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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 4, 2022

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1400)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem, led by the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

SUSAN JACKS

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 25, Canada lost a wonderful artist, talented and beautiful in every way. Susan Jacks passed away in Surrey after a rich career with chart-topping Billboard and Cashbox hits in Canada and the United States, three million-selling records worldwide, and many Juno and Grammy awards nominations as a performer and writer.

Susan and west coast artists, including Tom Northcott, Howie Vickers, Bill Henderson and, of course, Terry Jacks, with whom she formed The Poppy Family, earned major radio airplay way before Canadian content rules because they were just that good.

Susan dealt with tough personal times and loss, including struggles with kidney disease, the triumph of a transplant, and the fight with the disease once again.

It turns out Burton Cummings and I share the same favourite Susan Jacks song, with a title line that best suits her memory: “For the sun shines for those who look / Beyond the clouds.”

May Susan enjoy her eternal sunshine. She has taken the love of her fans and friends with her.

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UKRAINE INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES FLIGHT PS752

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the University of Alberta announced a dedicated place of quiet reflection in memory of friends and family lost in the downing of Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752. As we re-

flect on the tragedy of this event, we are reminded of the profound effect it has had on the Edmonton Iranian family.

I met personally with families of the victims, who were integral members of our community. We lost beloved university students, professors, doctors and community volunteers. Notably, we lost parents, children, siblings, family and friends.

This tragedy and its effects continue to be felt in Edmonton. As days and years go by, our community continues to mourn and remember those whom we lost. However, this also presents an opportunity to reflect on the importance of those we hold dear and to continue to recognize the amazing community that we call home.

* * *

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has one of the highest rates of multiple sclerosis in the world, with over 90,000 Canadians diagnosed with the disease. MS is three times higher among women, and COVID-19 amplified the income insecurity faced by women with disabilities.

Diagnosed with MS in 2008, Michelle Hewitt shares how difficult it is to make ends meet. She says, “I regularly speak to women who are no longer able to work and have no avenues for income once their medical EI is finished. They are not seen as ‘disabled enough’.... The system is failing them.”

Our government recognizes the urgent need to address this issue and plans to introduce a new Canada disability benefit to support Canadians with disabilities and lift them out of poverty.

Today, in honour of MS Awareness Month, I join the MS Society's virtual carnation pinning campaign to support a world free of MS. I encourage all of my colleagues to wear their carnations today and join in this effort.

Statements by Members

● (1405)

*[Translation]***MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH**

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, multiple sclerosis is the most common neurological disease affecting young adults. Research has shown that more than 60% of people with MS become unemployed at some point.

This disease is episodic, meaning that people alternate between relapses into disability and periods of stability. At the moment, employment insurance offers them a mere 15 weeks of sickness benefits without any flexibility. It is obvious that the EI system needs a complete overhaul.

Today, in honour of MS Awareness Month, we are taking part in the MS Society of Canada's virtual carnation pinning campaign, part of the #TakeActionForMS movement, in the hopes of improving quality of life for people living with multiple sclerosis.

* * *

PEACE AND UNITY

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for decades Canada has maintained friendly ties with Europe and the European Union. It is a relationship based on our shared values, even as we strive to overcome the challenges of history.

Today, we stand with the courageous and resilient Ukrainian people as they defend their homeland and fight for democracy and human rights.

On May 9, which is Europe Day—a day to celebrate peace and unity—iconic Canadian landmarks will be lit up in blue and yellow, the colours of the European Union and Ukrainian flags.

I invite all Canadians to join both me and Europeans in reaffirming our support for democratic values and the deep ties that bind our country and the European Union.

* * *

*[English]***ONLINE NEWS ACT**

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week I met with representatives from independent newspapers who have concerns about Bill C-18.

The government has poured hundreds of millions of dollars into foreign online advertising giants Facebook and Google, not local, independent, southern Alberta-owned weekly papers, like the Brooks Bulletin, Strathmore Times, The Chestermere Anchor and the Crowsnest Pass Herald.

Bill C-18 dictates that media companies must be “qualified Canadian journalism organizations”. Many independent papers run their own reporting, editing and publishing and do not qualify. Independents that do not qualify as “Canadian journalism organizations” also miss out on the labour tax credit and the news subscription tax credit.

Weekly papers play an important role in municipalities to inform residents in our communities. We should be supporting Canadian weekly papers, not leaving them behind in favour of billion-dollar conglomerates.

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EDUCATION INITIATIVE FOR WAR-DISPLACED STUDENTS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the great advocacy of International Students Overcoming War, or ISOW. As a student club from Wilfrid Laurier University, this student-led and student-funded humanitarian initiative fights hard to ensure that the right of education and higher learning is safeguarded globally.

ISOW is committed to supporting the Canadian humanitarian mission to address the education crisis for refugees and internally displaced individuals. Since 2015, ISOW has sponsored 23 scholars from Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Lebanon and Myanmar.

During their Ottawa visit, ISOW representatives shared with me their vision for greater collaboration with the federal government to establish a rapid response mechanism for education emergencies. After hearing the personal and academic accounts of two scholars from Myanmar, I want to echo ISOW's proposal to this House.

I applaud the students and alumni of ISOW for the hard work they have done and will continue to do. I am confident that, because of their inspirational advocacy and leadership, Canada will remain a destination for post-secondary education and a hub for those who seek higher learning experiences. Bravo.

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● (1410)

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Han Dong (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, May is Asian Heritage Month in Canada, a time for all Canadians to come together to recognize the immense contribution of Asian Canadians and celebrate their rich and diverse culture and history.

However, even as we celebrate Asian Heritage Month, anti-Asian racism has been on the rise in Canada during the pandemic. We know that one of the root causes of anti-Asian racism in Canada is a lack of understanding of and appreciation for the contributions and sacrifices made by Asian Canadians throughout Canada's history.

*Statements by Members***MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH**

Recently, I have been championing a petition signed by over 10,000 Canadians across the country who want to see Won Alexander Cumyow as the face of the redesigned five-dollar bill. They know that it would ignite an important conversation among all Canadians about the history and contributions that visible minorities have made in shaping our multicultural society today. We believe that, should Mr. Won be selected, it will be a significant way to combat anti-Asian racism.

The Deputy Speaker: I want to remind folks to keep their conversations outside in the lobbies.

The hon. member for York—Simcoe.

* * *

TARIFF ON FERTILIZER

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the planting season is under way. I want to wish farmers in York—Simcoe and right across Canada the very best as they continue their hard work to feed Canadian families.

Unfortunately, the Liberal government is maintaining a 35% tariff on fertilizer imported from Russia, even if the order was paid for well before the invasion of Ukraine. While Canadian farmers support the use of economic sanctions against Russia, applying the tariff to pre-existing orders does not penalize Russian producers; instead, it only punishes farmers who are already facing unprecedented challenges. The Liberals need to do more to increase our domestic fertilizer production so that we no longer rely on Russia for our nitrogen, phosphorus and potash.

If the retroactive sanctions persist, many agricultural producers will go bankrupt, jeopardizing our food supply and further increasing grocery costs for Canadians. I urge the federal government to listen to Canadian farmers.

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JEOPARDY! CHAMPION

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will take record-breaking Canadians for \$2,000: With 21 consecutive wins and counting, totalling over half a million dollars, she is the most successful Canadian to ever compete on *Jeopardy!* Who is Mattea Roach?

For the past month, Canadians and *Jeopardy!* fans around the world have marvelled at Mattea's surge into the top 10 longest winning streaks on the iconic TV quiz program. With last night's win, she now holds the fifth spot, with no sign of slowing down. Communities across the country have cheered on the 23-year-old, including in my riding of Halifax, where she was raised and attended Sacred Heart School, and in Toronto, where she lives and works as a tutor. Mattea has ties here in Ottawa, too. In 2016, she worked as a parliamentary guide.

I invite all members to join me in congratulating Canada's *Jeopardy!* super champion, Mattea Roach, on her history-making performance. I would wager it all on a daily double that there is still much more to come. To Mattea, I say way to go.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can personally attest to the devastating impact multiple sclerosis has on families. As some may know, my mother succumbed to a progressive form of MS a few years ago. I can still remember the impact that diagnosis had on her, from coming to terms with the news, to planning home renovations that included a wheelchair ramp and accessible bathroom. As it worsened, it left a loved one with a perfectly healthy mind trying to operate in a body that just would not respond.

That was only one small snapshot of a story too many Canadians are forced to experience. In fact, 12 Canadians are diagnosed with MS every day. It can happen to anyone, without warning, and sadly it is often known as Canada's disease. Fortunately, this country is home to some of the best MS researchers. There have been many life-altering advancements in treatments over the past two decades, including the exciting recent discovery that the Epstein-Barr virus might be a trigger for MS.

Today, in honour of MS awareness month, I am participating in the MS Society's virtual carnation-pinning to show my commitment to creating a better quality of life for Canadians affected by this disease and, hopefully very soon, creating a world free of MS.

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● (1415)

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week is Mental Health Week, and this year's theme is empathy. Of course, this is an interesting place and time to be making a statement on empathy. How do we, not just politicians but all Canadians, passionately debate critical issues in a way that does not relentlessly chip away at our collective mental health?

For starters, I would argue that we all need to scale down the verbal bombardment on one another from behind digital barricades. We need to listen. Listening needs to be more than skimming through responses to our social media posts, virtually high-fiving those who agree and cleverly smacking down those who challenge us. This is not healthy for our democracy, and it is not healthy for us as human beings.

Statements by Members

We all long for meaningful connection. We need to be heard and understood. True understanding does not have to imply agreement. We can strongly disagree and still work hard to understand each other. This builds connection. It helps us identify even limited common ground. It is good for our mental health and it is good for our country. This is a great week to start.

* * *

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the birth of a child is a joyous time, it can also be a time when mental health challenges arise. Right now, 40% of women and 20% of men in Canada have a perinatal mental illness, and rates have skyrocketed during COVID. “Perinatal” refers to the time from conception to one year after a baby is born. Sadly, we do not talk about it and even when we do, support and mental health services may not be there.

This morning, I joined Jamie and Patricia from the Canadian Perinatal Mental Health Collaborative, alongside the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, colleagues and community members for the national fundraiser referred to as “Flora’s Walk” named after a Canadian mum who tragically lost her life to postpartum psychosis.

On this World Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day, each of us can do more. We can talk about it. We can share stories like Flora’s and support perinatal mental health.

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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirited Peoples. I wish to lift up all organizations, families and survivors of violence who have led the way in advocating for justice, and all of those who are working to put an end to this crisis of violence reported in the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls almost three years ago.

In spite of the alarming findings in the report, we have witnessed little action from the federal government, including in this year’s budget where there is zero new budgetary allocation to address this ongoing genocide. This is unacceptable, especially in light of the alarming increase in gender-based violence that has occurred as a result of the pandemic.

With communities, families and survivors of violence, we stand in solidarity, and I commit to not allowing this genocide to fall by the wayside. I call on all members of Parliament to join me and respond to this crisis with the urgency it deserves.

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[Translation]

MARCEL LAROCQUE ARENA

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Marcel Larocque arena in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu is Quebec’s only finalist in the Hockeyville contest. That is why I encourage ev-

eryone to vote on May 6 and 7. This time around, the important thing is not just participating, it is making sure our arena wins.

The Marcel Larocque arena is more than just a little local arena. It is the rink where our youth forge strong bonds with people who encourage them to stay in school and focus on their studies. It is the weekend curling tournament. It is going to that very first figure skating show. It is the summer day camp that blends competition and the most fun ever for players at every level.

The Marcel Larocque arena is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. What better gift than a facelift so that it can continue to bring us together for another 50 years? Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu is all about ice sports. Who knows? Maybe the next Guy Lafleur is, at this very moment, lacing up his skates in the dressing room at the Marcel Larocque arena.

I wish the Marcel Larocque arena good luck.

* * *

● (1420)

[English]

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the month of May is MS Awareness Month, and today is carnation day. Every day in Canada, another 12 people are diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, so I want to speak to those 12 people today. A diagnosis is not the end of life as we know it. There are many people and families all across Canada who are going through, and have gone through, what those diagnosed are dealing with here today. They are not alone on this journey.

It was only a short year ago that my wife received her official MS diagnosis. I know the emotions of the day run high, but thanks to improvements in detection and treatment, my wife is working every day and continues to be the amazing wife and mother she has always been. She is not letting MS define who she is or limit her in what she can or cannot do.

In conclusion, we do not know how strong we are until being strong is all we have left.

* * *

INDIGENOUS EDUCATOR

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise today to acknowledge an innovator in indigenous education and Cape Breton’s most recent recipient of the Order of Canada.

Dr. Marie Battiste is a renowned indigenous educator, author and advocate. Dr. Battiste was the first Mi'kmaw to obtain her Ph.D. from Stanford after completing her masters in education at Harvard. Her academic career has spanned over 30 years, and she is the author of books on decolonizing education, indigenous knowledge, indigenous humanities and Mi'kmaw treaties. She is a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and has received four honorary doctorate degrees, as well as a National Aboriginal Achievement Award in Education in 2008.

