. She knows lots of scientists and is well-connected, and is probably more knowledgeable than any other member of this place. She made some really important suggestions, like getting in touch with the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University, where they have established legal precedents and worked with other countries on climate change, or with James Shaw, who is the Minister for Climate Change in New Zealand. He has implemented a series of detailed plans to combat climate change. She knows a long list of scientists. All of this was rebuffed.

What does the hon. member think about the accountability in this bill?

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I know the member is disappointed, and I know that the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands was extremely disappointed, not just with the product but with the process. When in government, no party will win everyone over, but for goodness' sake, we should at least have a clean process. More than anything, that is where members, like the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith and the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, can find some common cause to hold the Liberal government to account.

It is really sad when we see a minister so hell-bent on getting his way that he is willing to push aside even his own caucus members. That is not accountability. That is not how the system is supposed to work. I have heard the expression that with good people, a bad system can work, but unfortunately when we do not have the right people, even a good system will not work.

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola. His constituency name is not as easy as Essex, but it is a heck of a great name.

The hon. member spoke of putting teeth into bills and teeth into reports, and of Conservatives fighting for great fresh ideas. Could the member give us an example of what he and Conservatives would have liked to see in the report and ultimately in the bill?

• (1945)

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased that the member for Essex listened to my speech. Had he listened to the whole thing, he probably never would have wanted to talk to me again. However, I will speak specifically to the one part of it.

The Conservatives believe in a whole-of-government approach. We need an all-hands-on-deck approach to climate change. That is the only way we are going to be able to do this. We need to work with the provinces. As I said, the provinces should be partners not punching bags, something the government continues to forget.

What did we want to see? Instead of the minister being the sole person to decide who is on the advisory board and the plans that go to cabinet being made on the recommendation of the minister, we wanted a whole-of-government approach. Instead of one person being responsible, multiple ministers should be. Then cabinet itself would be able to argue, break down the silos and come out with a united plan.

Climate change is very real. It is a challenge. If we cannot get the right governance structures in place and do not get rid of the silos of government and work with the provinces, we will get no further. We need all hands on deck for this, and the Liberal bill puts it all on one minister.

How can one minister change everything, unless it is the Prime Minister in that government? I do not know. These guys seem to think there is a way to do it. We will see how it works in reality.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege of sitting on the environment committee with my colleague, and I did notice all of the collusion that happened between the NDP and the Liberals on this issue.

My question to him is simple. How will all of the collusion in the way the NDP has worked to support the Liberals be portrayed in the next election? Can Canadians trust NDP members to have their own thoughts, or are they just here to prop up the Liberal government?

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, we live in a democracy, so it is up to citizens to decide who will champion their cause. If we look at Bill C-10, for example, the Liberals have sided with the Bloc, the NDP and the Greens to jam a bill through that quite honestly most Canadians do not understand. When they find out that their right to freedom of expression, as laid out under subsection 2(b) of the charter, is at risk, they will not like it.

It is up to the NDP to decide: Are they here to carry water for the government, or are they here to stand up for their constituents? Unfortunately, in this case, they do not seem to be doing much of anything. If I were a constituent of the NDP and I asked what they got, they would say they got an interim objective assessment in 2026 that the official from the Department of Environment and Climate Change said does not amount to a lot.

The government does not stand up to scrutiny. When will the NDP?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as members will see, my speech has a few things in common with the speech by my colleague from Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

I believe the Greens, the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois all experienced the same frustration during the committee's study. The Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of Bill C-12 anyway, despite its flaws, because we agree with the net-zero by 2050 target set out in the Paris Agreement.

I do want to point out, however, that the government chose to delay putting Bill C-12 on the House's agenda for more than four months. It took pressure from environmental groups for the government to finally introduce it in the House.

Government Orders

It was introduced in November, and the Minister of the Environment announced the formation of his advisory body in December, before we had even discussed it in committee. In April, the Prime Minister declared his climate ambitions to President Biden, setting targets for a 40% to 45% reduction by 2030. It was not until mid-May that Bill C-12 was finally referred to the committee, with only a few weeks left in the parliamentary session. In our view, the government's calculation is clear: little time to hear witnesses, little time to read correspondence or the many briefs submitted to the committee and, lastly, a rushed and truncated clause-by-clause process whose outcome was, as some committee members put it, a foregone conclusion.

The government has run roughshod over important parts of the legislative process by imposing this agenda and the resulting delays. I am not alone in drawing these conclusions. Since urgent action is needed, we are now dealing with Government Business No. 9. The real emergency is the climate emergency. We were hopeful that the parties that had been clamouring for strong, robust climate legislation that provides transparency and accountability and is guided by science would deliver. I can say right now that the result has been disappointing.

For its part, the government, through the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Canadian Heritage, explicitly said that targets were going to be included in the bill. It did so twice: once in the House and once in committee. At the May 17 meeting, at 2:51 p.m., the minister confirmed the following to my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia: “Yes, the new target range of 40% to 45% that we have announced as a goal for 2030 will be a requirement of the act.”

The two ministers, namely the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of the Environment, lied: no numerical target ended up being included. We worked quickly, and we have had to pick up the pace because of the timeline I mentioned earlier. However, we did listen to what various experts had to say and heard their advice on what key elements were required to come up with an ambitious climate bill.

Even more importantly, given Canada's record on greenhouse gas emissions and its dismal past failures, it was important for us to establish a road map for a bill that would enable Canada to honour its international commitments under the Paris Agreement, or in other words, legislation that would provide Quebecers and Canadians with a demonstrably viable path toward net-zero emissions, a green and fair transition and a future for our young people. That is what this is about. It is about the life we want for future generations in our communities.

We were given excellent advice, but the government, with the calculated and negotiated support of the NDP, failed to deliver the basics of what was required, despite the science and what it tells us, despite what we have been told over the years by experts from almost every sector of the economy, including those from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the International Energy Agency, despite the fact that time is of the essence and that we cannot take small steps when leaps and bounds are required, and despite the 33 robust amendments presented by the Bloc Québécois, which were all systematically rejected except for one.

• (1950)

I will not use my time to talk about everything that happened at committee because my colleague already covered that thoroughly, but I would like to talk about the other committee, the one the Minister of Environment and Climate Change created in December. Since December, the government has given that committee a hodgepodge of different names, as my colleagues will see.

The committee started out as an expert advisory panel, which was not bad. It was a good start, but then things went downhill. Next it was known as the independent advisory body, the departmental net-zero panel and the net-zero advisory panel. If my colleagues find that confusing, they are right.

Everything to do with the organization of what Bill C-12 now calls the “net-zero advisory body” is crucial to Canada's ability to say it has a meaningful climate act, not just to the governing party's ability to call an election and say it has this great climate legislation and everyone should vote for that party.

The advisory body, its composition, its mandate, its responsibilities and powers, its operation and its resources are all elements that the Bloc Québécois tried to clarify with the sole aim of finding in this bill what it was supposed to promote: government transparency and accountability in dealing with the climate emergency. The things I just mentioned were largely left out of the original version of Bill C-12.

In its amended version the NDP simply added the word “independent” to the name of the body. However, getting independent advice and having an independent body are not at all the same thing. By refusing the amendments we proposed, the NDP's minor qualification is unfortunately merely cosmetic and has no real legal scope. The departmental expert who appeared at our meeting confirmed this unequivocally.

Climatologist Corinne Le Quéré appeared before the committee. She is the chair of France's High Council on Climate and a member of the Committee on Climate Change in the United Kingdom. She has participated in several studies conducted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, so she has extensive knowledge and expertise. She said, and I quote:

...the current design of the legislation makes the advisory group too close to the minister, and the independence isn't quite visible enough. It must be at arm's length. The distance isn't very visible.

Let us now talk about consultations. We want thorough consultations to take place with different sectors of the economy and with government actors, all with respect for Quebec, the provinces, indigenous peoples and civil society, it goes without saying. However, the consultations must be guided by the people who have the expertise and scientific knowledge on climate change, and not the opposite.

Government Orders

When I listen to science, I am not listening to a multitude of positions and propositions coming from all over the place, to interests that are sometimes reconcilable, sometimes divergent. People are best placed to draw up a plan for us when they are independent, either as individuals or as a body, when they consult others, accept positions and propositions and analyze them in light of the demands of the climate crisis and the solutions that scientific expertise has to offer.

I will mention an amendment that the NDP will try to get a lot of mileage out of, I am sure. It is the one that requires the minister's first plan to include an objective for 2026. My colleagues should make no mistake: The expert who was present at the study confirmed that an objective is not the same thing as a target. The member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley will tell us that his negotiated amendment is essentially a surrender. He said, and I quote:

There is other wording I would have preferred as well, but this exercise is about building enough agreement to get these changes through the committee, and that was the language that was agreed to that we feel will gain agreement from the majority of the committee members. I think the term "objective" is clear enough for most people to understand...That's certainly my understanding. My hope would be that the government would understand it similarly.

I wish him good luck with that, because hope is not a management tool for dealing with a climate crisis. I think it is good to remind our NDP colleagues of that fact.

The weekend after the first meetings for the clause-by-clause study of the bill, my office voice mail was bombarded by concerned citizens from places like Kingston, Victoria and Sudbury, who had watched the committee proceedings and wanted to express their severe disappointment as NDP supporters. Concerning the environmental file, two people went so far as to say that "the Bloc Québécois is the only real opposition left in Ottawa". I am not making that up.

● (1955)

Will Canada impose an impossible task on future generations by making this accountability mere window dressing? The government must be accountable now, not in six months or a year.

The Bloc Québécois is a party with integrity that followed through on its convictions. We kept our word on the issue of climate accountability for the common good, for more transparency, for greater democracy, for more rigour and for more results.

We proposed a target of 37.5% below 1990 levels, the baseline year used by Quebec and the 27 EU countries. Canada decided to use 2005 as the baseline year, thus writing off 15 years of pollution.

We are facing a race that we cannot drop out of, but all we have is sneakers with no laces. I am worried about that. Everyone in Quebec and Canada should be worried, too. We were unable to see the process through to the end because of how the government, with the NDP as its ally, conducted this important debate.

We could wait until fall to put Bill C-12 to a vote. After all, the government waited six months to introduce it in the House and then refer it to committee. Instead of calling an election this summer, why not continue our work and wait until the fall to debate the bill and do an outstanding job of perfecting it? This will not happen,

however, because the government would rather stand up in front of voters and show them how great it is.

● (2000)

The Speaker: It being 8 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of Motion No. 9 under government business now before the House.

[*English*]

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

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

The Speaker: Call in the members.

● (2030)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 177*)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Bachrach
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baker
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bessette	Bibau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blois
Boudrias	Boulerice
Bratina	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Charbonneau
Chen	Cormier
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duvall	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Garneau	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill

Government Orders

Gould
 Guilbeault
 Hardie
 Holland
 Hussen
 Iacono
 Jaczek
 Joly
 Jordan
 Julian
 Khalid
 Koutrakis
 Kwan
 Lambropoulos
 Lamoureux
 Lattanzio
 LeBlanc
 Lefebvre
 Lightbound
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
 MacGregor
 Maloney
 Marcil
 Masse
 May (Cambridge)
 McDonald
 McKay
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McPherson
 Mendicino
 Miller
 Morrissey
 Ng
 O'Connell
 O'Regan
 Perron
 Plamondon
 Qaqqaq
 Ratansi
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Sahota (Brampton North)
 Sajjan
 Samson
 Sarai
 Scarpaleggia
 Schulte
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Simms
 Sorbara
 Ste-Marie
 Tassi
 Therrien
 Trudel
 Van Bynen
 Vandal
 Vaughan
 Virani
 Wilkinson
 Yip
 Zahid
 Zuberi— 207

Green
 Hajdu
 Harris
 Hughes
 Hutchings
 Ien
 Johns
 Jones
 Jowhari
 Kelloway
 Khera
 Kusmierczyk
 Lalonde
 Lametti
 Larouche
 Lauzon
 Lebouthillier
 Lemire
 Longfield
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Manly
 Martinez Ferrada
 Mathysen
 McCrimmon
 McGuinty
 McKenna
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Mendès
 Michaud
 Monsef
 Murray
 Normandin
 Oliphant
 Pauzé
 Petitpas Taylor
 Powlowski
 Qualtrough
 Regan
 Rodriguez
 Romano
 Saini
 Saks
 Sangha
 Savard-Tremblay
 Schiefke
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Simard
 Singh
 Spengemann
 Tabbara
 Thériault
 Trudeau
 Turnbull
 van Koevorden
 Vandenbeld
 Vignola
 Weiler
 Wilson-Raybould
 Young
 Zann

Bergen
 Bezan
 Block
 Brassard
 Carrie
 Chong
 Cumming
 Dancho
 Deltell
 Diotte
 Dreeshen
 Epp
 Falk (Provencher)
 Findlay
 Génèreux
 Godin
 Hallan
 Hoback
 Jeneroux
 Kent
 Kram
 Kusie
 Lawrence
 Lewis (Essex)
 Lloyd
 MacKenzie
 Martel
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McLean
 Melillo
 Morantz
 Motz
 O'Toole
 Paul-Hus
 Rayes
 Reid
 Richards
 Ruff
 Saroya
 Schmale
 Shipley
 Soroka
 Steinley
 Stubbs
 Tochor
 Vecchio
 Viersen
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Williamson
 Yurdiga

Berthold
 Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
 Bragdon
 Calkins
 Chiu
 Cooper
 Dalton
 Davidson
 d'Entremont
 Dowdall
 Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
 Fast
 Gallant
 Genois
 Gray
 Harder
 Jansen
 Kelly
 Kitchen
 Kurek
 Lake
 Lehoux
 Liepert
 Lobb
 Maguire
 Mazier
 McColeman
 McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
 Moore
 Morrison
 Nater
 Patzer
 Poilievre
 Redekopp
 Rempel Garner
 Rood
 Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
 Scheer
 Shields
 Sloan
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Sweet
 Van Popta
 Vidal
 Vis
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Wong
 Zimmer— 112

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

Pursuant to order made earlier today, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Bill C-12 at report stage.