Today, Dr. Battiste continues her important work at Cape Breton University, as well as being a knowledge holder, a grandmother, a wife and also the mother of this very proud member of Parliament.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us try to have a conversation with the Prime Minister. Maybe this time, we will get the answers that Canadians deserve.

In our justice system and in criminal cases, no matter when the crime was committed, once facts are reported to police, charges can be laid against the alleged criminal. Whether we are talking about sexual, economic or violent crimes, time does not forgive.

Does the Prime Minister agree with me?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again we see the Conservative Party engaging in an act of political theatre on a matter that was dealt with years ago.

Conservatives will stop at nothing to distract from their support of the illegal protests that cost our economy dearly, put people out of work and made many people feel unsafe in their own communities.

Instead, let us talk about the real things that matter to Canadians, from the cost of living to Putin's illegal war in Ukraine. Those are the issues that this government is focusing on, while the Conservatives focus on me.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I asked a simple question about justice in Canada. It concerns all Canadians.

The Prime Minister himself has often condemned the conduct of past governments, and rightly so. He himself has acknowledged that no one can escape from things they did in the past simply because enough time has passed.

My question to the Prime Minister is simple. Should the RCMP investigate criminal cases that are, say, six years old, when new facts are reported to them?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP will always do its job.

It is interesting to see how determined the Conservatives are to avoid talking about the economy, about housing and about the budget we tabled just a few weeks ago. They are still blocking the eco-

Oral Questions

nomic statement we tabled last fall. Despite the concerns being voiced right now by women across the country, they do not even want to talk about women's rights. They do not want to talk about anything.

The Conservatives just want to engage in personal attacks, but that is not what Canadians care about.

* * *

● (1425)

HEALTH

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know the Prime Minister is in trouble when he starts bringing up those things.

Every MP in the House is inundated with calls from constituents because this government is not functional anymore. There are incredible delays everywhere: at Immigration, for passports, at the Canada Revenue Agency, and with employment insurance.

Even public servants are recommending that people contact their MP. That says a lot.

Does the Prime Minister not think it is time to end the federal health measures and bring federal employees back to their offices to do their work and serve the public?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the two years of the pandemic, we did everything we could to keep Canadians safe.

The vast majority of Canadians co-operated. Canada's vaccination rate is higher than that of many other countries—not in the Conservative caucus, but across the country. We saw a tremendous amount of people doing the right things.

We will continue to be guided by the science and by the best recommendations of experts to keep Canadians safe. That is exactly what we will continue to do, while giving Canadians much-needed services, of course.

[English]

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, surely the Prime Minister knows that vaccinated Canadians are on planes with unvaccinated international travellers here. Surely he knows that Italy, Greece, the U.K., Denmark and many other countries have no more travel restrictions and no more mandates. There, families have been reunited, workers are back to work and everyone can travel.

In Canada, the government does not trust Canadians. Why?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we have seen over the past couple of years that Canadians stepped up incredibly to be there for each other, to get vaccinated, to wear masks and to keep each other safe. That strength of response is why we have not only had less impact from the pandemic than many other countries, but our economic recovery has come back so much stronger than many other countries'. That is why we are going to continue to be informed by experts on how to keep Canadians safe.

Even as variants continue to evolve, we will evolve in our measures to keep Canadians safe.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, divide and stigmatize, rinse and repeat. Which experts is the Prime Minister listening to, what is the specific advice, what year is the advice from and why is the advice different in Canada than in the rest of the world? It is all secrets.

Canadians want to know this: When will the government end the outdated, ineffective and vindictive mandates?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we see the Conservative Party talking an awful lot about divisions among Canadians, but that has not been the experience of most Canadians, over 90% of whom stepped up to get vaccinated, and who demonstrated every step of the way that they were there for their neighbours, that they were—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Hold on a second.

Again, as I have said, talk to your whips and get on the list for question period. I am more than happy to have other questions asked in the House of Commons.

The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Mr. Speaker, last week, with the Prime Minister present, journalists asked Quebec's premier if he was still going to demand—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Mr. Speaker, I cannot continue so could you take care of this first?

The Deputy Speaker: Apparently, I interrupted the Prime Minister, who had not finished answering the question. I thought he had.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: In that case, before giving the floor back to the member for Beloeil—Chambly, we will go back to the Prime Minister, so he can finish answering the question from the member for Thornhill.

The hon. Prime Minister.

[*English*]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, like I said, the Conservatives never miss an opportunity to try to pretend that Canadians are divided, when in fact Canadians were united, from 90%

vaccination rates, to pulling together for their neighbours, to following public health rules, to being there for each other.

That is why Canada pulled through better than many countries from this pandemic and why our economy is coming back so strongly. That is why we will continue to listen to experts. That is why we will continue to have Canadians' backs.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Beloeil—Chambly can now ask his question.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last week, with the Prime Minister of Canada present, journalists asked Quebec's premier if he was still standing firm on his immigration demands, essentially for the sake of consistency, whether with respect to social services, education, francization or the labour shortage, and thus ensure that Quebec manages everything, except for security matters.

The Premier of Quebec said yes. When the Prime Minister of Canada was then asked what he thought, he simply answered no. Then the government questioned Quebec's immigration targets and levels.

Is Ottawa attempting to challenge the authority of Quebec and impose its own immigration levels?

● (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is not at all the case. We recognize that under the Canada-Quebec accord Quebec can choose to accept up to 28% of new permanent residents who arrive in Canada every year.

We will always work with Quebec to achieve its immigration targets, and we will be there if it wants to increase its immigration levels to ensure that Quebec welcomes its fair share of new arrivals.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, will they be there if Quebec wants it, or only if Quebec wants it?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship made it clear that the federal government does not think Quebec is taking in enough immigrants. However, the federal system has been backlogged for so many years that there have been files waiting to be processed since 2009.

This government seems to want to impose targets beyond the numbers we are able to integrate, willingly and knowingly, in spite of its own failures. Should Quebec simply stop talking to Ottawa and take care of its own affairs?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we recognize that immigration is essential to our economy and, as the member opposite knows very well, Quebec sets its own immigration targets.

Last year we welcomed more than 50,000 new permanent residents in the province and, this year, Quebec has significantly increased its immigration targets, which will help to considerably reduce those wait times.

We will always work closely with the Government of Quebec to ensure that our immigration system continues to work well for Quebecers and Canadians.

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[English]

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many people in this country live in regions and communities where they have no access to abortion services. The government has been in power for seven years and has done nothing to expand access to abortion services. We have an opportunity today to do something concrete by ensuring that we cover the cost of birth control and emergency contraceptives.

Is the Prime Minister prepared to take this meaningful step today to truly expand access for people across the country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me to state once again in this House that the right to choose is a woman's right and hers alone. We will never back down from protecting and promoting access to safe abortion in Canada and around the world, and we cannot take any rights, including this most fundamental one, for granted.

To all Canadians, we must be active, vigilant and speak out, and this government always has and always will be there for the full range of reproductive health rights of all women across the country.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is about access. This is about women's lives, not about a political wedge.

[Translation]

The Liberal government has had seven years to improve access to abortion services and it has done nothing. We have an opportunity today to do something concrete by ensuring that we cover the cost of birth control and emergency contraceptives. Is the Prime Minister prepared to take this meaningful step today, yes or no?

[English]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we said, we have not hesitated to take action, including by withholding funding from New Brunswick in light of its continued refusal to fund Clinic 554 and by investing \$45 million to help community organizations expand access to reproductive health care information and services.

[Translation]

I have also tasked the Minister of Health with ensuring that all Canadians have access to the sexual and reproductive health services they need, no matter where they live, by reinforcing compliance with the Canada Health Act. We will continue to be there and actively ensure that women across the country have access to reproductive health services.

Oral Questions

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is May 4 in Canada and there are citizens who cannot leave the country. They cannot fly; they cannot take a train. They have lost their jobs, been laid off or fired, because of a health choice.

It is May 4 in the United Kingdom, and citizens have been thriving without mandates for nearly two months because their government followed the science and made the shift from mandates and control to personal responsibility.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson ended the mandates, but our Prime Minister will not. What is different? Is it the science or just the PM's politics?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every step of the way, we have followed the best advice of experts and scientists in Canada to keep Canadians safe, and that is exactly what we have been able to do. We have had a far less bad pandemic in Canada than in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, because we have been following the science and sticking to it. We will continue to.

It is interesting that the member opposite talks about the freedom of personal choice. I wonder if he is willing to extend that to the personal choice of women to control their own bodies.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised that the Prime Minister does not want to talk about his failures and wants to change the channel on his absolute failure to follow the science. We have seen that in countries like Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland and other countries around the globe, their science is all the same, just like in the United Kingdom.

What is the evidence? What is the science that the Prime Minister is following? He is not following science. He is desperate to keep power and control over Canadians he dislikes, just like Xi Jinping in China and Maduro in Venezuela. The provinces are ending their mandates. Countries around the world are doing the same. The Prime Minister—

The Deputy Speaker: The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every step of the way, we have been guided by one principle: to have Canadians' backs. That is exactly what we have done through this pandemic, including by trusting in science, by trusting the experts and by moving forward in a responsible way that has resulted in a pandemic that was far less bad in Canada than in other places around the world, but also an economic recovery that has been stronger and faster.

Oral Questions

At the same time, we will continue to engage in keeping Canadians united as they have been, in keeping each other safe, in protecting our economic recovery and in building a better future for all.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I spoke to Daniel and Sandra. They have a sick daughter in the United Kingdom. She is alone and she needs the help of her parents.

Sandra has begun her immunization process with Novavax, and she has been told that she needs to wait 163 days before she is able to travel, to continue her immunization schedule. This is in stark contrast to the three weeks between doses recommended in the monograph. Federal vaccine mandates are punitive to Canadians who have made decisions contrary to the Prime Minister.

Sandra's daughter needs help. When will the Prime Minister end the vindictive mandates and allow Canadians to travel freely?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but pause on the language that the Conservative Party continues to use around vaccinations, words like “punitive” and words like “vindictive”, when we know that vaccines have saved not millions, but billions of lives around the world through this pandemic.

While the Conservative Party continues its attacks on science and continues its attacks on experts, we will continue to follow the science and keep Canadians safe. That is how we have Canadians' backs.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Try to keep it down. Try to keep it quiet so we can hear the answers and can hear the questions, and have respect for the questions as much as respect for the answers.

The hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the mandates have served their purpose and the word “vindictive” is really what is left.

Dr. Theresa Tam said in the health committee that Canadians have a lack of trust and a complacency with respect to additional doses of the vaccine. This is of course not terribly surprising given the disparaging language the Prime Minister has used to describe those who disagree with him: misogynist, racist, taking up space.

We have also heard that the decision to end federal mandates is a cabinet-level decision. On which date will the Prime Minister release the benchmarks cabinet has used to make the vindictive mandate decisions?

• (1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting to hear a Conservative member talking about the fact that the mandates actually served their purpose. That is a big step up from the Conservative Party, to actually recognize that mandates served a purpose in keeping Canadians safe.

That Canadians stepped up, with over 90% getting vaccinated, is part of why we have had a pandemic that hit us less hard than many places around the world. That is a fact, and we are going to contin-

ue to be guided by science, regardless of the politics that guide the Conservatives. We will be guided by experts and science.

The Deputy Speaker: I want to remind everyone that I have a clock here, and I am watching the time as well.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister will be pleased to know that many countries are following the science when it comes to managing COVID-19.

For example, Cuban travellers can freely enter Cuba as long as they fill out a form and agree to a possible PCR test. The United Kingdom, Sweden, Switzerland and Ireland all lifted COVID-19-related travel restrictions. In Canada, all of the provinces have lifted masking requirements or are in the process of doing so, like Quebec. These countries and our provinces, including Quebec, are following the science.

Is Quebec wrong?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the pandemic, different countries used different ways to keep their citizens safe and to get through this crisis.

Although we did lose some people, the decisions that Canada made in partnership with the provinces are why the pandemic hit Canada less hard and why we are experiencing a stronger economic recovery than many other countries. That happened because we followed the science, and the decisions that we make in the coming weeks will continue to be informed by science.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us remember that when the pandemic began in March 2020, we were the first to ask that the borders to be closed because there was a virus coming, and we knew it was dangerous.

The Prime Minister's government did not react. It chose to wait. We know what happened next. Then the situation changed. Science did its job, and Canadians are vaccinated. All countries are freeing their people.

Why is the Prime Minister so desperate to maintain control over Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we are going to talk about our approaches at the beginning of the pandemic, I will point out that it was the Conservative Party that was the most vocal about demanding more vaccines in this country so Canadians could be vaccinated. I am willing to give them credit for that, but once we delivered those vaccines, it was unfortunately the Conservatives who fought to prevent people from being persuaded that vaccines were a good idea.

Unfortunately, they did not follow the science. We will continue to follow the science, we have delivered these vaccines, and we will implement measures that will keep Canadians safe.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the federal level, there is a backlog of 29,000 permanent residence applications from Quebec immigrants. Some people have been waiting since 2009.