* * *

CANADIAN NET-ZERO EMISSIONS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-12, An Act respecting transparency and accountability in Canada's efforts to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

NAYS

Members

Aboultarif
 Albas
 Allison
 Baldinelli
 Barrett

Aitchison
 Alleslev
 Arnold
 Barlow
 Benzen

Government Orders

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: There are four motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-12.

Motions Nos. 1 to 4 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

• (2035)

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.) moved:

That Bill C-12, in Clause 7, be amended by replacing subclause (4) with the following:

- (4) The Minister must set the national greenhouse gas emissions target
- (a) for the 2035 milestone year, no later than December 1, 2024;
- (b) for the 2040 milestone year, no later than December 1, 2029; and
- (c) for the 2045 milestone year, no later than December 1, 2034.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC) moved:

That Bill C-12, in Clause 22, be amended by replacing line 32 on page 12 to line 9 on page 13 with the following:

“(2) The Minister must make the annual report available to the public within 30 days after receiving it and then, within 120 days after receiving the report, the Minister must publicly respond to the advice that the advisory body includes in it with respect to the matters referred to in paragraphs 20(1)(a) to (c), including any national greenhouse gas emissions target that is recommended by the advisory body if the Minister has set a target that is different from it.”

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.) moved:

That Bill C-12, in Clause 22, be amended by replacing subsection (2) with the following:

(2) The Minister must make the annual report available to the public within 30 days of receiving it and then, within 120 days of receiving that report, the Minister must publicly respond to the advice that the advisory body includes in it with respect to matters referred in paragraphs 20(1)(a) to (c), including any national greenhouse gas emissions target that is recommended by the advisory body if the Minister has set a target that is different from it.

That Bill C-12 be amended by replacing, in the French version, Clause 27.1 with the following:

27.1 Cinq ans après la date d'entrée en vigueur de la présente loi, un examen approfondi de ses dispositions et de son application est fait par un comité soit du Sénat, soit de la Chambre des communes, soit mixte, que le Sénat, la Chambre des communes ou les deux chambres, selon le cas, désignent ou constituent à cette fin.

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House again today to speak in support of Bill C-12. We are having this discussion at a time when Canada is warming at twice the global rate and the regions in our north are warming at three times the global rate. Meanwhile, Canada is a top-10 emitter of greenhouse emissions on an absolute basis and is firmly entrenched as a top-three contributor to emissions on a per capita basis.

We have signed on to agreements like Kyoto and Copenhagen and made commitments to lower our GHG emissions, but never followed through with the detailed measures that would be needed to meet them. Bill C-12 would change that by requiring transparency in the policies the federal government would bring in to mitigate climate change, as well as hold us accountable to meeting them. Bill C-12 would ensure that Canada follows through on our strengthened 2030 target of 40% to 45% below 2005 levels of emissions that were announced at the Leaders Summit on Climate, held on Earth Day earlier this year.

Bill C-12 would ensure that Canada is on a path to realize net-zero emissions by 2050 and that we can implement our strengthened climate plan that would cut our emissions and allow our economy to thrive in a low-carbon world. For that reason, I urge all colleagues in the House to join me in supporting this legislation, but members should not just take my word for it. They should listen to the calls from leading environmental NGOs in this country for the two Houses to swiftly pass Bill C-12. A recent letter co-signed by the Climate Action Network, the David Suzuki Foundation, Équiterre, Ecojustice and West Coast Environmental Law made that particular case. It is hard to believe that just a decade ago, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the member for Pontiac and I were each working for those latter three respective organizations.

The decade that was lost under former Prime Minister Harper, and the efforts described by some as cowardly or even as a pariah in the context of UN-led climate change negotiations, is a big reason we are here today. Climate accountability legislation is long overdue. Since Bill C-12 was first tabled, I have spoken with hundreds of constituents and dozens of organizations, both within and outside of my riding, that wanted to know more and had ideas for this legislation. People like Daniel Huot have reminded me as recently as today why it is important that people who represent the public are accountable for the commitments they make, and climate change is no different.

I have spoken with members of all parties about this legislation and I know there has been a tremendous amount of engagement with experts across the country since the first reading of this bill. There is proof that improvements have been made. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change stated that he was open to amendments that would strengthen this bill. His actions have shown that he was true to his word. I want to thank all members of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development for taking an already good bill and making it significantly better through a number of amendments. In particular, I want to thank the NDP for supporting the government on the majority of the amendments made at committee.

[*Translation*]

I also want to thank the Bloc Québécois for the amendments it proposed and for voting in favour of sending the bill back to the House.

[English]

In my speech at second reading, I raised a few key aspects of this legislation that needed to be strengthened for it to give the House and all Canadians confidence that this bill would hold the government to account sooner and allow for longer-term planning. Originally, this bill would not have required reporting on Canada's track to achieving 2030 targets until a 2026 report by the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development and a 2027 progress report by the government.

I argued that the progress reporting in this bill needed to occur sooner so that Canadians could judge with confidence whether our country was on track to meeting our commitments for 2030 and averting the greatest challenge the world faces. To that end, the bill has been amended to require the first progress report to be submitted no later than the end of 2023 and that another be submitted in 2025. Earlier and more frequent reporting will provide enough time to take corrective action, or to vote in a government that will deal with the climate emergency and meet our international responsibilities.

Bill C-12 has also been amended to require that any progress reporting related to 2030 must now include an update on the interim greenhouse gas emissions objective for 2026. This satisfies some people who were seeking a 2025 target. It also addresses a concern I had raised that, due to our federal structure, shared responsibility for policies related to climate and the need to consult and accommodate indigenous peoples would have collectively taken a year or more to go through. Setting a short-term target for 2025 would have made that difficult, and it may have also led us to make short-term changes to cut emissions at the expense of changes that may take longer to pay back, in terms of emissions reductions.

● (2040)

I also focused on the long term in my last speech. I argued that we should provide targets and plans looking five years in advance, as the original bill required, as well as look 10 to 15 years ahead to allow the government and the private sector to make the investments now that will get us to our medium-term goals and on course to get to net zero by 2050.

This will allow us to have what the Canadian Institute for Climate Choices calls the safe-bet solutions, which are based on existing technologies like electric vehicles, measures for methane reduction and home retrofits and will help us meet our near-term reductions, as well as to work on some of the wild cards, which are the high-risk, high-reward technologies that we need to get to net zero.

These breakthrough technologies include climate solutions like hydrogen. They can be game-changers in hard-to-abate areas like freight transport. For these technologies to do the heavy lifting to help us reach our medium- to longer-term decarbonization, we need to set the minds of our government to where we are going and also show the private sector where we are going, so that those investments are made today and so that those jobs are also created today.

The testimony I heard as part of my role on the Standing Committee on Natural Resources clearly underlined that this is the certainty that businesses are looking for. They also said it was critical to pair this with a steadily increasing stringency of measures like

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the clean fuel standard and the price on pollution that will make Canada a destination of choice for low-carbon investment. To this effect, the amendments to Bill C-12 have acknowledged this by requiring emissions targets to be set 10 years and a day in advance.

I want to run through a number of the other important changes as well.

The content of the reporting has been improved to require the inclusion of more detail in projections for annual emissions reductions by each economic sector, and also to show what additional measures could have been taken to better ensure that targets are met.

Amendments have also made it clear that the net-zero advisory body will be independent of government and will also have a role in target setting in addition to its role in meeting those targets. This body has already been set up, with a diverse and exceptional group of 14 experts, including several who have been highly critical of the government's efforts to date. Together they will provide wholly independent advice and annual reports to the minister, which the minister will have to respond to publicly.

In what may seem self-evident, another amendment will require that governments make progressively stronger greenhouse gas emissions targets and ensure that Canada's targets are at least as ambitious as the most recent nationally determined contribution communicated under the Paris Agreement. While these requirements may seem self-evident, they guarantee that our emissions targets do not stale and will instead ensure we achieve and maintain a position at the forefront of global climate action.

[Translation]

If my colleagues think that this piece of legislation, with the Bloc Québécois's amendment, does not go far enough to promote climate accountability, a review will be mandated within five years or less.

● (2045)

[English]

Ultimately, Bill C-12 will require the federal government to be ambitious with its climate action, to be transparent with Canadians about the measures it is taking, to be clear with how it could do more and to put them in the driver's seat to holding the government accountable to ensure that we do what we must to address the climate emergency.

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I will conclude today with the following: Let us not let one party's intransigence on climate change derail our country for a decade, as it did before. Let us not make the same mistake again. Let us ensure that we deliver the climate action that the vast majority of Canadians want to see and let us pass climate accountability legislation today.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I would like to hear his thoughts on greenhouse gas reduction targets. At the beginning of the parliamentary session, the Liberals' target was to achieve a reduction of 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. In the budget, the government proposed a 36% reduction. On Earth Day, the target turned into a range of 40% to 50%. Not too long ago at the G7, the Prime Minister joined the other countries in aiming for a 50% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030.

In spite of all these targets—and no one quite knows which one we are aiming for—the government has not managed to put a figure in the bill. Since Kyoto in 2012, Canadian governments have been systematically incapable of meeting their targets.

Does my colleague truly believe that the current version of Bill C-12 will help us meet our greenhouse gas reduction targets?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I think it is a good question, because we already have our work cut out for us if we want to hit our current target. We have to respect what science tells us to do.

Under our current plan, we can implement measures in this budget to reduce our emissions to 36% below 2005 levels. We have to do even more. I think this legislation will help because it will force the government to be transparent. Ultimately, that is what will help individuals support and encourage the government and make sure it does what it said it would do.

[*English*]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague is familiar with the recent work by the International Energy Agency in modelling what a pathway to net zero by 2050 would look like. Notably, that modelling calls for an end to all new fossil fuel infrastructure this year. I wonder how he justifies the construction of the Trans Mountain pipeline in the context of that pathway to 2050, especially given that the Prime Minister signed a communiqué at the G7 that specifically noted the IEA's pathway.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his question and his important work as part of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development to get these important amendments passed.

Absolutely, the IEA report is an eye-opener. It is a report the Government of Canada asked the IEA to put together, along with a number of other nations. It makes some very important conclusions on the rate and speed of the transition we are already experiencing today. As my colleague mentioned, after this year there would not be a need for new exploration or new production going forward, which is going to cause some major changes in the way that energy

is produced all around the world, including in Canada. That is something we need to take into account.

One of the things I mentioned in my speech earlier today was hydrogen, which could very much be a fuel of the future for some of the hard-to-abate areas I mentioned. Blue hydrogen and green hydrogen offer opportunities and are part of the picture of what our energy sector is going to look like into the future.

• (2050)

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege and pleasure to speak tonight to this important bill. I am going to take a bit of a different slant on this.

As members know, I was first elected in 2019, so I am a relatively new member of this House. This period of time just before the session ends for the summer is a very busy time, as I understand. This is my first experience with it. It is the first time I have gotten to see the government trying to complete its agenda, which is kind of lagging. What I have been expecting is the very best the government has to offer to get its agenda through before the House rises for the summer.

My background, really briefly, is that I come from the accounting world, and specifically the management accounting area. Efficiency was one of the things I really focused on. I worked in a manufacturing plant and I helped people figure out the easiest way to do their job so that it required the least amount of labour and we could produce the best product, most efficiently, at the best price. Essentially, it is where I learned one of my mottoes, which is “Work smarter, not harder.”

As I have watched what has gone on here in the last couple of weeks from my lens, a relatively new lens, I have witnessed the exact opposite of efficiency. It has been quite fascinating. In fact, I imagine that when our Prime Minister was on his way back from his vacation trip to Europe a couple of weeks ago, he had to stop in a quarantine hotel like all other Canadians, except that he of course stayed in a special hotel that was close to his house and was only there for a few hours—but I digress. He probably would have called his government House leader to ask how things were going and how the legislation was coming along. Unfortunately, the government House leader would have had to give him the sad news that nothing had happened, that in fact everything had stalled out because of the many mistakes made by the government. In fact, everything was in chaos, as he could see if he looked at Bill C-30 or Bill C-10 or anything else.

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As we look at this bill, the government House leader has denied many times that the Liberals are going to call an election shortly, saying it is the event that just is not going to happen. However, in April, on this bill, the Liberals seemed to suddenly realize that they needed to pass something, and that is where Bill C-12 came into the picture. They needed to pass something just in case the event that is not going to happen happens.

After months of inaction on this bill, suddenly there was a big panic. Why is the government willing to ram through a flawed bill just before the summer? It is just in case that event that is not going to happen happens. Of course, the Liberals could wait until September, but here we are instead. It is the last panic time before the event that is not going to happen happens. This is hypocritical, and it is very disrespectful to our democracy.

I want to look at Bill C-12 through my new eyes. I had a front-row seat to this bill because I am on the environment committee. I have been able to see this first-hand. One of the questions I was asking myself was, "How do we have success when creating a new law?" Of course, the first step is to write a good bill. When the minister came to our committee, the first thing he said was that he was open to amendments. I am assuming he said that because he knew that the bill was not well written and that it had many flaws.