Yesterday, the Liberals blamed Quebec, saying that if Quebec really wants to improve wait times, it only has to increase its immigration cap. Those 29,000 applications came from immigrants who have already been selected by Quebec, who are already living in Quebec. Their files are being held up in Ottawa.

Is that Quebec's fault? Is Quebec now in charge of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have always worked hand in hand with the Government of Quebec on immigration. We are processing files as quickly as possible. Yes, it would be better if Quebec sent us more files, because then we could ensure higher immigration levels. However, this kind of work is ongoing.

Last year, we welcomed more than 50,000 new permanent residents to the province, and this year, Quebec has significantly increased its immigration targets, which is a good thing. We will continue to work so we can meet expectations in this area. The federal government is always ready to do more when it comes to immigration.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec does not run Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, but maybe it should.

If Quebec had full control over immigration, immigrants chosen by Quebec itself would have their permanent residence served up on a silver platter. Right now, it takes an average of two and a half years for the federal government to process applications; some have been waiting for 13 years. The federal government's system is broken.

Is the Prime Minister okay with the fact that his government is abandoning immigrants selected by Quebec who live in Quebec, work in Quebec and study in Quebec?

• (1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, immigration will, by and large, always be under federal control, but we do have an agreement with Quebec that recognizes Quebec's distinct needs. I realize our Bloc friend is not happy about this, but Quebec is not yet its own country, nor will it ever be if Canadians continue to do their job. Until then, we will have this partnership between the federal government, which is here for all Canadians, and the provincial government of Quebec.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Everyone is getting in on the act.

Oral Questions

The hon. member for Sturgeon River—Parkland.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are rightly concerned about the Liberal government's political interference with the inquiry into the Emergencies Act. The Prime Minister has refused to turn over key evidence that cabinet used to justify invoking extraordinary powers, and questions remain on how and why it selected Justice Rouleau to head the inquiry.

Could the Prime Minister clear the air and confirm to the House if any minister or member of their political staff spoke with Justice Rouleau about the inquiry before his appointment, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we invoked the Emergencies Act, we ensured that it was done in a proportional and time-limited way to enable the kind of restoration of order that we needed in Canada while maintaining people's confidence in the transparency and the accountability of democracy. That is why we moved forward with the parliamentary committee. That is why we have moved forward with a national public inquiry as required, to be able to give that full transparency.

I can understand the Conservatives are concerned about this. They are worried that it is going to show the level to which their support for these blockaders contributed to the difficulties of so many Canadians.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government must invoke the National Defence Act to use the military for civilian law enforcement. The government insists it did not deploy the military during the February demonstrations in Ottawa. Now we know surveillance flights were conducted over Ottawa at that time.

Did the government invoke any statute to deploy the Canadian Armed Forces in this manner, or was the surveillance conducted without lawful authority?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here are the facts. The flight in question was part of a Canadian Armed Forces training exercise that was planned prior to and was unrelated to the convoy protest. That is the fact.

What the official opposition is playing with here is dangerously close to misinformation and disinformation when it chooses to make political hay out of something that could be concerning to many people if it were true, but it is simply not true. I think it is important and behooves all of us in the House to demonstrate responsible leadership in how we move forward.

Oral Questions

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said, “One has to be very, very cautious before deploying the military in situations engaging Canadians. It is not something that anyone should enter into lightly”, yet we have now learned that Canada's special forces were operating surveillance aircraft, though I am sure they were just in training, over Ottawa during the February trucker protest. This contradicts everything the government has said to date. Liberals did not put soldiers on our streets, but they did put them in the air.

How can the Prime Minister justify using military assets to surveil—

• (1450)

The Deputy Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want Canadians to pay very careful attention to this exchange. What the member opposite just engaged in is dangerously close to misinformation and disinformation designed to gin up fears and conspiracy theories around what happened a number of months ago. It is entirely irresponsible for members of Her Majesty's loyal opposition to stray so close to misinformation and disinformation. I would ask them to be more responsible.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: We crossed a couple of lines there, and I want us to be careful when we talk about misinformation and when we impugn other members and what they are doing. I want us to be careful. I heard it from all sides.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order. I can stand here for the rest of question period and then that would be that. Do we want to continue with question period? That is my question.

An hon. member: Yes, please.

The Deputy Speaker: That is very good. However, we are out of control. We need to bring it down a bit so the people watching from above and the people watching at home can understand that we are having a debate that is important to Canadians. Let us bring it down.

The hon. member for Lethbridge.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Emergencies Act can be invoked only if there is no other law in Canada that can deal with the situation at hand. It appears that there was military surveillance that was conducted during the Ottawa protest. I find that very interesting, as do many Canadians, because either the government authorized this flyover, this military surveillance, without lawful authority, or it utilized another law in Canada, namely the National Defence Act, and, therefore, the Emergencies Act was not required.

Which is it? Did the government conduct military surveillance illegally, or did it invoke the Emergencies Act illegitimately?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the flight in question was part of a Canadian Armed Forces training exercise that was planned prior to and unrelated to the convoy protest. Those are the facts as put forward.

The choice of the Conservative Party of Canada to drum up and allude to conspiracy theories and come dangerously close to spreading misinformation and disinformation is something we need to be very careful about.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The previous comment still applies.

The hon. member for Burnaby South.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have come to learn what we have long believed, which is that the Canada Infrastructure Bank does not actually deliver infrastructure. It just enriches those at the very top. We have long known that public-private partnerships do not actually benefit communities. In fact, the transport committee has made a recommendation that the Infrastructure Bank be scrapped.

We have been calling for and we continue to call for the Infrastructure Bank to be turned into a climate bank that creates jobs for workers and builds infrastructure publicly to help us tackle the climate crisis. Will the Prime Minister do that? Will he turn the Infrastructure Bank into a climate bank that favours people and public investment?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the environment commissioner's findings are proof that taking action to protect our environment works and that this is the time to be even more ambitious. Infrastructure Canada is strengthening the climate lens it uses to assess the environmental impacts of projects as we continue to build a clean, competitive economy. We will use these reports to keep delivering what Canadians expect, which is a healthy environment and a healthy economy.

* * *

• (1455)

HEALTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, reports out of New Brunswick indicate there has been a 30% increase in overdose deaths in one year alone. We know this is a crisis gripping the entire country. Experts have called for decriminalization as one tool to tackle this serious crisis and to save lives. We agree.

In fact, we have a private member's bill that calls for a health care approach instead of a criminal law approach to dealing with this crisis. Will the Prime Minister support our bill and save lives?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have long recognized the importance of tackling the opioid epidemic with all the tools that science and experts are recommending. A significant number of the investments we have made have been in safe supply, but we know there is always much more to do.

That is why we continue to work to divert people who use drugs away from the criminal justice system and toward supportive and trusted relationships. Our multi-faceted approach builds on previous actions to address the opioid overdose crisis, including investments of over \$700 million in community-led harm-reduction treatment and prevention projects. We will continue to do everything we can to protect Canadians from this national crisis.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, May 5, is Red Dress Day, a day to acknowledge the ongoing national tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. To enact the calls to justice of the final report of the MMIWG commission, it is perfectly clear that all communities need to see concrete actions to enact the national action plan and to ensure women are protected and safe anywhere in the country.

Could the Prime Minister tell us about the concrete actions the Government of Canada is taking to create culturally safe and appropriate spaces to address the ongoing national tragedy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the member for Brampton South for her hard work.

Our government is committed to working alongside indigenous partners and survivors to end violence against indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQI+ people in Canada and the tragedy of MMIWG. That is why we invested over \$100 million in budget 2021 to re-establish and revitalize indigenous cultural spaces, which responds to call for justice 2.3. This work has begun, for example, in the Skeetchestn Indian Band in B.C. with funding for the construction of a traditional pit home and museum facility that the community has long advocated for, as well—

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

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the last three years, the government's first-time homebuyers program has only approved 13,000 applications and the shared equity mortgage program has approved nine applications. The housing co-investment fund has been so poorly executed, organizations have stopped applying altogether. However, we are not to worry, as the minister and the Prime Minister have repeatedly said they are doubling down on their failed programs. Why should Canadians believe that they would ever be able to afford a home under the Prime Minister?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, housing prices are a real concern, especially for middle-class Canadians hoping to afford their first homes. That is why, since we

brought in 2017's national housing strategy, we have seen millions of families move into new homes supported by government programs. Through budget 2022, we are making further investments to double housing construction in this decade, help Canadians buy their first home, curb unfair practices that drive up the price of housing, and support the construction of affordable housing. We recognize there is still more to do, and we will continue to do it. That is what Canadians expect of us.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it used to be the case that if people worked hard, got a good job and saved up for it, they could expect to afford a home in Canada, but the government's housing strategy has been to spend more money, creating more bureaucratic programs that have caused housing prices to double since the Liberals have taken office. This is leading many in my generation to completely give up on their dream of home ownership.

Will the Prime Minister recognize that his policies have failed young Canadians, adjust course and implement a real plan to address this housing crisis?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after a couple of weeks in the House, I am happy to hear a question that actually goes to the heart of budget 2022, because we put forward a housing plan that focuses on three things, particularly for young Canadians. First, we will help young Canadians save for a down payment on a first home with a historic tax-free savings account to help with the purchase of a first home. Second, we will cut down on speculation by bringing in a ban on foreign buyers and will crack down on unfair practices like blind bidding. Third, we will increase the supply of housing in Canada for this young generation by working with municipalities, with historic investments, once again, to double new housing starts over the coming decade.

* * *

● (1500)

[Translation]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the number one concern of the people of Papineau, of Louis-Saint-Laurent and across Canada is inflation and the ever-increasing cost of living. The latest inflation figure for Canada is 6.7%, which is unacceptable, especially since our French friends have a much better figure of 4.5%. Why is that? For one thing, the French government decided to freeze all tariffs.

Oral Questions

As we know, the current government ignored this and increased the Liberal carbon tax on April 1. It is never too late to do the right thing. Will the Prime Minister stand up and tell the people of Papineau and all Canadians that he will freeze all tariffs?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed to hear one of our Quebec colleagues speak out against putting a price on pollution.

We know that it is important to my constituents in Papineau and to people across this country to put a price on pollution so that it is no longer free to pollute anywhere in the country. We know that putting a price on pollution is the right thing to do in the coming years to protect future generations.

At the same time, we are investing so as to return more money to the provinces where we had to impose this pricing, and we are investing to support families, including more child care spaces.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the Liberals took office in 2015, national home prices have more than doubled. This is greatly outpacing the United States and other G7 countries. The Liberal government has had six years to fix this issue and has failed to develop a plan that works. Instead of Canadians moving into new homes, the dream of home ownership or an affordable place to live is moving further and further away.

When will the Prime Minister finally focus on building new homes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we took office in 2015, we started from a standing start in terms of federal investments in housing because the previous Conservative government, for 10 years, had not seen housing as a priority for it to invest in. We moved forward with 2017's historic national housing strategy, which is now up to about 70 billion dollars' worth of investments, to help families get into homes.

In budget 2022, we are moving forward with support for families to save up and investments with municipalities to double the increase in housing over the coming years, and we are cracking down on unfair speculation. These are the things that will help families get into their new homes.

* * *

[Translation]

SENIORS

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was in Quebec City yesterday to attend a conference on seniors' living conditions. It was hosted by the Coalition for the Dignity of Seniors, which represents 150,000 people.

All the attendees were unanimous in denouncing the Prime Minister for creating two classes of seniors. Everyone sees that the skyrocketing price of food and housing does not affect 74-year-olds differently than 75-year-olds. Unlike the Prime Minister, inflation does not discriminate based on age.

When will he increase old age security for all seniors starting at age 65?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2015, we have always been there for seniors, whether by increasing the guaranteed income supplement by 10% for the most vulnerable seniors or by investing in programs to help them.

We have always been there. To help seniors, we brought the retirement age back down from 67, where Mr. Harper set it, to 65. We improved the CPP, and Quebec followed suit with the QPP. We increased the GIS for 900,000 seniors. We made a one-time payment of \$500 to seniors 75 and older, and we will always be there for our seniors.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, obviously that is not enough. Continuing to be there for seniors does not simply involve telling people between the ages of 65 and 74 to go back to work if they need more money. That is not helpful; it is insulting.

What would be helpful is to give every senior \$110 more a month, every month. That would keep their purchasing power from eroding and help them cope with unforeseen situations. That is what being there for seniors looks like, not giving them a one-time cheque just before an election to try to buy their vote.

When will the Prime Minister really be there for all seniors rather than dividing them into two classes?

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact that seniors are living longer and longer is good news. The challenge is that, as they live longer, their expenses go up too.

That is why we recognize that seniors aged 75 and older need a little bit more help. That is why we were there to give it to them. This will not take anything away from seniors between the ages of 65 and 75 since we also increased their benefits.

We are doing a little more for the most vulnerable seniors, those who are older. I think that is exactly what Canadians expect.

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[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, special interest activists south of Canada's border are intending to go around existing legal processes to shut down Enbridge Line 5. Line 5 supplies 540,000 barrels of oil per day and fuels the economies of Ontario and Quebec. It is governed by the terms of the transit pipelines treaty between Canada and the United States, yet the Prime Minister says he is not interested in enforcing the terms of this treaty. This is critical.

Will the Prime Minister intervene today and defend Canada's interests?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Line 5 is a critical piece of infrastructure for both Canada and the United States. That is why we have been consistently and continually advocating for its continued operation with the Government of Michigan and the federal government in the United States, and continue to demonstrate how important our energy partnership is across the border.

We continue to be there to defend the interests of Canadians and of the people in northeastern United States. We will continue to be there to ensure that we are working as true partners on energy security for everyone across North America.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, energy security is what we need, but this pipeline has seen repeated attempts to shut it down. Last year, the government filed its brief with the U.S. court on a different attempt to shut down Line 5. Now it is pretending that there is no Canadian interest at stake in losing 540,000 barrels per day of critical energy delivery. Something has changed.

To the Prime Minister, is silence on Line 5 the price of buying the NDP's support for his government?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again we see the Conservatives trying to invent conspiracy theories where there simply are none. We have consistently advocated for Line 5 and continually pressured both the company and the State of Michigan to resolve their differences. We have continually advocated in the United States at the highest levels in Washington and we will continue to. This is something we take very seriously, and we will continue to be there to fight for it.

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Line 5 pipeline is the energy lifeline for southern Ontario and Toronto. Millions of jobs in Canada depend on affordable gas. This pipeline is a vital link that directly impacts thousands of jobs in my riding. The imminent shutdown of this pipeline will mean shortages at the pumps and the doubling of gas prices.

Will the Prime Minister deviate from his usual lack of leadership and assure Canadians that Line 5 will not be shut down?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Line 5 is critical infrastructure for Canada and the United States. We have taken strong steps to defend Line 5, including formally invoking the bilateral pipeline treaty. I have raised Line 5 directly with President Biden, and I have emphasized its importance to the Canadian economy and North American energy security.

Ambassador Hillman and others in our government continue to raise Line 5 with U.S. officials. We will always stand up for Canadian workers and Canadian industry.

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[Translation]

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was shocked and then horrified to see the 10 Conservative members

from Quebec remain silent about the possible eradication of abortion rights south of the border. That is so regressive.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1510)

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Pontiac may start her question over.

Mrs. Sophie Chatel: Mr. Speaker, I was horrified and shocked as I sat here in the House and watched 10 opposition members from Quebec remain silent about the possible eradication of abortion rights south of the border. That is troubling.

Some hon. members: Oh! Oh!

The Deputy Speaker: I would ask members to come to order.

Some hon. members: Oh! Oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I do not know what is in the air today.

The hon. member for Pontiac.

Mrs. Sophie Chatel: Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what the Prime Minister has to say about the official opposition's shameful reaction.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Pontiac for her question, and I share her sentiments. Every woman in Canada has the right to safe and legal abortion services.

The Conservative MPs' reaction to this recent news proves one thing: They would rather talk about me than address the issues that really matter to women and, frankly, to all Canadians.

As for us, we will always be there for women, and we will never question their right to choose. Shame on Quebecers.

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[English]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Revenue Agency is at it again. This time, it is being investigated by the Privacy Commissioner for betraying whistle-blowers who just want to do their work honestly. A CRA executive ordered them to make the deal and agreed that it was an "atypical process" to give sweetheart deals to big business.

Will the Prime Minister hold the CRA accountable and protect whistle-blowers?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an expert third party review found that there was no wrongdoing in this case, and the agency did not provide any form of preferential treatment to the taxpayer. We would like to remind the member that CRA is an independent agency and that at no point is political input sought for these sorts of matters.

We take the protection of employee privacy extremely seriously and believe that those who disclose serious wrongdoing must be protected. Our whistle-blowing law provides secure and confidential processes for disclosing serious wrongdoing in the workplace and protection for acts of reprisal.

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are so many pending investigations that it is hard to keep track of them all when it comes to the government across the floor. With the SNC-Lavalin scandal, we saw how the government would move mountains for its corporate friends. It fired the former attorney general and fired a former president of the Treasury Board, but for the CRA whistle-blowers, there is nothing.

Why do insiders always get ahead with the government while Canadians are left behind?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every step of the way, this government stands up for Canadians, stands up for workers and stands up for protecting our democracy, and we will continue to do exactly that.

While members opposite insist on making partisan, personal attacks against me, we will continue to stay focused on Canadians: on standing up for the middle class and those working hard to join it, on standing up for women and their reproductive rights and on standing up for doing things the right way for Canadians while the Conservatives try to sling mud.

* * *

• (1515)

ETHICS

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year the Prime Minister flew to Tofino on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. It was reported that he stayed in an \$18-million surf mansion whose owner's name was found in the Paradise Papers. Now we hear media reports that high-ranking Canada Revenue Agency officials are making sweetheart deals with big businesses so they do not pay their fair share of tax.

Could the Prime Minister please explain how he came to be in a home owned by someone referenced in the Paradise Papers? Who arranged that?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again we see Conservatives choosing to sling mud, to make partisan attacks and to focus on me while we stay focused on Canadians.

In regard to the accusations on the CRA, an expert third-party review found that there was no wrongdoing in that particular case, and that the agency did not provide any form of preferential treatment to the taxpayer.

We will continue to make sure that everyone pays their fair share of taxes. We will continue to stand up for Canadians. While Conservatives choose to focus on me, we will focus on Canadians.

* * *

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the aisle, we understand that growing the economy and protecting the environment go hand in hand. We also know that Canada's automotive sector has long been a pillar of our economy, especially in southwestern Ontario.

Could the Prime Minister kindly update the House on how the government is securing major strategic investments in the auto sector and positioning our country for a cleaner, stronger and better-prepared economy: one that is competitive in a low-carbon environment?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Kitchener—Conestoga, not just for his question and for his hard work on the file, but for his advocacy for the arts community, as well.

Our government recently announced transformative investments in Stellantis's Windsor and Brampton assembly plants. This is a big win for Canada, and it is just the latest in a series of historic auto sector deals resulting in more than \$13 billion invested and more than 16,000 direct jobs. With these two new plants, we are securing the long-term sustainability of our auto sector and ensuring that the vehicles of the future will be made right here in Canada.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released its findings in June 2019.

The Prime Minister accepted these findings, yet three years later there has been little action and no additional money to actually implement the findings.

Grieving families are waiting. When will the government commit to real action on implementing the report and the findings?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our hearts continue to be with survivors and families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, two-spirit and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

The Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations will be leading the take-note debate on this topic tonight, because addressing this ongoing violence requires living up to our goals as a country and all the calls for justice.

In June 2021, partners from across the country came together and released the national action plan, including the federal pathway to finally end this ongoing tragedy. When the member opposite talks about doing nothing, let me highlight that this will all be supported by budget 2021's \$2.2-billion investment in concrete measures to help keep people safe.

* * *

SENIORS

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, in the election campaign last summer, the Prime Minister promised billions in funding to provinces and territories to address the quality and capacity of long-term care homes.

He has said that nothing is off the table when it comes to addressing the crisis in long-term care, yet in this year's federal budget, the only time long-term care was even mentioned was in reference to money previously allocated in 2021. There was no mention of the promised safe long-term care act.

Does the government believe that there is no longer a crisis in long-term care?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we saw during this pandemic was a national tragedy of elders not being properly cared for in almost every corner of the country.

That is why we committed to working with provinces and territories to improve the quality of long-term care for residents right across the country. We are continuing to move forward, working with and recognizing the jurisdiction of provinces, but also knowing that the federal government has a role to play in ensuring that every senior in this country is treated with the dignity and care that they so richly deserve.

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● (1520)

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

At the end of his response to the member for Pontiac's question, the Prime Minister yelled, "Shame on Quebecers!" We checked, and that is what we heard. Naturally, I would ask that he withdraw his remarks.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the heat of the moment, I forgot one word. I meant to say, "Shame on Quebec Conservatives", as reported in—

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Foothills on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I am sure all of us in the House are used to vigorous debate during question period, but there is a line that should not be crossed, especially when it comes to using

unparliamentary language. The Prime Minister used an obscenity, and it was not "fuddle duddle", in describing the official opposition.

I would ask the Prime Minister to stand and apologize for that language.

The Deputy Speaker: I can say during question period that there were a number of things flying back and forth. I did not hear what the Prime Minister said. All I can say is I heard a number of lies on this side, as well. Those are things that should not be said in this House of Commons.

As I said before, during question period we should show some decorum in the House of Commons and watch what we are saying to each other so that we reflect what Canadians want in this House of Commons. I thank the member for his intervention.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska on a point of order.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a modicum of decorum must be maintained in the House.

The member for Pontiac made a false claim about the Conservative members from Quebec. A few moments ago, the Prime Minister made one of his own when my Bloc Québécois colleague asked him a question. This situation is unacceptable. I demand a formal apology from the member for Pontiac, who made a false claim about me and all my fellow Conservative members from Quebec here in the House.

Mrs. Sophie Chatel: Mr. Speaker, I was in the House when the Liberal Party and the opposition parties, with the exception of the official opposition, stood up—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. It is yes or no. It is not up for debate.

[English]

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I rise only to say—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

I am about to refer to members by name rather than by constituency. That is the next step. I do not wish to do that. I remind members that they have chosen to be in the House. Conversations are to take place outside the House, period.

[English]

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, what you have just said resolves what I wanted to say. We cannot hear the Prime Minister from this end with my microphone up to full volume. I could not hear what the Prime Minister was saying, either.

Tributes

The Deputy Speaker: I know the member for Edmonton Strathcona has a motion to put forward. I want to make sure she has had her conversations with the other parties.

The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

• (1525)

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, perhaps this can bring a little bit of decorum to the room.

I believe I have unanimous consent for the following motion: That, given that rates have increased from one in five to one in three women for perinatal depression, and one in two women for perinatal anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada; that Black, indigenous, people of colour, people with disabilities, gender and sexual minority populations experience higher rates of perinatal mental illness; that a study by the Canadian Perinatal Mental Health Collaborative shows that 95% of health care practitioners believe perinatal mental health services in Canada are insufficient; and that advocates are calling for a national perinatal mental health strategy, the House reaffirm its decision of May 5, 2021, that the government should develop a national perinatal mental health strategy and follow other countries in recognizing the first Wednesday of May annually as world maternal mental health day.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay. I hear none.

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

An hon. member: Nay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are a thousand good ways to attack an opponent and there is no need to choose the wrong one.

Unfortunately, during question period, the member for Pontiac made statements that were unfair and untrue.

Many of us members from Quebec applauded the response yesterday from the Deputy Prime Minister. Some, like me, commented publicly. Others, like the member for Richmond—Arthabaska, made comments on social media.

We all know the rules of Parliament. We know that we cannot state the opposite of the truth. Since individuals here have expressed support for the Deputy Prime Minister's comments, I believe the member for Pontiac was mistaken. I urge her to act with the dignity befitting her position.

Mrs. Sophie Chatel: Mr. Speaker, yesterday, when news broke that our neighbours to the south were considering overturning abortion rights, several members rose here in the House in support of women in the U.S.

What is happening in the United States is a step backwards. It is a regressive policy. That is why MPs must stand up, especially those from Quebec. No one should remain seated. We really need to support—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: We are falling into a little too much debate here.

The hon. House leader of the official opposition.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to respectfully ask that you check Hansard. The hon. member for Foothills rose about the Prime Minister using unparliamentary language, and I can assure you that we all heard it. It was unparliamentary. I am asking you to check Hansard to see if it was recorded and, if so, take the appropriate measures.

The Deputy Speaker: We will check Hansard and return to the House.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. In fairness, I think while you are perusing Hansard, you should check what was said on all sides of the House and provide a detailed report with respect to the names of the individuals and the words they would have used.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. House leader of the official opposition.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that nobody on this side of the House dropped an F-bomb in this place.

The Deputy Speaker: I am going to come back to the House on this one. Either it is parliamentary or it is not. There is no grading of the actual terms that we use.

The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a slightly different point of order. One of the principles and guidelines for Oral Questions, and obviously members have to be seated in their assigned seats to direct their questions to the Chair, is that members ask only questions concerning a matter that is “within the administrative responsibility of the government”. I believe that if you check the question from the member for Pontiac to the Prime Minister, you will find that it had nothing to do with the administrative nature of government.

• (1530)

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you for that intervention. We will come back to the House with a response to that as well.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I would like to place on the record that I have the same concern about the question from the hon. member for Pontiac, and I support the point made by the hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

* * *

HON. JOHN WILLIAM BOSLEY

The Deputy Speaker: Speaker Bosley passed away, and we are going to do a round of tributes.

The hon. member for Cardigan, the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the life of former Speaker and member of Parliament John Bosley, who sadly passed away last week. Having served in this place for quite a few years, I had the privilege of serving with John from 1988 to 1993. Although we sat across the aisle from each other, I have the utmost respect for those who step up in the name of service for their community and country, and John was no exception.

John proudly served the constituency of Don Valley West from 1979 until 1993. No doubt, he had a front-row seat to some of the most pivotal events in the history of our country. However, John is perhaps remembered for his time as the 31st Speaker of the House, where he served from 1984 to 1986.