He just opened the floodgates, because there were 114 amendments that came to committee, and 17 of those came from the government itself. The bill was only 10 pages long at that point. That is over 11 amendments per page, or four per clause. That is a lot of amendments. Those numbers alone should prove that this bill was flawed.

Every morning we are led in a prayer by the Speaker, and one of the lines in that prayer is "Grant us wisdom....to make good laws...." I cannot sit back and watch this law come into force. It is a bad law. The number of amendments also showed that this was true.

The second way that we could have success when creating a new law is to get feedback. There was a lot of feedback. There were 75 briefs received by the environment committee, which is great. A lot of Canadians put in a lot of hard work to write reports and provide information to the committee. The bad news is that only eight of those briefs were received before we started our study. That was because the study was jammed in. It was rushed into committee with a very short deadline.

That means that 67 briefs were received after we did our study. It means that the work of many Canadians was ignored, and the government was happy to ignore it. It was not particularly interested in listening to the views of people who submitted the briefs. It had a plan, an idea of what it wanted to accomplish, and that is what it was going to do.

The third way we could make sure to have success in creating a new bill is to let the committee do its work. The first thing the government did was make a deal with the NDP. It did not want the committee to get bogged down in any details of actually providing useful information. It wanted to be able to ram things through.

The Liberal-NDP coalition did exactly that. It rammed this bill through the committee. Almost every single vote at the committee

was marked by the Liberal-NDP coalition. The Liberals and the NDP made no bones about their coalition.

• (2055)

The NDP member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley posted to his Twitter before the clause by clause started, "[T]he NDP will be proposing amendments that the government has agreed to support.... We have also jointly agreed to a number of other amendments."

What was the practical result of this? The New Democrats and the Liberals fell silent. They did not ask questions. I am not even sure they read many of the amendments or even understood what they were. They had a plan. They just knew to vote for this and not vote for that. Therefore, it fell to the Conservatives and the Bloc MPs to scrutinize these amendments. As for me, I asked reasoned and thoughtful questions of the departmental experts as to the consequences of certain amendments, but the problem was that there were 114 amendments, as I said.

As I also mentioned, the government put forward 17 of its own amendments. That means that on 17 separate occasions, the minister messed up drafting the bill and he needed his MPs to fix it. That is like us buying a new car, driving it off the lot and just as we are leaving, the salesman says he has scheduled 17 appointments for us to come back for maintenance because the dealer messed up and there are a bunch of problems with the car. Therefore, we drive it off the lot, go back tomorrow and the dealer starts fixing it. It makes no sense.

The Liberals and the New Democrats on the committee were only interested in their amendments. They refused to engage with us on our amendments. To prove my point, there was kind of a funny example.

Subsection 7(4) of the original bill required that the minister would set national targets five years in advance. The government and NDP wanted to change that to 10 years in advance. The problem was the Greens put forward an identical amendment and because they got there first, we dealt with their amendment first.

As was the practice of the government and the NDP members, they did not want to support anyone else's amendments and certainly not the Greens'. Therefore, the Green amendment was voted on and was rejected. Next up was the government amendment that was literally identical. The chair, rightly so, ruled that it was inadmissible because we had just dealt with this at committee and we had decided not to proceed with it. That was a big problem. Everybody wanted to vote for that second one because the members actually wanted the amendment. However, I do not think they read the first one from the Greens, which was the same, and they did not realize they had just voted down, essentially, their own amendment.

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In the end, after a very long discussion and a lot of time wasted, the government members finally realized that instead of saying 10 years, they could say “9 years 366 days”, which was different enough to get it passed. I found that quite humorous, that the government members were not able to accomplish this.

I have an amendment that was read tonight, and it is in a section of the bill referring to the work of the advisory body, specifically the annual report that it has to submit. My amendment would require that the minister make the annual report public and, further, that the minister publicly respond to this report. It would require the government to actually take action, which is something we all know the Liberals are quite allergic to. The Liberals tried to make an amendment on this section at committee, but theirs was sloppy and it left the legislation in very bad shape.

Essentially, the Liberal-NDP amendment added words but it did not remove redundant words, so the bill as it is written right now makes no sense in that section. It still includes a long sentence that should not be there and it starts with a partial word. It just does not make a whole lot of sense. My amendment allows that wording to make sense again.

The Green Party put forward some really good amendments. The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands was quite frustrated at committee. I want to quote her because it is quite telling. She said:

I have to say that this is the most dispiriting process of clause-by-clause that I've experienced in many years. Usually amendments are actually considered, people actually debate them and there is a good-faith process...

I condemn this government for what it has done: for telling people like me, who believed in good faith that there would be an actual appetite for change to improve the bill and who accepted it and prepared amendments, only to show up here and watch Liberals stay mute, the NDP stay mute and march through their amendments, passing them in force, and not listening and not caring about the possibility that other amendments might work.

What happens when there is a flawed committee process? Flawed legislation results. Bill C-12 is flawed legislation.

● (2100)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I have some interesting numbers here. In recent weeks, the International Energy Agency clearly stated that achieving net zero by 2050 means reducing global oil production by 50% by 2040 and by 75% by 2050.

The government made it clear in this bill that it wants to achieve net zero by 2050. However, its own projections and those of Natural Resources Canada indicate that oil and gas production in this country will continue to increase until 2045. In 2045, we will produce even more than we produced in 2019. Considering those numbers and the current version of the bill, does the member think Canada will achieve its greenhouse gas reduction targets?

[*English*]

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, what we have to understand is that right in the numbers she provided there will be oil and gas used in the world for many years to come. I want to ensure that Canada is the country producing and supplying that oil and gas to the world.

We have some of the toughest rules when it comes to human rights, labour policies and environmental legislation. We do not want oil that will be produced in the world to come from jurisdictions where they do not have the tight and very difficult rules we have. That is clearly what we want, and Canada can lead the world in that way.

We also have to remember that our oil and gas producers are very good with technology, and they are developing new technology all the time, which reduces the carbon footprint of our own gas production. Through technology and good legislation, we can be leaders in the world and we can produce the oil and gas that the world will need for many decades to come.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank colleagues on the environment committee for the work they did, at least those who collaborated on the bill. The outcome is really a testament to their hard work on behalf of Canadians.

For my colleague who just spoke, I am looking for a very simple yes or no on this. Does he believe global warming is a fact and that human beings are the primary cause of that phenomena? If he does believe in it, what will he do to get his Conservative colleagues, who still are on the fence or outright deny global warming, to realize the facts and reality on the issue?

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, yes, global warming is real and yes, we need to do something about it. It is not other politicians that need to be convinced of this, it is people. Where people struggle sometimes with this, is the fact that many of the proposed solutions to this point will affect them deeply. They are going to take away their jobs. They are going to take away their livelihood. They are going to take away things that they are used to. That is why we have to be smart in how we do this. We cannot simply outlaw things without proper solutions to replace them with.

It is incumbent upon us as leaders to ensure that we have the tools in place to reduce our greenhouse footprint, absolutely, but we need to do it in a way that does not get rid of jobs, does not throw people into poverty, that allows people to live their lives, but do it in a better and more environmentally friendly way.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with the introduction of Bill C-12, the government indicated it would collaborate with all parties to ensure an agreed-upon makeup of the advisory board, which is fairly central to the effectiveness of this net-zero legislation.

However, during initial debate on the bill, I asked the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country for more details about the potential make up and powers of the advisory board, at which point he proudly shared that the advisory board members had already been appointed.

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I would like the member to elaborate on the fact that, again, this shows the lack of true commitment to working within the House with all members of Parliament to bring forward the best bill and the best results to the advisory board.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, this is a core issue of one of the flaws in the bill. The government says one thing and does another. The Liberals said they were going to have an advisory committee that would be made up a variety of different people, yet they created the committee even before the bill was passed. We are still talking about it here, yet the committee already exists.

The membership of that committee is definitely skewed in one direction and it is lacking the ability to represent all different aspects. In my view, there is not enough business representation on that committee. We need to ensure the committee is proper because it is a very important part of this process, that we have an independent body of experts and experts across the board who can help us deal with all the complicated issues that will come from this. Not only—

• (2105)

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is probably the last time I will speak in the House under your chairmanship. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your excellent work. I must say that you are one of the only Conservative members who voted for my bill, Bill C-215. You are a true gentleman. I consider myself fortunate to have served with you, even if only for a short time. I wish you a very happy retirement.

Quite honestly, Mr. Speaker, I am not sure where to begin with this bill. I would say that at the beginning of the study of this bill in committee, I felt like a little kid on Christmas Eve. It was the first detailed study I had seen in committee. I thought that finally here was a climate bill and that, although I was a little disappointed that mine did not make it to committee, at least we had something to work with, something to improve.

I would say that I became disillusioned rather quickly. It seems to me that as parliamentarians, as politicians, our job each and every day is also to show our constituents that they should not be cynical about politics, that we are here for the right reasons and not just for strategy, that we really want to change things. Unfortunately, I saw anything but that at the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

First, I have to say that the committee was forced to rush its study of the bill. As my colleagues have already mentioned, we had only a few hours to debate this bill in the House. It was then referred to committee and we had to study it quickly.

Today, we are voting on closure. On the second to last day of the parliamentary session, when we are finally debating Bill C-12, we are being told that, as a progressive party, we should vote for this bill. We really want to do the right thing, but we also would have liked the government to accept the Bloc Québécois's helpful suggestions to truly improve this bill.

As a result, we find ourselves with a version of Bill C-12 that, a bit like its original version, does not guarantee that Canada will meet its greenhouse gas reduction targets, as it committed to do on the international stage.

If the Liberals were serious about their commitment, they should not have been trying to pass a climate law just to say that they passed a climate law. The Bloc Québécois seems to be the only party that stayed true to its convictions. I do have to acknowledge that the Conservatives also stayed true to their convictions, as we saw in committee. They proposed a number of amendments and engaged in meaningful debate. I will give them that. Other parties disappointed us in these debates.

The objective was of course to create a strong legal framework that would enshrine targets in the act, establish the climate policy and require the adoption of a plan. It is all well and good to set targets and be ambitious, but without a plan, nothing will happen.

This suggests that the act creates some provisions and mechanisms that will guide the implementation, the assessment, the tools and the approach that will be used to really reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. The Bloc Québécois included such mechanisms in our proposals, in Bill C-215 and in the amendments we presented in committee.

The Liberal members voted against our climate accountability bill. They introduced their own bill that was specifically designed not to interfere with their current plan, which, as I mentioned earlier, is to continue oil and gas production in the coming years. That means we are heading straight for a wall.

I heard the minister say a little earlier that he had Bill C-215 in his hands when Bill C-12 was drafted. I would like to hope that the Liberals drew inspiration from Bill C-215, but their bill is really not the same.

In fact, that says something about the Liberals' partisan tactics, which are shameful. We have said many times in the House that the climate emergency should not be a partisan issue. However, unfortunately, that is what the Liberals turned this bill into when they realized that they really had to introduce a climate bill because environmental groups all over the country were telling them that it was time to hold that debate if they wanted to pass a climate law by the end of the parliamentary session. That is when the Liberals woke up. It was not because of the climate emergency, but because they were running out of time before the end of the session. That is why we are here tonight, speed-debating this bill.

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• (2110)

Not surprisingly, as I said, the Liberals reduced it to a partisan game, but who got caught in their speed trap? It was their farm team, the NDP. That, I have to admit, I was not expecting. Shame on me for believing for one second that the New Democrats had the same environmental values we do. Obviously, we are getting used to the NDP saying one thing and doing the opposite. That is what happened at the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, and I should have seen it coming. That was my mistake.

The government clearly used the NDP by promising them something. It refused the Bloc Québécois's help by systematically voting against all the amendments we proposed. We heard the Minister of Environment and Climate Change say a little earlier that they had voted in favour of at least one Bloc Québécois amendment, but that is false. It was the Conservatives and, for once, the NDP that helped us get that amendment passed, but the Liberals managed to oppose everything we proposed.

With the NDP, the government acted as if it were a majority. The NDP accepted the government's offer to make only cosmetic changes to Bill C-12, thereby squandering the balance of power the opposition would have had to really improve this bill. The NDP gave up the chance to strengthen Bill C-12, and that is truly deplorable. It is as though all the NDP wanted was to make public statements to say or claim that it had negotiated amendments to the bill when, in fact, it did not achieve anything at all. As for the government's amendments, they stayed true to the original Bill C-12 and had no real effect. These are cosmetic changes.

Even with all this inconsequential busywork in committee, Bill C-12 does not even establish accountability mechanisms in case of failure. When the bill was introduced, the Prime Minister himself acknowledged this. When he was questioned about the lack of consequences in case reduction targets were not met, the Prime Minister said, "We live in a democracy, and ultimately it is up to Canadians to continue to choose governments that are serious about fighting climate change and that will be accountable to the public every five years."

In other words, according to the Prime Minister, the act does not actually need to contain binding mechanisms. We just need to trust the Liberal government. In saying that, the Prime Minister admitted right off the bat that his bill was weak. Why introduce it, if not for electoral reasons?

Criticism poured in from all sides, from opposition parties to environmental groups. Even journalists were wondering why the bill did not contain any binding targets. That is unbelievable. The government threw out some figures without backing them up, saying that there would be new targets.

The member for Repentigny and I brought up those famous reduction targets. We fought to ensure that Bill C-12 would at least contain greenhouse gas reduction targets. It is a climate bill after all.