Mr. Speaker, as you know all too well, it is no easy task to keep this place in check. We have all been called here with a sense of duty and service, and we want to do right by our constituents and fellow Canadians. This can certainly lead to a lively debate even at the best of times. As Speaker, John wanted members to treat this place and each other with the level of respect and decorum that is expected while serving in this chamber.

Although I was not yet serving here during his time as Speaker, I heard he was no stranger to occasionally tossing a member out of the House if he did not behave. John also made some significant changes, changes that should make us very thankful here today, including shorter, more relevant questions during question period. Over the years, this has allowed more voices from across the country to be heard, which is vitally important in a country as large as ours.

John served here for 14 years, and there is no doubt that this place is better for it. His desire for a respectful and productive House lives on today, and it is something each and every one of us should strive for every time we set foot in this chamber.

Finally, it is never easy to lose a loved one, so our hearts go out to John's partner Mary, his daughter Yanette, his family and friends, former colleagues and all those whose lives he touched over the years. He will no doubt be remembered.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too rise today to pay tribute to my friend, the Hon. John Bosley, and mark his death last week. As most of us know, John was the former member of Parliament for Don Valley West and a former Speaker of this House.

It is always sad when we lose a colleague. Despite the partisanship that often divides us, it has been my experience that there is always a degree of collegiality and mutual respect among most members. Of course, Speakers serve this House in a special way and have a unique opportunity to bridge the divide between parties and develop relationships with all members.

It is fitting that the House take a few moments today to honour John Bosley and reflect on his service to this place.

I first met John Bosley when I came to Ottawa as a young staffer after the 1984 election, working for then member of Parliament Bill

Tributes

Attewell, from the neighbouring riding of Don Valley East, and then later for the Hon. Barbara McDougall. I got to know John very well over the years. I also served on his board in Don Valley West for a decade.

Here are some stories about John.

The riding of Don Valley West was actually redistributed in 1976. It was then called Don Valley, and the Conservative member of Parliament was a fellow named James Gillies, or Jim Gillies to most of us. Jim was going to run again. The Hon. Michael Wilson lived in Don Valley West, and he wanted to run in Don Valley West, where he lived. James said he was going to stay and run again in the 1979 election, so Michael Wilson had to find another riding. He ended up fighting a contested nomination in Etobicoke Centre, winning that, and going on to win the election and become Canada's finance minister.

Shortly after Michael Wilson won the nomination in Etobicoke Centre, Jim Gillies decided not to run. That irritated Michael Wilson a little bit, but it gave the opportunity to a young real estate agent in Don Valley West. The Bosley family had a big real estate business, and of course that is always a great set-up if one wants to run for Parliament. John had already had signs up throughout the riding for years with his name on it. He was elected for the first time in 1979 and, of course, re-elected through the 1993 election.

In 1983, when Brian Mulroney became leader of the Conservative Party, he appointed a number of task forces. One of them was on Revenue Canada. They travelled the country, and John was co-chair of that one with Perrin Beatty. They travelled the country in 21 communities, hearing from Canadians about Revenue Canada issues. One of the big recommendations from that was the taxpayer bill of rights. When Brian Mulroney got elected as Prime Minister in 1984, one of the first pieces of legislation brought to this House was the Revenue Canada taxpayer bill of rights, so before John even became Speaker of this place, he had already had an impact on public policy.

John cared deeply about this House as a fundamental pillar of our democracy. While that may be somewhat obvious, he believed that as the Speaker he could bring people together. It was a tough time, with 211 new Conservatives, 40 Liberals and 30 NDP members. He tried all he could to bring this place together. It was a very, very difficult time. He was sort of known for pointing at members during that period of time.

I would ask all members, as they leave the chamber, to go down to the portraits of the former Speakers, take a look at the wall and reflect on the contribution that the Hon. John Bosley made, not only to this place but to his community of Don Valley West in Toronto.

Tributes

• (1535)

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, John William Bosley passed away last Thursday. He was the 31st Speaker of the House of Commons.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to offer my condolences to his wife Mary and daughter Yanette, his family and friends, and members of his political party.

Mr. Bosley was elected in 1979 as a member of the opposition, and he was re-elected in 1984 and 1988 as a member of the Progressive Conservative government of the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney. In 1984, Brian Mulroney placed his trust in him by appointing him Speaker at the age of 37. At the time, he was the second-youngest person to hold that position.

He presided over the House for two tumultuous years before resigning. I remember the speech he gave on that occasion, lamenting the indiscipline in the House. He feared that this indiscipline would erode public respect for the institution. Looking back, it may be worth asking if his message should be heeded today.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Bosley was the very last Speaker to be appointed by a prime minister. He presided over the very first election of a Speaker, his successor. This responsibility is now assigned to the dean of the House, and I have had the honour of taking on this task for the past five years.

I am the only sitting member of Parliament to have had the privilege of serving alongside him in 1984 when he was Speaker of the House. I remember him as an intelligent, cultured and compassionate person. He was passionate about finance and about order and discipline. He was personally disciplined but also disciplined in his interactions with his colleagues and in his role as Speaker.

I thank John for the many years he devoted to public life. May he rest in peace.

• (1540)

[English]

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Hon. John Bosley, former MP, 31st Speaker of the House of Commons and former parliamentary secretary to Prime Minister Joe Clark.

Mr. Bosley's time in the Speaker's chair was not extensive, lasting from 1984 to 1986, but his work laid the foundation for important changes to the Standing Orders, requiring MPs' questions to be relevant and on topic. Those are the same rules that, from time to time, some parliamentarians still try to ignore to this day.

One interesting fact about the changes to the Standing Orders was that they were used as quickly as they came into effect. As a matter of fact, NDP MP Jim Fulton, on the day the Standing Orders changed, was ejected from the House for accusing a minister of lying, with Speaker Bosley stating:

The Member gives me no choice. I must name the Member and require that he leave the House for the rest of the day. I must do so. I must name the Hon. Member for Skeena and I must ask him to leave the House for the rest of the day, under the authority of the new rules.

Speaker Bosley was the very last Speaker appointed by a prime minister after changing the rules in 1995 to allow MPs to democratically elect the Speaker of the House of Commons by secret ballot. He resigned from the speakership unexpectedly in September of 1986, paving the way for the House's first elected Speaker, The Hon. John Fraser.

[Translation]

Sadly, I never had the opportunity to meet the Hon. John Bosley, but former NDP MP Bill Blaikie shared some of his memories of Mr. Bosley. I remind members that Mr. Blaikie also served as Deputy Speaker of the House between 2006 and 2008.

Bill Blaikie described Speaker Bosley as a very kind colleague who was fair and honest in his role and decisions as Speaker.

[English]

Bill also recalled that, even back then, Wednesdays were always a bit rowdier following each party's respective caucus meetings. Bill related that on Wednesdays, Speaker Bosley would often comment, "Oh, it must be Wednesday. Wonderful Wednesdays."

In my experience over the years, I and so many other speakers who are chairing or have chaired in the House can relate to John's sentiment about "wonderful Wednesdays". As we saw, today it is no different.

Mr. Bosley dedicated his life to public service. I touched upon his duties as a parliamentary secretary to former prime minister Joe Clark, but he also spent the entirety of the eighties as an elected MP.

His tenure in the House of Commons lasted for 14 years. We can infer that his defeat was likely not a result of his performance as an MP, given that the election of 1993 proved devastating to the Progressive Conservatives, as they were reduced from 257 seats to two.

• (1545)

[Translation]

Even after losing his seat, he retained his passion for politics and served as an advisor on institutional development to parliaments all over the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

[English]

To John's family, I know that they have lost a tremendous individual who, over the years, dedicated so much of himself to not only this country but to others abroad as well. They should know that his legacy will live on throughout these halls.

On behalf of our NDP leader, my NDP colleagues and myself, may they please accept our deepest condolences for their loss.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I move, having known Mr. Bosley, to add a few comments on behalf of the Green Party.

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

Government Orders

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: As the 31st Speaker of the House of Commons, John Bosley was, in the best sense of the word, a true servant of the House.

[*Translation*]

When the prime minister at the time, the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney, chose Mr. Bosley to occupy the position of Speaker of the House, it was regarded as a wise choice, in light of Mr. Bosley's fairness and wisdom, as well as his deep respect for the House and its members.

As Speaker, Mr. Bosley was called on to interpret a new set of rules adopted by the House, including a provision calling for the Speaker to be elected by secret ballot, which would reinforce the Speaker's independence, neutrality and authority.

[*English*]

Mr. Bosley's deep regard for the institution of Parliament and his firm belief that members should indeed be given the opportunity to choose their own presiding officer prodded him to step down from the position of Speaker in September of 1986.

Moreover, before his departure took effect, he presided over the first selection of a new Speaker by secret ballot and, in doing so, Mr. Bosley placed the interests of the House ahead of his own and left his legacy as a demonstration of true leadership.

On behalf of the entire House, on what would have been his 75th birthday, I too would like to thank Mr. Bosley for his commitment to Parliament and extend my condolences to his family.

The hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, during question period, in the response to my question about air surveillance during the trucker's strike, the Prime Minister called me a conspiracy theorist and also accused me of misinformation.

It was at the end of that response when the unparliamentary language was stated. I heard it, and my colleague, the member of Parliament for Abbotsford, heard it.

To save you going through 45 minutes, I am telling you when it was within the debate.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for that intervention.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, yes, I heard the exchange. I thought he referenced her in terms of disinformation, which is different from misinformation. I would like you to check the Hansard, because, truly, if they are using their position to spread disinformation, I think that is a legitimate question, but I could have been wrong.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: I believe, Mr. Speaker, both words were used, in fact.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I do not know what is in the air today, but boy.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1550)

[*English*]

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021

The House resumed from May 3, 2022, consideration of the motion that Bill C-8, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021 and other measures, be read the third time and passed, of the amendment, and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 3:50 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to the amendment on the motion at third reading of Bill C-8.

Call in the members.

● (1615)

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

(*Division No. 73*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dancho	Davidson
Deltell	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Gallant	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Moore
Morantz	Morrison

Government Orders

Motz
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Schmale
Shields
Small
Steinley
Strahl
Thomas
Tolmie
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

Muys
Patzner
Perkins
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Rood
Scheer
Seeback
Shipley
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Idlout
Jaczek
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Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Larouche
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Perron
Plamondon
Qualtrough
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
Spengemann
St-Onge
Tassi
Thériault
Thompson
Trudel
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Villemure
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lemire
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saarnich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Michaud
Morrice
Murray
Ng
Normandin
Oliphant
Pauzé
Petipas Taylor
Powlowski
Robillard
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sinclair-Desgagné
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Trudeau
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vignola
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi — 214

NAYS**Members**

Aldag
Ali
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bérubé
Bittle
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Casey
Chagger
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Victoria)
Coteau
Damoff
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
El-Khoury
Fergus
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Fry
Garneau
Garrison
Gazan
Gill
Green
Hajdu
Hardie

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bergeron
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blanchet
Blaney
Boissonnault
Bradford
Brunelle-Duceppe
Carr
Chabot
Chahal
Champoux
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davies
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fortin
Freeland
Gaheer
Garon
Gaudreau
Gerretsen
Gould
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment defeated.

The next question is on the amendment.

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the amendment be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

PAIRED

The hon. House leader for the official opposition.

• (1620)

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

• (1630)

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

(Division No. 74)

YEAS

Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeschen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmieć
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Poilievre
Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Scheer	Schmale
Seebach	Shields
Shipley	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Wagh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer—	

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Garneau	Garon
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gill	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauson	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lemire
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martínez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)

Government Orders

McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty	Beech	Bendayan
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Bennett	Bibeau
McLeod	McPherson	Bittle	Blaikie
Mendès	Mendicino	Blair	Blaney
Miao	Michaud	Boissonnault	Boulerice
Miller	Morrice	Bradford	Brière
Morrissey	Murray	Cannings	Carr
Naqvi	Ng	Casey	Chagger
Noormohamed	Normandin	Chahal	Champagne
O'Connell	Oliphant	Chatel	Chen
O'Regan	Pauzé	Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Perron	Petitpas Taylor	Collins (Victoria)	Cornier
Plamondon	Powlowski	Coteau	Dabrusin
Qualtrough	Robillard	Damoff	Davies
Rogers	Romanado	Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Sahota	Sajjan	Dhillon	Diab
Saks	Samson	Dong	Drouin
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay	Dubourg	Duclos
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke	Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Serré	Sgro	Dzerowicz	El-Khoury
Shanahan	Sheehan	Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Fillmore	Fisher
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné	Fonseca	Fortier
Singh	Sorbara	Fragiskatos	Freeland
Spengemann	Ste-Marie	Fry	Gaheer
St-Onge	Sudds	Garneau	Garrison
Tassi	Taylor Roy	Gazan	Gerretsen
Thériault	Therrien	Gould	Green
Thompson	Trudeau	Guilbeault	Hajdu
Trudel	Turnbull	Hanley	Hardie
Valdez	Van Bynen	Hepfner	Holland
van Koeverden	Vandal	Housefather	Hughes
Vandenbeld	Vignola	Hussen	Hutchings
Villemure	Virani	Iacono	Idlout
Weiler	Wilkinson	Ien	Jaczek
Yip	Zahid	Johns	Joly
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 214	Jones	Jowhari
		Julian	Kayabaga
		Kelloway	Khalid
		Khera	Koutrakis
		Kusmierczyk	Kwan
		Lalonde	Lambropoulos
		Lametti	Lamoureux
		Lapointe	Lattanzio
		Lauson	LeBlanc
		Lebouthillier	Lightbound
		Long	Longfield
		Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
		MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
		MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
		Martinez Ferrada	Masse
		Mathyssen	May (Cambridge)
		May (Saarnich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
		McGuinty	McKay
		McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
		McPherson	Mendès
		Mendicino	Miao
		Miller	Morrice
		Morrissey	Murray
		Naqvi	Ng
		Noormohamed	O'Connell
		Oliphant	O'Regan
		Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski
		Qualtrough	Robillard
		Rogers	Romanado
		Sahota	Sajjan
		Saks	Samson
		Sarai	Scarpaleggia
		Serré	Sgro
		Shanahan	Sheehan
		Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
		Singh	Sorbara
		Spengemann	St-Onge

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

[Translation]

The next question is on the main 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. opposition House leader.

John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded vote.

• (1640)

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

(Division No. 75)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste

Alghabra	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Anand	Sorbara
Angus	St-Onge
Arya	
Atwin	
Badawey	
Baker	
Battiste	

Sudds
Taylor Roy
Trudeau
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 180

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Barsalou-Duval
Benzen
Bergeron
Bérubé
Blanchet
Block
Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe
Caputo
Chabot
Champoux
Cooper
Dancho
DeBellefeuille
Desbiens
Doherty
Dreeschen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Gallant
Gaudreau
Genuis
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Jeneroux
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Lake
Larouche
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Maguire
Mazier
McLean
Michaud
Morantz
Motz
Normandin
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Scheer
Seebach
Shipley
Sinclair-Desgagné

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Beaulieu
Bergen
Berthold
Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas
Bragdon
Brock
Calkins
Carrie
Chambers
Chong
Dalton
Davidson
Deltell
Desilets
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferrerri
Fortin
Garon
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Gourde
Hoback
Kelly
Kmieciak
Kram-Neuman
Kusie
Lantsman
Lawrence
Lemire
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
MacKenzie
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Moore
Morrison
Muys
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Plamondon
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Rood
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shields
Simard
Small

Private Members' Business

Soroka
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Thomas
Tolmie
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer— 149

Steinley
Stewart
Stubbs
Therrien
Tochor
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Bill read the third time and passed)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1645)
[English]

REUNITING FAMILIES ACT

The House resumed from May 3 consideration of the motion that Bill C-242, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (temporary resident visas for parents and grandparents), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: As this is the first recorded division to be taken on an item of Private Members' Business in Parliament, I would like to take this opportunity to explain the procedure.

The recorded division will start with the sponsor of the item, regardless of whether the member is participating in person or by video conference. We will then proceed row by row, without making any distinction of party, with members in favour of the motion, beginning at the back row of the side of the House on which the sponsor sits. I will call each row until we reach the front row of the seats.

[Translation]

After we have gone through all the rows on this side, the hon. members on the other side of the House will have their turn to vote, starting again with the last row.

Those opposed to the motion will be called in the same order. Members who are not present in the House will cast their votes using the electronic voting system, as was the case for other votes recently.

[English]

The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-242 under Private Members' Business.

● (1655)

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

*Private Members' Business**(Division No. 76)*

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison	Hanley	Hardie
Albas	Aldag	Hepfner	Hoback
Alghabra	Ali	Holland	Housefather
Allison	Anand	Hughes	Hussen
Anandasangaree	Angus	Hutchings	Iacono
Arnold	Arseneault	Idlout	Ien
Arya	Ashion	Jaczek	Jeneroux
Atwin	Bachrach	Johns	Joly
Badawey	Bains	Jones	Jowhari
Baker	Baldinelli	Julian	Kayabaga
Barlow	Barrett	Kelloway	Kelly
Barron	Barsalou-Duval	Khalid	Khera
Battiste	Beaulieu	Kitchen	Kmiec
Beech	Bendayan	Koutrakis	Kram
Bennett	Benzen	Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Bergen	Bergeron	Kusie	Kusmierczyk
Berthold	Bérubé	Kwan	Lake
Bezan	Bibeau	Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Bittle	Blaikie	Lametti	Lamoureux
Blair	Blanchet	Lantsman	Lapointe
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney	Larouche	Lattanzio
Block	Blois	Lauzon	Lawrence
Boissonnault	Boulerice	LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Bradford	Bragdon	Lehoux	Lemire
Brassard	Brière	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe	Liepert	Lightbound
Calkins	Cannings	Lloyd	Lobb
Caputo	Carr	Long	Longfield
Carrie	Casey	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Chabot	Chagger	MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
Chahal	Chambers	MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Champagne	Champoux	Maguire	Maloney
Chatel	Chen	Martel	Martinez Ferrada
Chiang	Chong	Masse	Mathysen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)	May (Cambridge)	May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)
Cooper	Cormier	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Coteau	Dabrusin	McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
Dalton	Damoff	McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Dancho	Davidson	McLean	McLeod
Davies	DeBellefeuille	McPherson	Melillo
Deltell	Desbiens	Mendès	Mendicino
Desilets	Desjarlais	Miao	Michaud
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Miller	Moore
Diab	Doherty	Morantz	Morrice
Dong	Dowdall	Morrison	Morrissey
Dreeshen	Drouin	Motz	Murray
Dubourg	Duclos	Muys	Naqvi
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ng	Noormohamed
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz	Normandin	O'Connell
El-Khoury	Ellis	Oliphant	O'Regan
Epp	Erskine-Smith	O'Toole	Patzner
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provence)	Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Fast	Fergus	Perkins	Perron
Ferreri	Fillmore	Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Findlay	Fisher	Poilevre	Powlowski
Fonseca	Fortier	Qualtrough	Rayes
Fortin	Fragiskatos	Redekopp	Reid
Freeland	Fry	Rempel Garner	Richards
Gaheer	Gallant	Roberts	Robillard
Garneau	Garon	Rogers	Romanado
Garrison	Gaudreau	Rood	Ruff
Gazan	Généreux	Sahota	Sajjan
Genuis	Gerretsen	Saks	Samson
Gill	Gladu	Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Godin	Goodridge	Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Gould	Gourde	Schmale	Seeback
Gray	Green	Serré	Sgro
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Shanahan	Sheehan
		Shields	Shipley
		Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
		Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
		Singh	Small
		Sorbara	Soroka

Spengemann	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
St-Onge	Strahl
Stubbs	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thériault	Therrien
Thomas	Thompson
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudeau	Trudel
Turnbull	Uppal
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Van Popta
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vignola	Villemure
Virani	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Weiler
Wilkinson	Williams
Williamson	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zimmer	Zuberi— 330

NAYS

Members

Schieffe — 1

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

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

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 52 minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

While I am on my feet, I move:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

● (1700)

The Deputy Speaker: 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 Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Mr. Speaker, I request that the motion be carried on division.

Routine Proceedings

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. opposition House leader.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, we would like a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1740)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 77)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cornier
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
El-Khoury	Erskind-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Garneau
Garrison	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lattanzio
Lauson	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)

Government Orders

Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Miao
Morrice
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Qualtrough
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 175

Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendicino
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
Oliphant
Petitpas Taylor
Robillard
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
Spengemann
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Trudeau
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
MacKenzie
Martel
Mazier
McLean
Michaud
Morantz
Muys
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Plamondon
Rays
Reid
Richards
Rood
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shields
Simard
Small
Steinley
Stewart
Stubbs
Therrien
Tochor
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

Liepert
Lobb
Maguire
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Moore
Motz
Normandin
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Scheer
Seebach
Shipley
Sinclair-Desgagné
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Thomas
Tolmie
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer— 146

NAYS**Members**

Abouttaif
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Barsalou-Duval
Benzen
Berthold
Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas
Bragdon
Brock
Calkins
Carrie
Champoux
Cooper
Davidson
Deltell
Desbiens
Doherty
Dreeshen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Gallant
Gaudreau
Genuis
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Jeneroux
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Lake
Larouche
Lehoux

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Beaulieu
Bergeron
Bérubé
Blanchet
Block
Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe
Caputo
Chabot
Chong
Dancho
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferreri
Fortin
Garon
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Gourde
Hoback
Kelly
Kmiec
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lantsman
Lawrence
Lemire

PAIRED

Nil

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1745)

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022, NO. 1

The House resumed from May 3 consideration of the motion that Bill C-19, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to participate in debate on the Budget Implementation Act. It is an act that comes at a time when the country is facing a lot of challenge.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I wonder if I might wait until a few members—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order, please. Could we ask hon. members to take their conversations outside the chamber and into the lobby?

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise and participate in the debate on the budget implementation act today. I might start just by saying that I am wearing this flower to mark MS Awareness Day, as many members, indeed perhaps all members, were doing today in the House, which I think is a great thing.

We are discussing the budget implementation act at a really challenging time for the country. This will not come as news to members in the House, just as it will not come as news to people across the country who are living that very experience, but I think it is important to talk a little more about some of the issues that people are facing. As we come, hopefully, out of the pandemic, our lives are still very much affected by what we have gone through and what we continue to go through.

If we look at our health care system, for instance, the effects of the pandemic are still very real and very much at work, even for those who are not in hospital as a result of the pandemic or with COVID-19. A lot of Canadians, either themselves or their family members or friends, are trying to access medical services and are finding it difficult to do so. Our health care professionals are simply exhausted after having spent the last two years working so hard to try to save the lives of Canadians who have been affected COVID-19. They are now trying to address the backlog of medical procedures, diagnostics and other types of care that have accumulated over the course of the pandemic, while our hospitals were full with extraordinary numbers of people sick with COVID-19.

We are facing real challenges on the health front, not only trying to figure out how to deal with the problems that still exist, but also, I hope, and it is certainly the case for New Democrats, how we can create a silver lining in all of the pain, hurt and challenge in health care. We are trying to figure out how we come out of it with a stronger public health system that would serve Canadians well into the future and be run more efficiently in terms of finding ways to save money, not by cutting services to people who need them but by exploring new ways that contain efficiencies in them to deliver services to people who need it.

I am speaking, of course, of pharmacare and having a proper national pharmacare plan that could save money while serving more people. There are a number of studies to show that this is very much possible. When we look across the world, we note that Canada is one of very few countries with public health care on a national level that do not have a national drug policy and a national drug insurance plan. I do not think it is a coincidence that we also pay among the highest costs for prescription drugs. It is because we are not mobilizing our purchasing power through the power of a national prescription drug plan. That is one example.

Another example is investments in things like dental care. We know that good oral health helps prevent other kinds of health issues that could occur down the line. Investing in something like a basic dental care plan means investing in the future and heading off health problems that would not only make a difference in the lives of Canadians by increasing their health and reducing their sickness, but would also help avoid human tragedy and cost less in the long run. We know that when we allow health problems to get to the

Government Orders

point of crisis, they are far more expensive to fix. That is happening in health care.

In the economy, we are facing a whole other set of problems. We have talked a lot over the last couple of years about people being out of work, as they were, and about their needing support from the government while they were out of work. Now we are in a phase in which there are still people struggling to get into the workforce. We could go out and talk to them.

There are people who are trying to maintain their business. I am thinking of folks like the independent travel agents, an industry that is made up of about 80% women, who are still trying to hold their business together and deal with their clients, and who are not getting paid because they do not get paid until well after the trip has been taken. There is still a lot of uncertainty with travel rules, and not just in Canada but across the globe, that are still making it difficult for people to travel and therefore difficult for people in that industry to make their money.

• (1750)

The tourism and hospitality industry is a really important industry in the Canadian economy. The numbers from before the pandemic show that very well, and the people who have the skills and the training and the networks to be able to deliver good service to Canadians within that industry are people we still want to have available to work in that industry when the pandemic is truly behind us.

They are going to need some ongoing support to be able to do that, just as people in the arts and culture industry need help.

[*Translation*]

In December, the government spoke about arts and culture workers. A solution was even negotiated with the Bloc Québécois.

However, we have yet to see a program that provides financial assistance to people working in the arts and culture sector, just as we have yet to see financial assistance for those working in the tourism and travel sector.

[*English*]

There is still a lot of work to do, coming out of the pandemic, for people who are still suffering negative economic consequences.

At the same time, unemployment has gone down significantly. We hear from employers that they are looking for people to work. We have this awkward situation of some people being in very difficult personal economic circumstances because their kind of work, the kind of work they are trained for and have experience with, has not come back, even as there are employers in very different industries who cannot find people to work in their business.

Government Orders

I would say, even though I am still trying to give a bit of an overview of some of the problems we are facing, that there is definitely a role for the government there. It is why the reforms to employment insurance are so important right now. They are important, in part, to be able to provide financial assistance to people who are still struggling. I think we need some supplementary income assistance programs beyond employment insurance reform, but certainly those reforms are very important to have in place, just as they were over the last number of years, in order to support people.