As I said earlier, at the beginning of the parliamentary session, the Liberal government intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2030. On budget day, that target increased to 36%

because of all the funding that was going to be injected. However, a few days later, on Earth Day, the greenhouse gas reduction target went up again to between 40% and 45% by 2030. A few days ago at the G7 meeting, Canada, along with other countries, promised to reduce emissions by 50% by 2030.

The government never managed to include any of these targets, no matter which, in the bill, despite the fact that the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change had told us that a target would be set out in Bill C-12. All they had to do was pick one and include it.

That is rather shameful because it tells us that the Liberals know that they will not be able to meet those targets. That is the way it has been since the Kyoto protocol in 2012. Canadian governments have been systematically unable to meet their targets. In our opinion, the fact that the Liberals keep changing the targets without giving them force of law means that they have about as much force as a New Year's resolution.

It is therefore difficult not to be cynical, and I am wondering how many times the Liberals can disappoint people before they do become cynical. I have a lot of things to say about all the ideas that were rejected in committee, all the suggestions we made that the government did not accept. I would have said that it was a missed opportunity, but the Liberal government knew what it was doing from the start. I think that is the most disappointing part of this whole story.

We will debate this bill until late this evening to try to make it better, but what will be will be.

• (2115)

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's contribution tonight. Obviously, she saw much of what we saw during the committee process when a number of witnesses come forward who were unhappy with the government's bill.

Could she point out what she believes is fundamentally missing from the government's legislation? Does the environmental community she has heard from feel this is the best bill that could possibly go forward? What is missing? What are the main flaws in the bill?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for giving me an opportunity to go into more detail.

My answer is very simple. This is the title of the bill: an act respecting transparency and accountability in Canada's efforts to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050. That title does not accurately reflect what is in the bill, though, because the bill is not transparent, includes no accountability mechanisms, and offers no targets and no plan for meeting the targets. The bill is anything but transparent, accountable and binding. All it has to offer is a nice title.

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The Prime Minister makes nice promises when he is abroad, but there is nothing that really has force of law.

[*English*]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we heard this evening the Conservatives outline all the ways in which the NDP purportedly colluded with Liberals on this bill. We heard the previous speaker basically suggest that all of the amendments they put forward landed them nothing. While we fought to secure interim emissions objectives for 2026 and two more progress reports before 2030, it appears the Bloc got nothing out of its negotiations and debate, yet just an hour ago the Bloc voted to support closure on this motion.

If the Bloc fought and got nothing, why did it vote for closure? Will the hon. member be supporting this bill at the end of tonight?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Mr. Speaker, I thank my NDP colleague for that very good question.

We spent months working hard to bring about climate legislation for Canada. When I introduced Bill C-215, it was about time someone did it. During the 2019 election campaign, the government told everyone and their dog it was going to do it, but it still had not introduced anything.

The Bloc Québécois went ahead and proposed something, but the government came back with its own proposal, which was not very good. In committee, we tried and failed to make the legislation more binding. The NDP decided to make it look like it was helping and make the government seem like it was open to proposals from the opposition parties and to collaboration, so everyone would be better off. However, the government did not consult the other parties about this.

We hope we get a climate law, because it is better than nothing. I hate saying it is better than nothing, but we have worked too hard to end up with nothing, so the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of the bill.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech and her frank and honest views on the environment issue. We can see that she really cares about effecting change.

I can understand her disappointment at having believed that the Liberal government would bring in the changes it had announced during the 2015 election campaign. In the end, on this file and several others, the Liberals did not keep their promises. Personally, I am not surprised because that is very on-brand for the Liberals.

At the beginning of her speech, my colleague mentioned that the Conservatives proposed some valid amendments to Bill C-12 at the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

In her opinion, which Conservative amendments on the environment could have been adopted to improve the bill?

• (2120)

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very good question.

Earlier, I acknowledged my colleague's work at committee. He had a real desire to make changes. I would not say that all the changes were good ideas, but some were. The proof is that the Bloc Québécois voted in favour of a Conservative amendment regarding electric transportation. After hearing the witnesses in committee, we tried to have discussions to improve all these things.

I think that my colleague would agree that the discussions we had with the Conservatives were more fruitful than the ones we had with the government. Once again, the government is playing partisan politics. It wants to add "introducing a climate law" to its list of achievements. If the bill makes it to the Senate, everyone will be happy, except true environmentalists.

[*English*]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak to Bill C-12, such an important piece of legislation we are considering this evening. It is a bill that would create a framework for real climate accountability in Canada at long last.

We are debating this closure motion because we are running out of time in this place to deal with a bill that concerns the climate crisis, incidentally an issue on which we are also very much running out of time on. The springtime temperatures above the Arctic circle broke records last month, rising to over 30 degrees.

As we debate this bill, the American west is experiencing an unprecedented heat wave and mega draught, and NASA has just alarmingly reported that the earth is now trapping twice as much heat as it did in 2005. Across the globe, the climate emergency is already having serious impacts on human health and our economies, and it is time we take serious measures to at long last make a difference on this issue.

The purpose of accountability legislation is to keep our country on track toward its major emissions milestones, most notably those for 2030 and 2050. This is a tall order because, as a country, we have been dismal in living up to our climate commitments. In fact, we have not met any of the targets we have set as a country, and we have the shameful distinction of being the only G8 country whose emissions have risen since the Paris Agreement was signed.

It is unfortunate that the Liberal government, in crafting this bill, did not look around the world to the gold standards of climate accountability. We have heard a lot about the U.K. example in debate on this bill. Of course the U.K. example uses something called carbon budgets, and in that country it has led to the U.K. meeting and exceeding every single aspirational carbon budget it has set.

Government Orders

Instead, the minister took a different tact with this bill, and he never really clearly explained why that is, but as a result we have this bill in front of us.

A carbon budget is much easier to understand after all because it mirrors our financial budgeting framework. There would be a certain amount of emissions that, as a country, we could emit in a certain amount of time, and if we were to emit more than that, we go into deficit. It is something that is transparent and easy for citizens to understand. I still do not understand, even at this late date in debate, why the minister chose not to use that structure for this bill in front of us.

The Liberals introduced the bill they did, and we had some choices. We could obviously reject it outright and know it is going to be at least a year, if not two years, before we have another shot at a climate accountability bill, or we could work as hard as possible to strengthen the bill and make the most of this opportunity. That is the option we chose. That is because during the election we heard from thousands of Canadians who called on us to collaborate across party lines with other parties to ensure Canada had some semblance of climate accountability coming out of this Parliament.

In a minority Parliament, that is just not an opportunity. I believe it is a responsibility, and one we in the NDP took to heart. We brought our ideas to the government and we pushed hard for changes that would strengthen Bill C-12. Of all the changes we pushed for, the most significant one, as we heard so much about this evening, was the setting of an interim emissions objective between now and 2030.

The scientists tell us that this is the most important decade if we are going to turn around catastrophic climate change. So many of the witnesses we heard at committee told us that we needed accountability before 2030, and that, given the government's track record over past decades, it was not enough to simply say to trust us and wait until the end of the decade.

We are very pleased we were able to leverage a commitment to a 2026 objective for emissions. While it is procedurally different than the other major milestones in the legislation, we believe it plays the basic role of providing transparency and accountability and showing to Canadians whether or not, as a country, we are on track to meet that critical 2030 milestone.

• (2125)

There were other changes we pushed for as well, and we heard about those this evening. We wanted the bill to lay out the specific requirements of the emissions reduction plans. We wanted the advisory body to have certain expertise on it, so that Canadians could trust that the advice the minister was getting was adequate. The third thing I would mention is that we wanted indigenous knowledge, which we know is so important to have reflected in our legislation. We wanted that to be defined and built into the bill in a much more substantive way.

The minister agreed with many of our proposals. There were other proposals he pushed back on. That, after all, is how negotiation works, but let us be clear that this bill in front of us is much stronger today than it was when it was first drafted. With the passing of the Bloc Québécois amendment calling for a five-year leg-

islative review, Bill C-12 now includes amendments from the government and two of the three opposition parties. It is not the bill we would have written, but it is a bill we can accept.

Canada's major environmental organizations agree Bill C-12 should pass, and six of these groups wrote us a letter back on June 7. They said that we cannot afford another decade of ad hoc, incoherent Canadian climate action. Climate legislation is essential to help drive the necessary changes and Bill C-12, as amended, provides a foundation we can build on to ensure Canada develops the robust accountability framework we need.

We have heard in previous speeches that the Bloc and the Conservatives are frustrated with the process, and that is fair enough. If the Liberals had given Bill C-12 greater priority in this parliamentary session, introduced it earlier and given it more hours of debate, we could have seen a more exhaustive, deliberative process. Why this did not occur is a fair question for the government.

As for the Conservatives, it is difficult to know how to take their amendments. They voted against pretty much every aspect of this bill. At second reading, they voted against the very principle of the bill, and the amendments they put forward at committee did not seem to me intended to strengthen the bill, but rather to blunt its impact.

Regardless, we now have a bill in front of us that is both less than perfect and much better than it was. The essence of this bill is transparency. Its value lies in the idea that a concerned and informed electorate, if properly and regularly updated, will not tolerate a government that refuses to take the actions necessary to drive down emissions. It would achieve this by requiring frequent reports, empowering an advisory body, requiring the minister to rationalize her or his decisions when it comes to deviations from the advice that body provides, and requiring ever more ambitious targets.

This bill cannot likely withstand a climate-recalcitrant, insincere government nor one that explicitly rejects our climate reality. By the same token, there is nothing in this bill that would hinder a truly progressive NDP government from tackling the climate emergency with the urgency that it deserves.

Government Orders

We have a choice, and I wanted to end in this way. Fifteen years ago, our former leader, the late Jack Layton, put forward Canada's first climate accountability framework with Bill C-377. I found the speech that Jack gave in this place at second reading, and I would like to read a passage from it in conclusion. Jack said:

Canadians have been seeing these changes and are calling for action. I think we have to say that they have been disappointed to date, but they are hopeful that perhaps for this House, in this time, in this place, when we have a wave of public opinion urging us on, when we have every political party suggesting that it wants to be seen to take action and, let us hope, actually wants to take action, there is a moment in time here that is unique in Canadian history when action can be taken. It is going to require us to put aside some of what we normally do here, and we have to understand the need for speed...

Our commitment to the House and to all Canadians is to do everything that we can to produce results from the House in the very short period of time before we find ourselves having to go back to Canadians. I do not want to go back and tell them we were not able to get it done. I want to go back and tell them that we all got together and we got it done.

Amen, Jack. Let us get moving at long last.

● (2130)

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his commitment to climate action.

He mentioned earlier the International Energy Agency's report and road map that said we can no longer have investments in fossil fuels after this year. I would like to ask him about Coastal GasLink, LNG Canada and the expanding fracking that is happening in British Columbia, and whether he thinks those projects should be shut down, because, as we know, fracking is a very dangerous process and the release of methane into the atmosphere is 80 times more potent than CO₂ in the first 20 years.

I would like his comments on that.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Mr. Speaker, I believe that all governments should be able to transparently explain to their citizens how the math around climate works and how their decisions can be rationalized in the context of a world that is moving toward a low-carbon future. The IEA has laid out the pathway to getting to net zero. It implies some very difficult choices ahead for us, but it is the path we have to take. I appreciate the member's question and would hope that every government would be sincere with its citizens and explain how the numbers add up and how we can hit those targets.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 9:33 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

[*English*]

The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion applies also to Motion No. 4.

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division, I would ask them to stand and indicate so to the Chair.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 1 stands deferred, which will also apply to Motion No. 4.

[*Translation*]

The question is on Motion No. 2. A negative vote on Motion No. 2 requires the question to be put on Motion No. 3.

The question is on the motion. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

● (2135)

The Deputy Speaker: If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, the recorded division on Motion No. 2 stands deferred.

The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred divisions at the report stage of this bill.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

● (2150)

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 1.

● (2200)

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 178*)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Bachrach	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baker	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bessette
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blois
Boudrias	Boulerice
Bratina	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chabot	Chagger

Government Orders

Champagne	Champoux	Sorbara	Spengemann
Charbonneau	Chen	Ste-Marie	Tabbara
Cormier	Dabrusin	Tassi	Thériault
Damoff	Davies	Therrien	Trudeau
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens	Trudel	Turnbull
Desilets	Dhaliwal	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Dhillon	Dong	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Drouin	Dubourg	Vaughan	Vignola
Duclos	Duguid	Virani	Weiler
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duval	Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Dzerowicz	Easter	Yip	Young
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Zahid	Zann
Ellis	Erskine-Smith	Zuberi — 209	
Fergus	Fillmore		
Finnigan	Fisher		
Fonseca	Fortier		
Fortin	Fragiskatos		
Fraser	Freeland	Aboultaif	Aitchison
Fry	Garneau	Albas	Alleslev
Garrison	Gaudreau	Allison	Arnold
Gazan	Gerretsen	Baldinelli	Barlow
Gill	Gould	Barrett	Benzen
Green	Guilbeault	Bergen	Berthold
Hajdu	Hardie	Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Harris	Housefather	Block	Bragdon
Hughes	Hussen	Brassard	Calkins
Hutchings	Iacono	Carrie	Chiu
Ien	Jaczek	Chong	Cooper
Johns	Joly	Cumming	Dalton
Jones	Jordan	Dancho	Davidson
Jowhari	Julian	Deltell	d'Entremont
Kelloway	Khalid	Diotte	Doherty
Khera	Koutrakis	Dowdall	Dreeschen
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Epp
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Lametti	Lamoureux	Fast	Findlay
Larouche	Lattanzio	Gallant	Généreux
Lauzon	LeBlanc	Genuis	Gladu
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre	Godin	Gourde
Lemire	Lightbound	Gray	Hallan
Long	Longfield	Harder	Hoback
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)	Jansen	Jeneroux
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Kelly	Kent
Maloney	Manly	Kitchen	Kram
Marcil	Martinez Ferrada	Kurek	Kusie
Masse	Mathysen	Lake	Lawrence
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
McCrimmon	McDonald	Liepert	Lloyd
McGuinty	McKay	Lukiwski	MacKenzie
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Maguire	Martel
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	McPherson	Mazier	McCaulley (Edmonton West)
Mendès	Mendicino	McColeman	McLean
Michaud	Miller	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Melillo
Monsef	Morrissey	Moore	Morantz
Murray	Ng	Morrison	Motz
Normandin	O'Connell	Nater	O'Toole
Oliphant	O'Regan	Patzer	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Perron	Poilievre	Rayes
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon	Redekopp	Reid
Powlowski	Qaqqaq	Rempel Garner	Richards
Qualtrough	Ratansi	Rood	Ruff
Regan	Robillard	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)	Saroya
Rodriguez	Rogers	Scheer	Schmale
Romanado	Sahota (Brampton North)	Shields	Shin
Saini	Sajjan	Shiple	Sloan
Saks	Samson	Soroka	Steinley
Sangha	Sarai	Strahl	Stubbs
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia	Sweet	Tochor
Schiefke	Schulte	Van Popta	Vecchio
Serré	Sgro	Vidal	Viersen
Shanahan	Sheehan	Vis	Wagantall
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Warkentin	Waugh
Simard	Simms	Webber	Williamson

NAYS**Members**

Wong
Zimmer— 115

Yurdiga

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare Motion No. 1 carried. Therefore, I declare Motion No. 4 carried as well.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The next question is on Motion No. 2. A negative vote on Motion No. 2 requires the question to be put on Motion No. 3.