There is also a role for government to get involved in hooking up those people who are struggling to find work with the employers who are looking for workers, and to provide the training that has to happen to transition people from one sector into another.

That is true because of the ongoing economic consequences of the pandemic, but it is already true and it will be more and more true as the changing climate changes and affects our economy and the workers who are at the front end or on the front line of that transition. They are the people most at risk of falling through the cracks. I do not think we really believe, and I certainly do not believe, and I do not think my colleagues in the NDP believe, that the banks are going to somehow slip through the cracks, or that big, multinational investors are going to get forgotten and not know what to do and be left on their own to figure out how to find their place in a changing world.

They will be well served. They are well served, in fact too well served, by institutions that should be looking to serve all people, including the workers who are on the front line. That is why we are going to continue to be a voice to say we cannot just be happy that the banks and the big institutional investors are taken care of, thanks very much. We have to make sure that the people who work for them and who produce the wealth that those companies enjoy are also taken care of in that transition. That is not just because it is morally important, and it is, but also because that is how we are going to help those other employers who also want to have successful businesses and who also represent Canada on the world stage of business, who need talent to be able to carry on their enterprise successfully.

There is a real role, and I think there always has been, but ever more so now, for the government to get involved in training and making sure that the right kinds of training are available to particular workers for particular employers and making that strong connection, so that we are not just saying to workers, “Well, let us wait until you lose your job to help you find a solution. Then we are going to direct you to some general training where there are some signals that there is some promise and hope for you in a particular sector, and then you will do the training and if you do not get hired, that is your problem.”

What we want is a government that identifies the employers who are really looking for work, who have a promising work forecast and a good business plan, and says we are going to work with them to find the workers they need for their business to succeed.

• (1755)

We are going to have them do the training knowing that there is a good job on the other end of that training, so that both employers and workers can transition. Whether that is transitioning out of the

pandemic or transitioning through the economic challenges of climate change, we are going to make sure that Canadian businesses are successful and that Canadian workers have the opportunity to share in that success.

That is part of the economic challenge. That is what we call the workforce issues that we are facing as a country, but we are also facing those challenges in the context of high inflation, which is really putting the pinch on households. I talked about the importance of supporting workers through that transition, both with training and with income, so they are not leaving their family in the lurch while they try and get that training for the promise of that new job. It is all the more important because inflation is eating into the household budgets of Canadians even as we try to navigate these very challenges.

I do not think I need to talk a whole lot about the inflation problem in the sense that it has been and no doubt will continue to be very well examined in this place. I will not go over all of the issues that have to do with inflation, but the point that I want to try and add, and I feel a duty to do so because we do not hear much about it except from this side of the House, is the role that corporate profiteering has been playing in inflation as well.

There have been some studies out in the last month that suggest up to a quarter, 25%, of the inflationary pressure that Canadians are experiencing in their household budget, has to do with price increases that go above the increase in costs that companies are experiencing. It is not just a matter of companies passing on the increased cost to their customers. We are talking about huge profit growth.

The general number pre-pandemic was around 9% for profit booking overall in Canada. It has gone up to 16%. That is the profit, which means that is what is left over after costs are subtracted from revenue. That means that in some industries, some companies certainly are making a lot more money. It is not just that they are passing on their costs. It is that they are spying an opportunity to make more money on the backs of Canadians who have already been through hell in the last few years and are still going through a really difficult time.

That should also be the focus of people in this place, not just the actions of government and not just what government has done that may have contributed to the problem, but what government has not done to get a handle on the situation.

That is nowhere more true than in the housing market. That is true in the housing market over the last two years, but it is also true in the housing market for decades. Under governments of both stripes, both Liberal and Conservative, we have seen incredible increases in the cost of housing.

I heard a Conservative MP in response to another speech I made in this place not that long ago try and downplay that. They said there have always been increases in the cost of housing, that it is quite normal and it is not that bad. I would call that “goldfish politics”, and I think it is important for Canadians not to buy into it.

Canadians are well served when they and their politicians have long memories about what has happened. If we look at the trend line for house prices, they have increased significantly in this century year over year. That has accelerated in the pandemic and there are reasons for that. Some of those reasons have to do with those very companies that I was talking about, which have been amassing a fortune and trying to figure out how to put that money to work for themselves by making more money, finding that the real estate market is a great way to do that.

That is why it makes sense for the government to step in and say that when we are talking about the residential housing market, we can treat it that way only up to a point. Individual Canadians are not well served; our economy, as a whole, is not well served, and we are not well served as a country when we allow the places that we depend on for shelter and to build our homes to be treated as an asset commodity. More and more, that is what has been happening.

The numbers tell the story. Something like 25% of CMHC mortgages in the last year or so were for investment properties. That is a record number. It has never been like that before, and it calls for a response from government. It is the government that sets the rules for the CMHC around its mortgage insurance policy.

I think we have to ask why, in this context, we would be content to allow investors to get the same treatment to de-risk their mortgage investment as somebody buying their first home. That does not make sense. I do not think it was captured 20, 30, 40 or 50 years ago, because investment activity did not play the same role that it is playing in the market today.

• (1800)

Given what has changed in the housing market, we have to be asking those questions. We have to be asking why it is that somebody can produce the same amount of cash up front for a down payment for their eighth home as they do for their first home, and whether that makes sense or whether we are going to ask them to do more in order to temper the effect in the market. It is hard to move housing prices down. It is a difficult policy area, but it is why it is that much more important that we get to work on it.

We are seeing the role of real estate investment trusts grow in the market. It is fundamentally unfair to say to Canadians that if they are going to buy their first home they are not just going to compete with the family down the street, or somebody from across the city who is thinking about changing neighbourhoods, or maybe somebody who just got a job in their city who is coming from another Canadian city. They are going to compete with some corporate entities in Canada that have some of the deepest pockets, that want to beat them on the bid and then that want to rent it back to them at extraordinary prices. That is not a fair competition. It is not a competition at all, in fact. Canadians cannot be expected to compete with deep-pocketed corporate investors to buy homes. That is ridiculous, so we have to find ways to change the rules of the mar-

ket so that Canadians are not put in this impossible position anymore. It is getting more and more impossible.

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The good news is that these things are doable. Whether we are talking about changing the terms and conditions for CMHC mortgage insurance for investors, escalating the amount that people need for down payments on subsequent properties, or having a moratorium on real estate investment trust activity in the market, these are all things that do not cost the government a dime. They are not going to be enough on their own because we have to address the supply side of housing, but targeting the investment activity that has been driving up those prices is a thing that the government can do to temper the rise in house prices over time, and that does not require spending money. That is a real virtue. Governments should be looking for solutions to problems that do not just throw more money at them. There are enough problems where we do need to invest in order to get to the solution.

On the supply side, we need to invest. There is no way to augment housing supply in Canada without significant investment. When it comes to climate change, we are going to have to make some serious investments. There are regulatory things we can do that do not cost money, either, but we are kidding ourselves if we think we are not going to have to make substantial investments in Canada's infrastructure in order to successfully transition to the low-carbon economy that we need.

There are times when public expenditure is part of the answer, and there are times when the government can pursue policies that can make a real difference and do not cost money. There are times to pursue policies that save money. Pharmacare, as I said earlier, is an excellent example of that: It is not about spending no money. It is about spending out of the federal government's budget, instead of other governments' budgets and Canadians' own pockets, to spend less overall. However, there are things we can do to combat the financialization of the housing sector that has created a completely unfair competitive landscape for Canadian families bidding on homes that will not cost the government money.

Here we are. We are in this time of transitioning, we hope, out of the pandemic and transitioning, unfortunately, into a far less certain future with respect to the climate and the economic uncertainty that will also generate. It is a time when we are going to need more public involvement in the economy, as far as I am concerned, to do that well and to make sure we do not leave people behind.

Government Orders

I have already spoken to the budget proper. I want to spend a bit of time talking to some of the measures in the budget implementation act: an act that unfortunately does not have sufficient ambition. There are a number of things in here that are good. They are a step in the right direction. I do not think the budget has an appropriate level of ambition, so it is perhaps no surprise that the budget implementation act also does not have the appropriate level of ambition, but it is certainly the case that it does not.

I was just getting to the act. I am sure that the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan is getting up for unanimous consent—

• (1805)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is the hon. Minister of Seniors rising on a point of order or a question?

Hon. Kamal Khera: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am tabling government responses to Questions Nos. 394 to 408.

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

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I would like to indulge the hon. member by seeking unanimous consent to extend his period for questions and comments by another 10 minutes, with the proviso that the extra 10 minutes be allotted exclusively to Conservative members to ask questions.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is not a point of order we are prepared to accept.

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when I think of budgets, I cannot help but think of priorities. At the end of the day, there are many wonderful aspects to the budget that will have a profoundly positive impact on Canadians. One that I am very much encouraged about is the issue of child care. However, there is something I think Canadians and the NDP also talk a great deal about, and the member has made reference to it, which is the idea of a national dental plan. It is important that we recognize that it is being done in a staged fashion, with children being recognized first. It is an area that I think is long overdue.

Would the member provide some thoughts on that component going forward, as well as on how important it is that we continue to do what we can in the health care field, specifically with respect to pharmaceuticals?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the opportunity to speak a bit more to the importance of dental care. One of the things to keep in mind, and I had the opportunity to speak about it earlier, is the health effects of getting good and timely access to appropriate dental care. We have heard stories in the NDP caucus about folks who felt embarrassed or overcame some sense of shame about the state of their teeth to go to a job interview, but then felt that they did not get the job because they did not present the way they would like to, or did not meet the expectations others had of them with respect to what their mouth should look

like to get a job. It impacts people in the pocketbook, and it speaks to their sense of dignity.

I look forward to the day when people in this country have experience with this dental care plan and have had the virtue of seeing friends, family and people in their neighbourhoods get timely access to the dental care they have not always had. They will see the difference it really makes in people's lives. I believe that, once we have had some experience with that, Canadians will not want to go back.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is interesting to hear my friend across the way talk a great deal about housing, but not in any way talk about the problem of supply. The main reason we have such high housing prices in this country is there is a greater need for homes than is met by the current supply, and all of his proposals involve creating more challenges and barriers for investors.

An alternative option is to create incentives to make it easier for investors to invest in new home construction and to encourage those investments, because while there are many people who want to invest in housing, there are so many barriers in place that make it hard to bring new construction online. Those barriers are not just at the federal level; a great number of those barriers are in place at all levels.

How can we address the housing challenges and costs if we do not address the supply problem? If we do address the supply problem, does it not make everything so much easier afterward?

• (1810)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I think the member must have had to go to the washroom during the section of my speech when I said the measures I was talking about today specifically would not be adequate without having a way to address the supply issue. I do not believe that simply making it easier for developers to create more expensive homes is going to get us out of this problem. I think we need targeted investments because we need suites that people can afford to live in. That is why we need co-operative housing. That is why part of the deal that the NDP cut with the government included investments in co-op housing, and we can see that in the budget. That is why we believe we need to be building social housing units where the rent is geared to income. Those are also ways of relieving some of the strain on the housing market.

I would be very happy to have a debate on what we can do on the supply side as well; I just could not fit it into the 20 minutes.

Incidentally, the member will note that I did not say no to his request; rather, it was another member who said no to his request. I would have been glad to take him up on it.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, as my colleague said, teeth are important for digestive health and self-esteem.

We are not against dental insurance. What we are asking for is a right to opt out with compensation for provinces that want to implement their own insurance plan.

Does my colleague think it would be possible to include this provision in Bill C-19?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, the NDP has always been clear that, for historical and cultural reasons, Quebec can exercise the right to opt out with compensation. That has been part of our plan all along.

The answer is, without question, is yes.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I really wish we were in the House talking about an NDP budget, because in listening to the member's speech, many Canadians will understand that a totally different view would be happening in this country if we had that.

My question to the member is specifically around housing and non-market housing. I am working with many constituents in my riding who have lost their homes. They cannot rent, because they are getting renovations. We have a lot of people moving to my riding, buying houses and pushing the market up so high that people cannot even dream of buying homes within their own communities anymore. What we do not have is affordable housing: market housing that would let them have places to be safe.

Could the member speak about how the government could do so much better if it would actually take action?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I will start with one specific example. A lot of co-op housing and other non-market housing was supported by the federal government under operating agreements for decades, but those operating agreements were tied to mortgages. When those agreements started to expire under the Harper government, they were not renewed. There was a promise by the Liberals to renew those agreements, but they were never renewed under the same terms and conditions. I do not think it was a success.

Part of the problem is that investors, in some cases, are moving in on those very properties. When a board comes to the conclusion that it cannot manage that non-market housing with lower rents in the absence of federal operating funding, it makes the housing a ripe target for something like a real estate investment trust to get a bunch of units on the cheap. It throws a bit of money into them to fix them up and then rents them out at much higher prices that displace all the residents who were there.