• (2215)

[*English*]

(The House divided on Motion No. 2, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 179*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Arnold
Ashton	Bachrach
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benzen
Bergen	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Blaikie
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Boudrias
Boulerice	Bragdon
Brassard	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Cannings
Carrie	Chabot
Champoux	Charbonneau
Chiu	Chong
Cooper	Cumming
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Diotte
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Duval	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Généreux
Gentuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Gray
Green	Hallan
Harder	Harris
Hoback	Hughes
Jansen	Jeneroux
Johns	Julian
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kram
Kurek	Kusie
Kwan	Lake
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire

Lewis (Essex)
Lloyd
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Manly
Martel
Mathysen
McCaughey (Edmonton West)
McLean
McPherson
Michaud
Morantz
Motz
Normandin
Patzner
Pauzé
Plamondon
Qaqqaq
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Rood
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shin
Simard
Soroka
Steinley
Strahl
Sweet
Therrien
Trudel
Vecchio
Viersen
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Wilson-Raybould
Yurdiga

Government Orders

Liepert
Lobb
MacGregor
Maguire
Marcil
Masse
Mazier
McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Melillo
Moore
Morrison
Nater
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Perron
Poilievre
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Ruff
Saroya
Scheer
Shields
Shiple
Singh
Stanton
Ste-Marie
Stubbs
Thériault
Tochor
Van Popta
Vidal
Vignola
Wagantall
Waugh
Williamson
Wong
Zimmer— 172

NAYS

Members

Anand
Arseneault
Badawey
Bains
Battiste
Bendayan
Bessette
Bittle
Blois
Brière
Casey
Champagne
Cormier
Damoff
Dhillon
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Ehsassi
Ellis
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Garneau
Gould
Hajdu
Holland
Hussen

Alghabra
Anandasangaree
Arya
Bagnell
Baker
Beech
Bennett
Bibeau
Blair
Bratina
Carr
Chagger
Chen
Dabrusin
Dhaliwal
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Gerretsen
Guilbeault
Hardie
Housefather

Government Orders

Hutchings	Iacono
Ien	Jaczek
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendicino
Miller	Monsef
Morrissey	Murray
Ng	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Regan	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota (Brampton North)
Saini	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simms
Sloan	Sorbara
Spengemann	Tabbara
Tassi	Trudeau
Turnbull	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Young	Zahid
Zann	Zuberi— 154

PAIRED

Nil

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I declare Motion No. 2 carried.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.) moved that the bill be concurred in.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I would ask them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

• (2230)

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

(Division No. 180)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Bachrach	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baker	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Besette
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blois
Boudrias	Boulerice
Bratina	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Champagne	Champoux
Charbonneau	Chen
Cormier	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duvall
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Garneau	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hardie	Harris
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Julian
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemire	Lightbound
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Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Manly
Marcel	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay

McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller
Morrisey
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Perron
Plamondon
Qaqqaq
Ratansi
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota (Brampton North)
Sajjan
Samson
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Tassi
Therrien
Trudel
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vaughan
Virani
Wilkinson
Yip
Zahid
Zuberi — 209

McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Michaud
Monsef
Murray
Normandin
Oliphant
Pauzé
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Qualtrough
Regan
Rodriguez
Romanado
Saini
Saks
Sangha
Savard-Tremblay
Schieffe
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
Spengemann
Tabbara
Thériault
Trudeau
Turnbull
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Vignola
Weiler
Wilson-Raybould
Young
Zann

MacKenzie
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean
Melillo
Morantz
Motz
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Ruff
Saroya
Schmale
Shin
Sloan
Stanton
Strahl
Sweet
Van Popta
Vidal
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Wong
Zimmer — 117

Government Orders

Maguire
Mazier
McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Moore
Morrison
Nater
Patzner
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Rood
Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Scheer
Shields
Shipley
Soroka
Steinley
Stubbs
Tochor
Vecchio
Viersen
Wagantall
Waugh
Williamson
Yurdiga

PAIRED

Nil

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I declare the motion carried.

When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to an order made earlier today, the House will now proceed to the third reading of the bill.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made earlier today, a member of each recognized party and a member of the Green Party may speak for not more than 10 minutes followed by five minutes for questions and comments.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging that I am addressing the House today from my riding of Vaudreuil—Soulanges, situated on land that has a shared history among the Huron-Wendat Nation, the Mohawk, the Anishinabek Nation, as well as the Six Nations.

[*Translation*]

Today I have the privilege of speaking to Bill C-12, the Canadian net-zero emissions accountability act, and explaining why it is so important to pass it as quickly as possible.

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Arnold
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Calkins
Carrie	Chiu
Chong	Cooper
Cumming	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Deltell	d'Entremont
Diotte	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Findlay
Gallant	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Harder	Hoback
Jansen	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kmieciuk
Kram	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lukiwski

*Government Orders**[English]*

There is an urgency to act on climate change and to put forward unprecedented actions aimed at limiting global temperature increases to no more than 1.5°C.

From 2009 to 2013, I had the privilege of serving as the national director of The Climate Reality Project Canada. During my work there, I came across peer-reviewed study after peer-reviewed study that showed the effects unabated greenhouse gas emissions would have on our climate here in Canada and around the world. For us here in Canada, the projections were dire. In fact, our climate was shown to be warming twice as fast as the rest of the world. In North America, warming is nearly three times as fast.

This is still the case, and we are seeing the effects. There has been record flooding in Calgary, which almost saw the Stampede cancelled; terrible flooding in Fort McMurray; and raging forest fires in British Columbia. Those have been compounded by the ravages of the pine beetle, which no longer has to contend with the cold winters as it once did. It is wreaking havoc on forests, reducing habitat for countless species and heavily impacting the forestry sector.

Prior to this pandemic, in the summer of 2019, I had the privilege of joining the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's Youth Council in Iqaluit, Nunavut, where we heard from hunters that the hunting season has shortened and has become more dangerous due to thinning ice.

I did not have to travel to the farthest reaches of our country to see the impacts of climate change. I needed only to take a walk outside my home in my riding of Vaudreuil—Soulanges in 2017 and in 2019 to see inundated streets, closed stores, and homes being washed away when my community experienced two record floods in a span of just three years.

This is our new reality and one that science warned us about long ago, but science has also provided the solutions. Canadians called out for change and action in 2015 and elected our Liberal government on a platform that promised unprecedented action. I am proud to say that is exactly what we have delivered on over the last six years.

Our Liberal government has already invested over \$60 billion to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help Canadians adapt to a changing climate. We have put forward unprecedented investments in clean technology and infrastructure, including tens of billions of dollars in public transportation, hundreds of millions of dollars in incentives for the purchase of electric vehicles and a network of charging stations across the country, \$3.2 billion for the planting of two billion trees, and over \$6 billion toward protecting 25% of our nature by 2025.

We also introduced a price on carbon pollution for the first time nationally. We are already starting to see positive results, with projected greenhouse gas emission reductions of 227 million tonnes by 2030.

These actions are unprecedented, but we know that more still needs to be done. That is why we are moving forward on delivering on our promise to exceed Canada's 2030 emissions goal by setting

legally binding five-year milestones, based on the advice of experts and consultations with Canadians, to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

This was reaffirmed in the Speech from the Throne, which said, "The Government will...legislate Canada's goal of net-zero emissions by 2050." This is what we will be delivering on when Bill C-12 is adopted by the House. In doing so, we will be at the front end of more than 120 countries already committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

As originally tabled, this bill served as a vital piece of legislation with legally binding processes for the federal government to set climate targets and bring forward plans to meet those targets. It also included rigorous ongoing progress reports, yearly reports by the independent advisory body, and ongoing audits by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

The act had already proposed a number of accountability measures, but building on this, significant and meaningful amendments were made to the bill at committee. These strengthened the bill even further and include a 2025 review of our 2030 target and an interim emissions reductions objective for 2026, which would enshrine the principle of progression for future targets and codify our new 2030 reductions target to a 40% to 45% reduction below 2005 levels.

The amendment to introduce a 2026 interim objective as part of subsection 8(2.1) of the bill is an important addition to this landmark piece of legislation. This new provision would require the inclusion of an interim GHG emissions objective for 2026 in the emissions reduction plan for 2030, and would provide a midpoint check-in between now and 2030.

• (2235)

Another important amendment that was passed will require the publication and tabling of two progress reports, which are due prior to the end of 2023 and 2025. This amendment will provide even greater short-term accountability. It requires that the Minister of the Environment, in consultation with other federal ministers, prepare progress reports on 2030 by the end of 2023, by the end of 2025 and by the end of 2027. It also requires the 2025 progress reports to include an assessment of the 2030 GHG emissions target, and requires the Minister of the Environment to consider amending the 2030 target, ensuring meaningful accountability checkpoints over the next 10 years.

Furthermore, an amendment adopted at the ENVI committee further strengthened the bill by explicitly specifying that the net-zero advisory body provides independent advice on achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, advice that is meant to be forward-looking. It also requires the minister to take into account the need to include members with a broad range of knowledge, experience, expertise and perspectives relevant to achieving net zero. This includes climate change science, indigenous knowledge, physical or social sciences, energy supply and demand, and much more.

Finally, the bill also enshrines targets and ensures that over time they only become more ambitious. That is why the amendment adopted by the committee, which includes our new climate target of reducing GHG emissions to 40% to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030, is so important. It will also ensure that all future climate targets in Canada can only be an improvement on existing ones.

This bill has been drafted with great precision and care by the government. It has been debated, and we have heard from experts in a wide range of sectors. It is a culmination of the kind of hard work that Canadians expect from the House. Organizations like the David Suzuki Foundation, the Centre québécois du droit de l'environnement, Climate Action Network Canada, Ecojustice, Équiterre and West Coast Environmental Law, among many others, have all given their time, expertise and guidance to this bill.

Devoted members of the House, most notably those on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, worked hard on this bill to strengthen it. They include my dear friend and the chair of the committee, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis; the parliamentary secretary and member for St. Catharines; the member for Etobicoke Centre; the member for Guelph; the member for Kitchener Centre; the member for York Centre; the member for Repentigny; the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley; and the member for Victoria, whom I had the pleasure of working with to help advance this important bill.

I can say without hesitation that Bill C-12 is a better bill today because of the work of the Commons environment committee, because of the feedback of all members of Parliament committed to fighting climate change and because of engaged Canadians.

• (2240)

[Translation]

Several countries are accelerating their transition to a net-zero economy, and Canada cannot afford to fall behind. We must seize the economic opportunity that climate action provides. That is why achieving net-zero emissions is not just a plan for a better environment, it is also a plan for building a cleaner, more competitive economy and a better future for our children and grandchildren.

[English]

I am asking for all members of the House to vote in favour of this bill as we work together to ensure that it advances to the Senate of Canada for consideration and adoption as soon as possible.

After countless hours of clause-by-clause consideration, and the Conservatives seemingly doing whatever it takes to delay its adoption, I invite the Conservative Party of Canada to be on the right side of history and do what is right for our children and for future

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generations of Canadians by joining the fight against climate change and supporting the Canadian net-zero emissions accountability act.

Canadians from all corners of the country are depending on us to get this done.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, what we have seen on this bill is a lack of respect for the basic processes that should be followed. The government said it was going to create an advisory panel, but then it announced who was going to be on that advisory panel before the bill had even proceeded to committee. The government is presenting this as some kind of an environmental plan, but the reality is that it is not a plan; it is just a bill that puts in place further targets. The other reality is that the government has not taken any action with respect to companies outside of the country that are releasing greenhouse gas emissions and selling their products in Canada.

I want to ask the member a question specifically about the issue of border adjustments. Does he support the Conservative proposal to have border adjustments so that outside companies exporting to Canada are operating under the same rules as companies inside of Canada?

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Madam Speaker, unfortunately my hon. colleague's question shows that the Conservative Party is still confused over its position on climate change. Before voting against the principle of this bill, the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola said in the House, "It may raise some eyebrows that my party will be supporting this". The Conservative finance critic said, "Conservatives in the House support this legislation", and the member for Saskatoon West said, "I like the proposed legislation".

I listened to the words of my Conservative colleagues today and I do not think I have witnessed a bigger act of retroactive continuity since the *Star Wars* movie *Rogue One*. Why will the Conservatives not support a commitment to net-zero by 2050? Is it because the caucus does not think climate change is real, or is it that they still do not want to do anything about it?

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. He is a fan of the Montreal Canadiens, so he will be happy to hear that the team is leading three to nothing.

I wanted to ask him questions about the targets, a subject I raise often.

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The last target was announced when the Prime Minister was at the G7. He joined the other countries in saying that we would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030. At the beginning of the parliamentary session, the objective was 30%, then it rose to 36% in the budget. Then came the much-talked-about range of 40% to 45%. The bill basically says that the target will be set in November, at the next summit with the parties to the Paris Agreement. Several different figures are on the table. Which one will become the government's target?

• (2245)

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her work on this bill.

However, I have to say that, in Bill C-215, the Bloc Québécois was fine with a target that was 30% below Canada's 2005 greenhouse gas emissions. Our government voted against that inadequate target and went well beyond what the Bloc suggested. During the climate summit hosted by the U.S., we announced a new reduction target that would bring us to between 40% and 45% below 2005 levels. That is good news for members of the House of Commons and for all Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague and friend for his speech. We sit on the all-party climate caucus together.

He talked a lot about what the government has been doing and gave a long list of important work that needs to happen regarding climate mitigation. The government touts the nature legacy program budget that it just rolled out of \$2.3 billion over five years, but in comparison, it is spending \$17 billion on the Trans Mountain pipeline. That is seven times what it is spending on conservation financing. We know that many indigenous communities are looking for financing for indigenous-protected areas to protect ancient old growth and estuaries and watersheds, which are critical to wild salmon, as we know. Does my colleague not agree that there is an imbalance here and that the government needs to invest quickly?

Yesterday a constituent of mine, Zan Callison, a young activist, noted the sense of urgency when it comes to protecting these critical ecosystems. Does my colleague not agree that we need to do more and urgently?

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague, in all sincerity, for his passion on this issue. It was a pleasure, as he pointed out, serving on that committee with him.

The one thing I will say is that we need to do more and we are doing more. I am unbelievably proud of the record investments that we have put in place, and not just for climate mitigation. There is also the billions of dollars, including \$4 billion in this most recent budget, to protect nature and ensure that we can reach the target of protecting 25% of our nature by 2025. This is not just a climate issue. We also need to protect these areas for species at risk and to ensure that we are leaving these areas for future generations of Canadians—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to move on.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure tonight to rise again in the House as the member for Calgary Centre and speak for perhaps the last time in this Parliament, if we hear what the government is saying correctly, which is that the Liberals are probably going to the polls at the end of this summer, but that is for another night.

I would like to speak tonight about Bill C-12, an act respecting transparency and accountability in Canada's efforts to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050.

I remember when the bill first came before Parliament. We did our jobs as parliamentarians. We read the bill and we looked at the bill, and a lot of us supported the bill because of what it represented, but we did our job as opposition parliamentarians, not just as parliamentarians on the government side. We looked at it and said that we have to pick our spots here about what we criticize, what we work with the government on and how we move these advances forward.

When the bill was introduced, I looked at its words and what it seemed to indicate as its intent: to hold governments accountable for reaching assigned climate change targets. All things considered, how could I not support government accountability?

Frankly, it is the absolute greatest failure of the government for the past six years. "Accountability" is not a word that seems to be understood by this weak government.

Let us talk about accountability in this debate on the environment. In the Liberals' six years in government, we have seen six increases in greenhouse emissions. We have seen more and more failed experiments through misguided interventions, and I note the excess spending in the department and in contracts with so many self-interested non-governmental organizations. Billions of excess spending went out the door to unaccountable, connected organizations that are accomplishing nothing but are being very well paid in the process.

Let us look at another example of virtue over objectives and results. Let us talk about two billion trees. How long ago did the government promise two billion trees? This year it is saying that this year it will actually plant 30 million trees. That is pretty good, but if we think about how many trees Canada actually has, we realize that it is hundreds of billions. This is a very small measurement, and it is accomplishing next to nothing. This is something that is more virtue over results. We actually need some results on the environment, and we need to get there as quickly as possible with some real programs.

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At first reading, I stood and supported the bill because it provided an accountability mechanism for a misleading, unaccomplished government. The veil came off that pretty quickly. The bill allows the Minister of Environment to appoint 14 representatives to a net-zero advisory board. They were already appointed prior to this legislation even being passed by the House, and it still has another House to go. The minister already has all his people picked out and put there, but it is also quite a power amassment by the Minister of Environment. Let us look at what he has done with his last power grab. Under the Impact Assessment Act, effectively he is the decider of every project that happens in Canada right now, whether or not it is provincial or federal jurisdiction.

This is something that is continuous. It is very clear that the minister is trying to get more and more decision-makers involved with his department and that he wants to make all the decisions for the government unilaterally. This is not the way Canada has been governed.

This board was constituted before the legislation even existed. It is a good thing that we took a good look at who is on the board. I will just go through one of the people, and I fully confess that I know two of the members on the board. I worked with them before, and they are actually pretty good members. However, I do not think two out of 14 are necessarily going to be holding the boat. There are some who seem to be quite obstructionist, so to speak, and the result is going to speak for itself at some point in time when the board comes to a conflict.

The executive director, Catherine Abreu of the Climate Action Network, is one of the appointees. What is her skill? She is an award-winning campaigner. That is fantastic. A campaigner is on a government-appointed board now.

Ms. Abreu believes we need to manage the swift decline of Canada's oil and gas industry, which is Canada's biggest industry, Canada's biggest contributor to taxes and Canada's biggest employer. That is great. We are just going to manage the swift decline of that industry rather than work with it to find out how we actually reduce carbon emissions. That is a good move.

● (2250)

What is this organization the Climate Action Network? It is a coalition of more than 100 organizations, including Clean Energy Canada, which all these others seem to collect around, and for some reason they need to fund an organization that oversees them. Who are they funded by? They are funded by each of the non-governmental organizations that is also funded by the government. It is a big circle of money pooling around, and eventually the taxpayer pays for it all, but let us follow the money. Environment and Climate Change Canada is the funder of many of these organizations. For a government department to spend tens of millions of dollars over budget and tens of millions of dollars more on external contracts for consultants is an embarrassment. This is where the money is going. It is all connected friends who are being paid in this process.

This reminds me of last summer and the Task Force for a Resilient Recovery: that bold environmental initiative from summer 2020. Of course, we cannot find a record of what it did or why it recommended what it did, but quite famously 15 individuals from

15 government-funded organizations came together quickly in the midst of a pandemic to not let this opportunity pass. "This opportunity" was the pandemic and people dying, because thousands of people died to allow them to move their agenda forward.

Those are scary comments. Parliament was shut down. Canadians were locked down. Were there meetings with these 15 organizations and these 15 individuals? Was external input sought? Did the Canadian economy or Canadian society participate in this report or these meetings? What about health care workers, teachers, businessmen, engineers, farmers, processors, technologists, workers, legalists and indigenous organizations? There was no input whatsoever. It was actually a whitewash of one professor's academic pursuit.

Stewart Elgie, of the Smart Prosperity Institute, drove it forward with one document. Who were some of the other partners in this? I will read them off: the International Institute for Sustainable Development, Efficiency Canada, the Transition Accelerator, the Institute for Sustainable Finance, Clean Energy Canada, Environmental Defence Canada, Corporate Knights, the Stockholm Environment Institute, Environment and Climate Change Canada, again funding itself, the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation and the Broadbent Institute. As well, a number of other institutes that are all funded by government come together here under the helm of none other than Gerald Butts: that beacon of transparent, democratic government.

If we look closely enough at all these organizations we will see significant overlap in boards, management and mandate. They love government money. Therefore, another circle of government-funded organizations gathered together to recommend more government spending on their initiatives. Members should not look for the report. It is not available, but we can see its recommendations, sometimes word for word and billion dollars for billion dollars, in the last throne speech and in this year's budget. It is government policy by a highly paid, self-interested Star Chamber. This is democracy under the current Liberal government. Are conflicts disclosed? They are not at all.

Bill C-12 proposes to enshrine this unaccountable, self-interested, conflicted decision-making body as an instrument in Canada's environmental decision-making. Indeed, some members of this board were involved in the Task Force for a Resilient Recovery. "Thanks for the deceitful work," says the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, "Canadians will thank you with an endless stream of unaccountable funds."

Bill C-12, supposedly about accountability of government, is in fact a removal of accountability of government. Members should follow the money. The government's friends are getting more expensive.

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• (2255)

Ms. Lenore Zann (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to say to the member that Catherine Abreu was here in Nova Scotia and doing excellent work for the environment for a number of years. When I was an MLA for 10 years, I was very impressed with her knowledge.

Does the member actually know what her background is, or is he just choosing her out of a hat to make fun of for some particular reason?

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, that was a strange question. This is not fun. I did not pick her name out of a hat. I am only reporting what was said in the paper about the person's qualifications and why she stood to be on this board. I do not know where she is coming from on that. I know there was a reason she was picked to be on the board. I know what she said in public, as far as the Canadian economy goes, and I know she has been involved very much in trying to end one of the economic engines of the Canadian economy without accountability.

That is what is wrong with the government, frankly. It is the lack of accountability.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. The Liberals keep saying that they listen to scientists and experts, but they gave the committee just a few hours to hear from witnesses, including scientists and environmentalists who came to talk to us about the issue, what needs to be done, why there is a climate emergency and the importance of having a climate act. In other words, that is a bit rich coming from them.

I know the Conservatives really did their part in the debates. I would like to know what they would have liked to see in Bill C-12 that would have made it more transparent, as the title suggests, more binding, and more demanding of accountability from whichever government is in power after the promulgation of a climate act like the one Bill C-12 will become.

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia for her question. It is a good question. I am still looking for the bill's *raison d'être* and trying to understand why it is before Parliament now. Given its contents, I do not know why it is before Parliament, because it does nothing for the environment. I think we need to do better for the environment. We need to do something better for our future.

• (2300)

[English]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of my favourite points of entertainment in the House of Commons has been watching the member for Calgary Centre argue with the Minister of Natural Resources about which party is more committed to oil and gas. The hon. member talked about accountability. The bill would work to establish an advisory board, which he referenced, that was supposed to have a mandate for review of the government's progress.

Specifically which measures of accountability would the member like to see to ensure the industry is held accountable for climate change?

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, accountability is about the whole country being accountable, including the oil and gas industry, so I do appreciate the member's question, particularly as it relates to the Minister of Natural Resources on that side of the House.

We need to set targets here. We need to force targets and regulatory targets about how we will reduce carbonization in our economy going forward, which applies to all industries.

The thing about our natural resource industry is that it has been the most successful at decarbonizing so far. We need to continue on that trend. One company in my riding reduced its carbon footprint by 18% over the past four years. That is significant progress. Show me another company or another industry in the country where we are reducing our carbon footprint by 4.5% a year and we will all be successful in this effort.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, if people are interested in my speech, I invite them to read Gooderham and Nathan, from which I drew inspiration.

Does the left hand know what the right hand is doing? Not in Canada it seems. The increase in Canada's oil sands production is not compatible with the objective of attaining net zero. On the one hand, the report entitled "Canada's Energy Future 2020", published by Canada Energy Regulator, does not mention any future changes in Canada's policy and plan that would limit the increase in the oil production forecast. On the other hand, the government plan, entitled "A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy" and an annex released on December 11, 2020, contain no commitment to stop increasing oil sands production, which should continue until 2045, according to the regulator's report.

The government and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change remained silent for more than six months after the report was released. They made no comments about how to reconcile Canada's current plans to increase oil sands operations and achieving net zero by 2050.

As members know, the oil and gas industries are the main source of greenhouse gas emissions growth in Canada. The more they increase, the longer it will take to reverse the trend and the higher the annual greenhouse gas emissions elimination rate will have to be after 2050, if we want to one day achieve net-zero emissions. All of the risks, losses and suffering will be passed on to future generations in exchange for our own immediate financial gain.

One really troubling aspect of the Canada Energy Regulator's report is that it does not contain any analyses or findings to inform Canadians about the future levels of oil sands extraction consistent with the Paris Agreement 1.5° temperature goal. However, similar studies are common and achievable. Such a study would provide a reliable, tangible assessment of the future levels of oil sands production in a world that has committed to avoid a more than 1.5°C rise in global warming.

A recent example of such a study, dating back to late 2019, is the International Energy Agency's sustainable development scenario. It is even more important to have this kind of information on Canada's future oil production given the International Energy Agency's new net-zero by 2050 scenario, which is also set out in Bill C-12.

What direction does the government intend to take with regard to Canadian production? That is important to know. The Government of Canada's remarkable claim that the oil and gas industries' greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced to 138 tonnes by 2030 has not been confirmed by any data analysis disclosed to the public. None of Canada's successive biannual reports have ever suggested that a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions of this magnitude could be achieved by 2050. That means that everything is being done to mislead the population and give people false assurances.

I want to quote someone that I admire who passed away a long time ago. He was a great Quebec premier named René Lévesque. He said, "The task of real democrats is to ensure that the people are evermore up-to-date, educated and informed on their own interests." That is what true democracy is, but we fall far short of that.

The reality is that, over the years, Canada has become a slacker on the international stage. Lord Deben, chairman of the U.K. climate change committee, said that Canada needed a constant reminder, nothing less. We need to hammer the reality home and highlight, relentlessly, what climate change denial leads to, as well as the negative economic effects that result from this willful blindness. Canada must fully grasp how its behaviour and climate inaction affect other countries around the world. We Matter. That is transparency.

Why is Lord Deben talking about climate inaction? Let us recap: On December 12, 2011, Canada became the first country to withdraw from the Kyoto protocol on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which it had signed in 1997 and which came into effect in 2005. Canada had to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 6% below 1990 levels. At least, at the time, we referenced the right year, 1990, and not 2005, as the current government is doing and as did the previous Conservative government, with the result that Canadian emissions only went down 1.5% since 2005.

● (2305)

By 2015, lots of Quebeckers and Canadians had lost faith in the Harper government on the climate question, so they tried their luck with the current Prime Minister, who promised to make fighting climate change a priority. That illusion was shattered, especially when the Prime Minister decided to buy the Trans Mountain pipeline for \$4.5 billion.

The first Liberal sleight of hand involved the Prime Minister stating that the profits would be invested in renewable energy projects, making the pipeline key to the transition. Unfortunately, the price tag for Trans Mountain and its expansion has climbed to over \$12.6 billion. There will be no profits. Essentially, the government decided to invest in fossil fuels rather than green technology, and taxpayers are paying the price, period.

Now for the Liberals' second sleight of hand in the fight against climate change. They want to sell us green oil, so they will try to

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persuade us that they are supporting clean, green hydrogen. The thing is, hydrogen is made from natural gas. It is blue hydrogen. It comes from natural gas, which is a fossil fuel, and that is what we need to avoid. In essence, the Canadian strategy's only purpose is to find new markets for western oil.

They also want to make us believe that we will reduce emissions with carbon capture, use and storage technologies. However, when carbon is captured and then injected into oil wells to extend their life, this does not reduce emissions, it increases them.

Finally, the third sleight of hand involves trees. The government is going to plant two billion trees by 2030 in order to continue operating the oil sands at the same time. Two billion trees will result in a total reduction of 30 megatonnes by 2030. Trans Mountain will result in 620 additional megatonnes of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. We can easily do the math.

The government now claims that the trees would remove two million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions a year. I am not a botanist, but how can trees that may not have reached maturity capture a significant amount of carbon?

I find it interesting because when we look at the Department of Natural Resources projections for the growing Canada's forests program, we see that the majority of the two billion trees will be planted in 2028, 2029 and 2030. So far, 30 million trees have been planted. At this rate, it will take 65 years to keep the Liberals' 2019 election promise. Of course planting trees is a good thing, but can we rely on that alone to reduce greenhouse gas emissions? Let us be serious.

Canada's climate policy is underwhelming. Canada's climate governance is lacking and will continue to be, with or without Bill C-12. Forecasts indicate that oil and gas production will continue to increase until at least 2040, and this is not compatible with combating climate change.

Bill C-12 was drafted and designed in such a way as to have no effect whatsoever on the Liberal government's plan. The Liberals are going to do some things, but it will not be enough because they are squandering all of the positive actions by continuing to subsidize fossil fuels at the same time.

My colleagues will ask me why the Bloc supports the bill, and my answer is simple. We support the objective of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, and enshrining this objective in law is essentially what Bill C-12 seeks to achieve.

We support the bill, but let us not kid ourselves. Quite frankly, saying we will achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 is not revolutionary. That is the target set out in the Paris Agreement, which we ratified in 2016. We can never say it enough: To achieve net-zero emissions, we must first reach global peaking of emissions, and Canada is not on track to do its fair share to quickly reach that target.

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The Liberals should talk a little less about 2050 and a little more about 2030. Quebeckers can count on the Bloc Québécois to monitor the situation and stay on top of this government's actions. We will not let the Prime Minister continue to wave his Liberal magic wand to make us believe that green oil exists. The Prime Minister is a great defender of greenwashing because green oil does not exist and never will.

• (2310)

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I agree with almost everything the member has said. Given where we are at as a planet, given where we are at as a country, given the challenge in front of us and given all the things we have discussed this evening in this debate, where does she find hope?

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, who serves with me on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

Where do I find hope? I actually have a hard time finding hope. I do manage to find it, however, in groups like Mothers Step In, where women and mothers join forces to stand up for their children and grandchildren. I find it in those kinds of groups, in those ordinary citizens who fight day in and day out, who take action every day for the environment. I find it in my colleagues here in the House, in the speeches we give, the questions we ask and the efforts we make to push this country to live up to the agreements it signs left and right.

The government needs to stop with the grandstanding and start taking real action.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would first like to commend and congratulate my colleague from Repentigny on her superb speech, which was passionate and full of conviction. I take my hat off to her.

Some people want to defend the industry by saying that it has some positive spinoffs.

What does my colleague have to say to them?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Joliette.

Speaking of hope, when I see how my colleague from Joliette defends his files, it always fills me with hope.

I found some very interesting data on the socio-economic benefits that the industry is always boasting about. An environmental engineer and professor at Université Laval, who is also an expert on pollution, said that over the past 20 years, as production and emissions reached unprecedented heights, the industry slashed jobs to cut costs, and public revenue from royalties and taxes dropped precipitously.

We must not fall for the arguments served up by the industry. There is another side to the coin.

• (2315)

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her support for a Conservative amendment to Bill C-12, which would deal with issues around electrification and transport. I know the member cares deeply about that. In fact, she was able to get an electric vehicle study from which I learned quite a lot.

Both the Liberals and NDP made a number of amendments, but most of the amendments already fell within the scope of the bill. It just prescribed exactly how the minister would do something. Most of them offer very little. For example, the NDP talks about the interim objective assessment in 2026. Even the minister tried to pass it off as a milestone.

Would the member give us her thoughts on whether these amendments would do anything further? What does she think of the government's attempts at transparency and accountability in the legislation?

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, who also serves with me on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

According to the expert who appeared before the committee, it is quite clear that an objective is not a target. If a party that claims to advocate for the environment and says it wants to rely on science thinks that it is doing the right thing by setting a 2026 interim objective, well, it is not. The government expert made it very clear that an objective is not a target.

Amendments were proposed to improve transparency and to make the law binding, but they were all rejected.

As I said a few hours ago, we have a race ahead of us and we have no choice but to run it, but our running shoes have no laces.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, as this is likely my last chance to speak in this session, I wanted to take a moment to thank my team in Ottawa: James Hammond, Justin Vossenber, Zhenglin Liu and Nick Watts; and at home, in beautiful northwest B.C., Eric Holdjik, Adelle Jonker, Josh McLeod, Ben Tassell and Enya Watson. Their hard work over the past year, and I know all members understand what I am talking about, in the challenging conditions of the pandemic has been exemplary and is deeply appreciated.

I also want to recognize my amazing colleague, the member for Victoria, and her legislative assistant Alicia Tiffin for their hard work on the bill we are discussing this evening.

Government Orders

In my remarks earlier this evening, I talked about the various aspects of accountability in the bill and the hope that those parts would work together to hold the federal government to account in the future. The stakes are exceptionally high on this issue, so admittedly it is difficult to accept what is an imperfect bill. To be frank, we do not yet know if it will do the job but we cannot afford the time it would take to do it over again. We must move forward.

It is important to note that Bill C-12 would provide a system for tracking action, but is not action itself, and concerted action carried out with the urgency this moment demands has been the missing ingredient in Canada for the past 30 years or more. We need action on electrifying transportation and expanding transit; action on retrofitting Canada's buildings; action on low-carbon manufacturing and industrial processes; action on clean power generation and transmission infrastructure; action on nature-based solutions; action on smart and sustainable community land use; action Canadians can see, touch and feel; and, most important, action at a pace and scale that matches the crisis before us.

If the bill passes into law, we will await the emissions reduction plan that will be required within six months. The contents of that plan, not this bill we are debating tonight, will determine whether Canada is serious about reaching its targets and doing its part to mitigate runaway climate change. Canadians, particularly young Canadians, will be watching to see if we are sincere about the climate emergency that was declared in this place just two years ago.

Seth Klein, in his compelling new book *A Good War: Mobilizing Canada for the Climate Emergency*, talks about the need to mobilize our country around climate in a way that has not been seen since the Second World War. In his book, he lists four markers that indicate a government has shifted into emergency mode: first, it spends what it takes to win; second, it creates new economic institutions to get the job done; third, it shifts from voluntary incentives to mandatory measures; and fourth, and most important, it tells the truth about the severity of the crisis and it communicates a sense of urgency about the measures that will be necessary.

Looking at the past year and a half, we can see this emergency mindset at work in Canada's response to the pandemic, and this is something Mr. Klein notes in his book, but we have yet to see it on the climate issue. Sadly, the approaches to date have been tentative, not transformational. It is clear we need to do much more and we need to do it rather quickly now.

I want to talk about an important aspect of our climate action future, and that is the need for a just transition. With the recently announced targets in this bill, we bump into an uncomfortable truth, the elephant in the room at the heart of Canada's climate predicament, and that is emissions from oil and gas, which have been rising faster than any other sector in Canada.

Between 1990 and 2019, emissions from this sector grew 87%. Paul Fauteux worked for the federal government as a diplomat and a senior official from 1980 to 2010. He directed Canada's climate change bureau and he led the Canadian delegation in the negotiations on the implementation of the Kyoto protocol.

At committee, I asked Mr. Fauteux why he thought successive federal governments had posted such dismal results when it came to action. This is what he said:

...Canada's climate policy has had, in effect, in reality, as a main objective, the protection of Canada's oil and gas industry. It has not been truly designed to protect the climate. The proof of that is that after all of these years of climate policy, emissions keep going up. Emissions from oil and gas in particular keep going up.

• (2320)

Last month, the International Energy Association, that granola-crunching think tank founded in 1974 by noted leftist Richard Nixon, laid this out very bluntly. In modelling the pathway to net zero by 2050, the IEA asserted that the construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure needs to cease this year. That is a stark statement. Just this past Saturday, the Prime Minister endorsed the communiqué of the G7 that explicitly notes the IEA's pathway.

The fourth marker of a climate emergency mindset is telling the truth about the severity of the crisis and communicating a sense of urgency about the measures that are going to be necessary. We need the Prime Minister and his cabinet to be honest with Canadians about how they plan to reconcile the widening gap between what Canada is doing and what it must do.

Of all the Canadians who deserve the truth, workers in the oil and gas sector top that list. Clean energy does create jobs, a lot of jobs, but in some places and in some times, a rapid transition is likely to affect workers, and they deserve a government that tells them the truth and has their backs with a just transition.

I still feel relatively new in this place, and I have been reflecting over the past several hours on our adversarial system, and not only the results it produces but the way it sometimes pits parties against each other even in matters on which there is broad agreement. It seems to me that climate should be an issue of such grave concern that we somehow find a way to transcend that to come together, and I suppose that if the bill before us passes tonight at the eleventh hour, we can claim to have done so in at least some small measure.

Among its weaknesses, the original bill had strengths too, and that is not something I mentioned earlier. Many of the amendments that the Green Party and the Bloc brought to committee reflected our desire to make this legislation much stronger, and while I did not agree that Conservative amendments strengthened the bill, I appreciate that they are at long last grappling with the climate question in a much more serious way.

In a minority Parliament, the opportunity is to work across party lines to create agreement that can enjoy the majority support of the House, yet when that occurs, it is so often framed as backdoor deals or an "unholy alliance", in the words of one parliamentary secretary yesterday. The fact is that the NDP did work in good faith with the government to explore the potential for strengthening the bill. We are guilty as charged. A bunch of the ideas we brought forward are now reflected in the bill, and to their credit, our colleagues in the Bloc voted for all them, if I recall correctly.

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I have a brief story to finish my remarks.

Bill 41 was a piece of provincial legislation in my home province of British Columbia. It became the B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, a much-needed and long overdue piece of legislation. There were a lot of questions and vigorous debate over the course of its passage through the legislature. However, when the B.C. government brought forward its Bill 41 for a final vote in the legislature in Victoria, it was carried unanimously by all three parties in the House and every single MLA. What a statement about the importance of indigenous rights to the future of our province.

With the recent vote, the bill before us now has amendments from every party in the House. Each of our parties has conveyed to Canadians that climate is an issue of urgent importance. Imagine the message it would send if we all stood together in this place tonight and carried the bill unanimously. That is my hope, and I hope too that the bill marks a turning point in Canada's effort to tackle the climate crisis. Years from now, let us look back at this point and say, "It was not perfect, but we stood together and we got it done."

• (2325)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member, being a fellow British Columbian, and I know that he is quite passionate about this issue and cares deeply about his constituents. I also appreciate his efforts on the environment committee to reach out, as he said.

One of the things that the member spoke about earlier was carbon budgets. The reason I raise carbon budgets is that this is a subject that was raised at committee for amendments by the Green Party. However, the member did not propose carbon budgets at committee, nor did he support the Green Party's amendments to even hit the floor to have a discussion about it. It was also something we heard about from multiple witnesses.

I would just like an explanation from the member. He says he supports carbon budgets, yet when the opportunity came up for him to support even the discussion of this idea at committee, he did not do that. Could he please give the House his rationale?

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, my recollection is that carbon budgets were ruled inadmissible at committee, because they fell outside the scope of the original legislation.

Carbon budgets is a concept that we very much support. It is something that we brought to the government in our conversations around amending the bill. We are disappointed, frankly, that the government did not choose to take that path. However, it is what it is. I hope that the approach the government is taking will prove effective.

Ms. Lenore Zann (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for supporting Bill C-230 in the environment committee yesterday.

The member is correct in the fact that we need to work together. Canadians want to see us work together. What does the member say about telling parties when they are doing the right thing and sup-

porting that, as opposed to playing political games, which seems to happen quite a bit in politics?

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her work. Her bill on environmental racism is a big step forward. I was really proud to speak to it and support it at the environment committee.

If I had the answer to her question, I would share it with all. A lot of Canadians get dismayed at partisanship at its worst. At its best, it has something to contribute. Every now and then, we come together because something is so important to the future that we all see it, crystal clear. I am hoping that the predicament facing our climate is one of those things.

• (2330)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

My Conservative colleague beat me to it, because I had the exact same question.

Earlier, the member was completely outraged that the government was not going ahead with the carbon budget, but when the Green Party proposed an amendment to that effect, he voted against it. I do not recall if it was ruled out of order, but we all remember that the NDP voted against it, and I do not know why. Perhaps it was because they voted against all amendments brought forward by the Green Party and the Bloc Québécois. He says one thing and does the opposite. He just said that the Bloc Québécois amendments would have helped improve this bill, but he voted against them.

I wonder what the government promised the NDP to get them to sign a blank cheque like that.

[*English*]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, there was no blank cheque provided. There was a conversation about what we hoped to see as improvements to the bill, things that would strengthen the bill. In fact, we went into those conversations with many of the same concepts and ideas that the Bloc and the Greens brought forward.

The reality is that some of the amendments that were brought forward would have cancelled out other amendments that we hoped to support later on. The committee process is a complex one.

At the end of the day, we have a bill that is stronger than it was before. That is the important thing. I am hopeful that it will be effective in holding governments to account.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to rise today to speak to Bill C-12 on behalf of Green Party members across Canada and the constituents in Nanaimo—Ladysmith, which is on the unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw, Snaw-Naw-As, Stzuminus and Lyackson First Nations. I would like to thank the voters in Nanaimo—Ladysmith for putting their confidence in me.

People in my riding see the impacts of climate change and are deeply concerned about the future of our children and grandchildren. I was born and raised on Vancouver Island. I also see the impacts. I see the changes to our local ecosystem. The drought months stretch into winter. Trees more than 100 years old are dying from lack of moisture. August in southern B.C. is now commonly referred to as “Smogust” because of the thick smoke from wildfires that blankets the province. I do not ever remember being unable to go outdoors because of the smoke when I was younger, except for the year Mount Saint Helens erupted. The climate is changing and we are not doing enough to mitigate it and prepare for it.

Two years ago, on June 18, 2019, this House voted to declare that we were in a climate emergency. Eighteen months after that emergency declaration, the government tabled Bill C-12, a bill so hollow it appeared to be an attempt to fool the Canadian public into believing that real action was going to be taken on the climate crisis. Where is the accountability in this act, a series of reports that show progress or lack of progress toward targets? If the electorate do not like the progress that is being made or the lack thereof, it can vote the government out. As Greta Thunberg said, “net zero by 2050 is surrender”. Without tough near-term targets, we’re abandoning our children and grandchildren to an unlivable world.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands offered to connect the environment minister with the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University. It could have helped ensure this was a meaningful bill, comparable to the U.K.’s climate budget law. She offered to connect the minister with James Shaw, the climate change minister in New Zealand, who just implemented a series of comprehensive plans to combat climate change. She suggested climate scientists who could testify at the committee. The minister did not want advice from any of these experts.

Why was the advisory body appointed before this bill went to committee? Perhaps because the advisory body is one of the great weaknesses of this bill. It should be an expert body made up of climate scientists, but it is not.

Bill C-12 has been mishandled. It was introduced in November, languished until March without debate and then languished again until May. Much of the expert feedback on Bill C-12 was provided to MPs when it was too late to bring forward amendments. This made a mockery of the process. There was no testimony from climate scientists, no youth spoke to the committee and not a single indigenous witness was heard. How often can the Liberals say they did not have time to consult indigenous peoples while also claiming that Bill C-12 respects UNDRIP?

Bill C-12 lacks a 2025 milestone, which was established in the COP decision document Canada signed in Paris. All the experts agree that 2030 is too late. The NDP-Liberal amendment for a 2026 interim GHG emissions goal is not a milestone year; it only provides a window to review progress or the lack of progress.

Why did the government reject the Green Party amendment for the plans and targets to be based on the best available science? The Liberals and NDP were so determined to block Green Party amendments that they voted down one that had the same language as the next government amendment, which meant that amendment was also defeated. After an hour of wasting time scrambling around for a

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solution to get that wording back into the bill, the government came up with this. It states:

The Minister must set each subsequent national greenhouse gas emissions target at least 9 years 366 days before the beginning of the milestone year to which it relates.

It does not say 10 years, as the Green Party amendment stated, but 10 years plus one day. This incident was one example of partisan posturing at its worst. The Liberals are trying to blame the Greens for slowing down the bill, but let us be clear. The delays were due to the scheduling of the bill by the Liberals.

As the end of the session approached, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands asked for nine of her amendments to be withdrawn to assist the committee with completing clause-by-clause. The Conservatives did the same. They were going to get voted against anyway. Throughout this process the Greens put climate first. The Liberals and NDP cannot say the same.

Bill C-12, the Canadian net-zero emissions accountability act, will not hold the current government, the next government or the government after that to account for emissions reductions.

● (2335)

The so-called accountability in the act is no different from the accountability that exists today: If Canadians do not like the government’s actions, they can vote the government out in the next election. The climate emergency demands the kind of accountability that is enduring and not subject to the whims of politics.

Canada needs to follow the example of the U.K., which established a carbon budget law that binds successive governments to emissions targets and holds them accountable, eliminating politics from climate action. The U.K. has reduced emissions by 42% over 1990 levels. Collectively, the 27 countries of the European Union have reduced their emissions by 25% since 1990. Shamefully, Canada’s current emission levels are 21% higher than they were in 1990.

Canada has not met the targets of any of the nine international climate agreements it has signed. The last target Canada was supposed to meet, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 17% below 2005 levels by 2020, was set by the Harper Conservative government in 2009. While there were real attempts by the majority of provinces and territories to meet the target, the oil and gas industry in Canada increased emissions so much that those efforts were in vain.

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The priorities of the current government demonstrate that it is not serious enough about the existential threat of climate change. The government is spending \$17 billion on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. Trans Mountain is not just a climate loser, but a money loser. According to the Parliamentary Budget Office, the only way that TMX will not result in billions of dollars in losses is if the government abandons climate action and increases oil sands production.

The Alberta NDP government's idea of climate action was to cap emissions at 100 megatonnes. That represents an almost 40% increase from 2014 levels. The B.C. government's idea of climate action is to ramp up gas fracking and build new pipelines to export liquefied fracked gas, providing \$6 billion worth of subsidies to five foreign multinationals. On top of that, the B.C. government is allowing carbon-sequestering endangered old-growth forests to be clear-cut.

How is it the federal government cannot ensure that the provinces work together to meet our international climate commitments? Why should we believe that Bill C-12 would change that?

These are just some of the reasons that Canada needs a carbon budget law. We need to take politics out of climate action and follow the science. We need a just transition for fossil fuel workers and an end to all subsidies for the fossil fuel industry.

The real obstacle is not the climate deniers. It is the politicians who recognize the science but lack the courage to remove politics from climate action. Bill C-12 does not meet the challenge before us. It provides a false sense of security and pushes long overdue action and accountability down the road for another decade. That is not just irresponsible: It is immoral.

Every civilization in history that came before ours ended in collapse. History tells us that in every case right up until the beginning of the period of collapse, people thought everything was going fine. Historic collapses were isolated to particular regions. When the Roman Empire collapsed, it had no impact on the people of Turtle Island or on the southern part of Africa.

For the first time in human history, we have an interconnected global civilization. This is also the first time in history that technological and environmental threats could destroy the planet's ability to sustain life. Humanity is facing something unprecedented. We could lose the capacity to survive on our planet. The next collapse could be our last.

Accepting this threat and addressing it requires a shift. The magnitude of the challenge of the climate emergency and the biodiversity crisis demands that we mature. We must choose to be long-term thinkers, collaborative and committed to mutual benefit. That is not a radical idea. It is a way of existing in harmony with our environment that has been the foundation of indigenous culture since time immemorial. Anything less amounts to a continued commitment to a self-terminating civilization.

Young people across the country are demanding better from us. They, and our children and grandchildren, deserve much more than this weak piece of legislation. I will be voting for this bill because it is better than nothing, but better than nothing is a very low bar.

• (2340)

Ms. Lenore Zann (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I agree that we are in an existential crisis when it comes to climate change around the world. Coming from Australia originally, I saw what happened there with all the forest fires and wildfires last year, and some of my family members barely escaped with their lives.

What do we do with provincial leaders who do not see the situation, who continue to say “drill, baby, drill” and continue to deny the fact that climate change is happening, to the point of floods and fires that are affecting our country? What does the member say we need to do in order to get them on board?

Mr. Paul Manly: Madam Speaker, we sign international trade agreements that the provinces are bound to, and we need to do the same thing with the environmental treaties. It was not until the Montreal accord to deal with the ozone that we actually had an environmental international agreement that had teeth to it and had sanctions attached to it, and we have not had one since. That is part of the problem with these climate conferences and the agreements that we make, that anybody can walk away from them. We need to ensure that the provinces adhere to our international commitments, and we need to take those commitments seriously. That is what needs to happen, quite clearly.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member's intervention, being a fellow British Columbian.

In the amended Bill C-12 after committee, there was a clause put forward by the NDP on basically using the term “independent” to make the advisory body independent. Does he think that is the case?

The minister said tonight that there was a milestone for 2025-26 included because of the co-operation between the Liberals and the NDP. In my understanding, that was an interim emissions objective assessment. Can the member comment on whether, in his view, those things do anything to strengthen the bill from a Green perspective?

• (2345)

Mr. Paul Manly: Madam Speaker, to start with, that advisory body should be made up of scientists. We need to listen to the scientists. Those are the facts here. They do need to be completely independent from the minister and the government, and the government needs to adhere to their advice. That is the way it should be, but that is not how it is set up in the bill.

The 2026 date is not a target. It does not set an emissions target that we are trying to reach, which is what we agreed to in the decision document in Paris, that we would have a 2025 target. It is a report on how progress is coming along or not coming along, and that is completely unacceptable.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

It is sad that the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands worked so hard at the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development but was not even able to vote on her own amendments. Most of the time, the Bloc Québécois was the only party voting in favour of the Green Party amendments, which would have significantly improved Bill C-12.

Considering the fact that Canada has never met its greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and that there are not even any targets in this bill, does the member think that Bill C-12 will finally help us meet our targets?

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Manly: Madam Speaker, I think it was extremely disrespectful and quite sad how the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands was treated in committee. This is a person who has dedicated decades of her life to this cause. She has been to 13 or 14 of these conferences. She has been following this file in her previous career and now in this career, and I would say that she probably knows more about climate change than any other member in this place. I do not think she was respected, her knowledge was respected or her connections were respected by the government or by the committee process. This bill reads much more like—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the time is up.

It being 11:50 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

[*Translation*]

The question is on the motion.

[*English*]

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

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

• (2415)

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

Government Orders

(*Division No. 181*)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Bachrach	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baker	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bessette
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blois	Boudrias
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Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Charbonneau
Chen	Cormier
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Dong
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duval	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Garneau
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gill	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hardie
Harris	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Julian
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lametti
Lamoureux	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lemire
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Manly	Marcil
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
McPherson	Mendès

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Miller	Monsef	Généreux	Genuis
Morrissey	Murray	Gladu	Gourde
Ng	Normandin	Gray	Hallan
O'Connell	Oliphant	Harder	Hoback
O'Regan	Pauzé	Jansen	Jeneroux
Perron	Petitpas Taylor	Kelly	Kent
Plamondon	Powlowski	Kitchen	Kmiec
Qaqqaq	Qualtrough	Kram	Kurek
Ratansi	Regan	Kusie	Lake
Robillard	Rodriguez	Lawrence	Lehoux
Rogers	Romanado	Lewis (Essex)	Liepert
Sahota (Brampton North)	Saini	Lloyd	Lukiwski
Sajjan	Saks	MacKenzie	Maguire
Samson	Sangha	Martel	Mazier
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke	McLean	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Schulte	Serré	Melillo	Moore
Sgro	Shanahan	Morantz	Morrison
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Motz	Nater
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard	Patzer	Paul-Hus
Simms	Singh	Poilievre	Rayes
Sorbara	Spengemann	Redekopp	Reid
Ste-Marie	Tabbara	Richards	Rood
Tassi	Thériault	Ruff	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)
Therrien	Trudel	Saroya	Scheer
Turnbull	Van Bynen	Schmale	Shields
van Koevorden	Vandal	Shin	Shipley
Vandenbeld	Vaughan	Sloan	Soroka
Vignola	Virani	Stanton	Steinley
Weiler	Wilkinson	Strahl	Stubbs
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Young	Zahid	Uppal	Van Popta
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NAYS**Members**

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Arnold
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Calkins
Carrie	Chiu
Chong	Cooper
Cumming	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Deltell	d'Entremont
Diotte	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)

PAIRED

Nil

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

(Bill read the third time and passed)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 12:17 a.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, June 22, this House stands adjourned until later this day at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12:17 a.m.)

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