That is just one example of where poor federal policy, under both Liberals and Conservatives, has contributed to the depletion of affordable non-market housing units. Keeping those units is part of addressing the supply problem. If we are losing more units than we are building, we cannot get ahead.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, in the member's speech obviously housing was a very attractive topic that I want to dive into, but he also talked about labour. I am particularly interested in changes in this budget implementation act around seasonal workers and employment insurance.

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I do not know if the member is prepared to comment on it, but we went through a period, under the previous Harper administration, where seasonal workers and routine unemployment were treated as sort of recidivism: It should not be allowed and should be punished. It seems to me that division 27 of the act is opening up again the idea of regional unemployment pockets, where the length of the weeks one could get employment insurance would reflect regional unemployment, but I am not certain because we have not gotten it to committee yet to study it.

What is the member's take on division 27 of this act?

● (1815)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, we are in the early days of studying this bill, but my initial impression is that it is extending a pilot program that was meant to help cover off some of those gaps that exist. The issue is that we actually have a fair bit of experience with this pilot program now, so the question is: Why can we not get to a permanent solution? We have a solution that is kind of de facto permanent, as long as the government is willing to continue extending the pilot program, but seasonal workers are in places where that is the established work culture and the work is just not available outside of the working season.

I come out of the construction industry, where workers say, "Make hay while the sun shines." We do, but I do not know why we cannot get to the point where we can offer these workers a little more certainty about what their lives are going to look like by making permanent a program that the government very clearly has been willing to extend indefinitely.

[Translation]

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, tonight I have the privilege of speaking to Bill C-19, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures.

Last week, I spoke about the budget and about the importance of balancing programs and spending to meet Canadians' needs while being fiscally prudent. I also spoke at length about the importance of the budget's housing initiatives. Today, I would like to touch on some of the areas I was unable to cover last time.

We have three indigenous communities in Kings—Hants: Sipekne'katik, Glooscap and the Annapolis Valley First Nation. Whenever I visit a community, the first issue raised by the chief and the council is the importance of increasing the housing supply and of funding renovations to existing housing. I am very pleased to see \$4 billion in investments in this budget. This is historic and significant.

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Kings—Hants is also Atlantic Canada's agricultural heartland. We have the largest concentration of farms, including the biggest supply-managed sector east of Quebec. Budget 2022 outlines the government's commitment to providing fair and equitable compensation to supply-managed farmers with respect to CUSMA in the fall economic update.

I want to compare that to those in the previous Conservative government who did not show consistent support for the system, including the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka, who has suggested that the supply-managed agricultural sectors and the system are responsible for food inflation. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of national capacity and we, on this side of the House, will support our supply-managed farmers.

[*English*]

I neglected to mention at the start that I will be sharing my time with the member for Surrey Centre.

I want to highlight the nearly one billion dollars' worth of initiatives for the agriculture sector, particularly through an environmental lens, that are being made available in budget 2022. There is nearly \$400 million for the on-farm climate action program, and we are tripling the agricultural clean technology program.

I would be remiss not to mention the fact that the Minister of Environment and his department are working closely right now on off-set protocols. They will be available and will be a boon for our agriculture sector, particularly in the prairie provinces, which have done a really good job on soil sequestration. There is an opportunity to reward that work and continue to encourage farmers to apply those practices and do even more. I think this is going to be a really important program in the days ahead.

I also want to talk about the importance of some of the wetland preservation programs that were in budget 2021 and reaffirmed in this budget. We will continue to roll those out to reward farmers who are doing tremendous work in sequestering carbon through carbon sinks on farm. This is going to matter across the country and indeed right in my backyard of Kings—Hants.

We know that labour is a major issue across the country. This is a reflection of the fact that the economy is very strong right now and that we have been there to make important investments. Indeed, I believe Statistics Canada reported that in the last quarter of 2021, nearly 900,000 jobs needed to be filled.

This budget really focuses on the importance of immigration, and our Minister of Immigration and my colleague from Nova Scotia provided a levels report to the House earlier in the year. We are focused on making sure that Canadian businesses and our communities have new immigrants to drive the important economy that we are seeing right now. By and large, I think all parties and all members of the House support that. It is extremely important, but it is not necessarily the case across all western countries.

• (1820)

We in Canada need to continue to promote immigration as an important element for supporting not only community diversity, but also our economic growth. I give credit to the government for its focus in this budget on that element.

Specifically, the budget allocates money for an agriculture-specific labour strategy. This was part of the platform the Liberal Party had in the 2021 election. Whether it is the seasonal agricultural worker program or otherwise, these programs are going to make a difference. I know they make a difference in Kings—Hants, but in places such as southwestern Ontario and Quebec they will as well.

I believe I am running out of time, and perhaps—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Yes, we are out of time. The hon. member will have four minutes and 25 seconds the next time this matter is before the House.

[*Translation*]

It being 6:22 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

RIGHT TO VOTE AT 16 ACT

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP) moved that Bill C-210, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (voting age), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am so pleased to rise on this beautiful evening to speak to my private member's bill, Bill C-210, the right to vote at 16 act.

First and foremost, I brought forward this bill because I believe in the power of young people in our society and in our country: the power of young people as a force for change, the power of young people as a source of energy and enthusiasm, and the power of young people to bring new ideas and new ways of seeing old problems.

As a young person, I was interested in politics at a young age, as I am sure many in this place were when they were 16 or 17. In the almost decade and a half since I was elected, I have encountered so many inspiring young people, such as the group of Heiltsuk youth who were part of a peaceful protest in 2015 that helped win recognition of their constitutional rights to a commercial fishery, and Fruin and Jessica from Smithers, who appeared before Smithers town council when I was mayor to advocate for a ban on plastic bags. There are people like Andy from Prince Rupert, whom I met during the all-candidates debate in 2019. Shortly thereafter, he ran a community podcast on the COVID-19 response and started writing his first book. Of course, there are the courageous young people currently taking the issue of voting age to federal court with their charter challenge. Incredible young people are stepping up and showing they care about issues, and it is time they had a proper seat at the table.

I also brought this bill forward because I believe we in this place have a responsibility to continuously strive to strengthen our democracy, to leave this place and this country better than we found it. I think we can all agree on the premise that the more people see themselves reflected in our democracy and feel included in our democracy, the stronger that democracy is.

This bill presents a chance to bring a new set of voices into our electoral system, into our democratic conversation: those of 16- and 17-year-old Canadians. It is just as Canada did for women in 1918, Asian Canadians in 1948, indigenous people in 1960 and 18-, 19- and 20-year-olds in 1970.

However, the right to vote, the name of which is in the title of this bill, is never guaranteed. I do not think there are any in this place who would suggest that if the group of people I just listed were excluded, our democracy would be nearly as strong, but democracy and voting rights are something we must keep fighting for. Speak to Indigenous people and they will tell you their voting access did not become an overnight reality in 1960. As we saw in the last federal election with the suspension of the campus vote program, there are still groups in our society, like students, that face barriers to voting.

Our democracy is a work in progress and it remains fragile. We see that around the world: in the United States, in France and here at home in Canada too. We are witnessing the rise of those who seek to destabilize western democracies. We are seeing the spread of misinformation, which is alienating citizens from their state. Only a year ago, an armed mob stormed the U.S. Capitol in an attempt to overturn an election that was free and fair.

Those forces are preying on real feelings of disillusionment. The fact is that many people do not feel represented by our political institutions. The antidote, in part, is to ensure that our democratic system is including as many people as possible, and that includes 16- and 17-year-old Canadians.

I called this my private member's bill, but truly this bill belongs to all of the representatives in this place and beyond who have championed this initiative over the years and who have brought forward this bill's objective not just at the federal level of government, but at other levels as well. The member for Ajax comes to mind. We were doing the math, and if his bill in this place had passed in

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2005, the children born that year would have been old enough to vote in the last federal election. The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands tabled a bill to lower the voting age in the House. Of course, my colleague, the wonderful member for Vancouver Kingsway, at our count has tabled a bill seven times in this place. I understand his count is a little different, but when we get up to bigger numbers, it becomes hard to keep track.

● (1825)

I hope that others will see their efforts reflected in the bill as well, such as the member for Calgary Skyview, who, as a Calgary city councillor, brought forward a motion to lower the voting age, and the member for Orléans, who championed a voting age initiative in the province of Ontario. I want to specifically acknowledge the work of Senator Marilou McPhedran, who has championed lowering the voting age in the other place and whose bill, Bill S-201, is currently at second reading.

Indeed, this is a bill with cross-party support and initiatives in both houses, and I hope this momentum means that, very soon, it will pass into law.

Why should we lower the voting age to 16 in Canada? The first reason, I think, is an obvious one, and I believe a compelling one, which is that the issues we are grappling with as a country are issues that have a tremendous bearing on young people, their present and the future they will inherit, issues like housing affordability, student debt, the sustainability of our health care system and, of course, the existential issue of the global climate emergency, the impacts of which will affect today's generation of adults in far-reaching and profound ways. Young adults deserve to have a hand in the decisions on these issues, and that is why I have brought forward this bill.

Another compelling reason for lowering the voting age is the impact it can have on some troubling trends when it comes to electoral turnout in our country. In the 2019 election, only slightly more than half, 53.9%, of people 18 to 24 years old voted. It turns out that Canada's current voting age of 18 is possibly the worst time to expect young people to vote for the very first time in a federal election.

As many in this place know, the age of 18 is a time of great transition. It is a time when young people are moving away from their home community. It is a time when they are embarking on full-time employment and full-time studies, often in a place away from where they grew up. Among all the competing experiences and responsibilities at that age, voting in a federal election rarely ranks and, as a result, the 18-24 age cohort votes in the lowest numbers of any age group in our country.

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If we lower the voting age to 16, we will see a different result. Most young adults at that age are still living at home, in the riding they grew up in. They have deep-rooted connections to their place. These conditions mean that there is a high likelihood that they will come out and vote in their first election. When they vote in the first election, there is a high likelihood that they will vote in the second election, and there is also a likelihood that they will form voting habits that stick with them for their entire life. That is not conjecture. That is what other countries, like Austria, Germany and Scotland, have found to be the case. It is what the data shows.

That is why the chief electoral officer of our country has said in the past that lowering the voting age is “worth considering” because “there’s a real benefit to making sure that Canadians vote early, and voting when you’re 16, there’s an opportunity to reach out to them.”

I want to take a moment to acknowledge Dr. Jan Eichhorn from the University of Edinburgh, who is here in Ottawa with us this week sharing some of the findings from his research on this topic. Not only does Dr. Eichhorn’s research indicate that 16- and 17-year-olds vote in greater numbers than their 18- to 24-year-old peers, but he has also found that they are more open-minded when deciding which party to vote for. He shared with us that when Scottish citizens saw the results of lowering the voting age, in the independence referendum, support for the idea of lowering the voting age went from 30% to 60%.

Of course, there are some detractors. I want to be honest. I have been a bit dismayed that many of the arguments against lowering the voting age are rooted in stereotypes of young people that are at best inaccurate, and at worst discriminatory and ageist.

● (1830)

“Let kids be kids,” they say, ignoring the fact that at 16 and 17, we give young adults all kinds of responsibility in our country. In most provinces, they can operate a motor vehicle at age 16. They can leave school and live on their own. They can join the Canadian Armed Forces, as the sons of the member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine did. They can write their own will and testament. They can be held criminally responsible for their actions. Many 16- and 17-year-olds work and pay taxes, yet they cannot vote for the government that sets those taxes. In today’s Canadian society, these are not kids. They are young adults with rights and responsibilities.

We are talking about voting rights specifically. While researching the issue of voting age in Canada, one particular inconsistency stood out to me. While the current law limits voting in federal elections to age 18, the age limit set by political parties for voting in leadership elections is, wait for it, 14. A leadership race, like the Conservative leadership race that is taking place right now, is an election to decide which candidate will have a chance to become Canada’s next Prime Minister. That is a serious election, and it is one that we already trust young people to take part in.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms says nothing about age limits on voting. It only says that every Canadian citizen holds that right, and it is up to Parliament to establish the reasonable limit to that right. Three years ago, the Supreme Court ruled that it was demonstrably unreasonable to limit Canadians who live abroad from voting, and this is under section 3 of the charter. Given the ev-

idence, can we truly argue that there are reasonable grounds to withhold voting rights from 16- and 17-year-olds? I do not think there are.

I sense there may be some in this place who find this initiative trivial, perhaps, or unimportant, or maybe they are worried that enfranchised young people will not vote for them. For me, it comes down to a matter of justice. If there are those in our society who the evidence shows are competent, then excluding them is unjust. It was unjust for women, it was unjust for indigenous people, it was unjust for Asian Canadians, and it is unjust today for 16- and 17-year-olds. I can think of no more serious work, no more important work than correcting this injustice and enfranchising young adults, who have been excluded from our democratic process here in Canada for far too long.

I will end with the words of Mégane Jacques, a 17-year-old from Quebec, who just yesterday addressed a group of MPs from all parties. Ms. Jacques said, “You have the capacity to make Bill C-210 a reality, to make our lives as Canadians better, now and for future generations. That is your job, isn’t it, to make Canada a better place for all of us? What an honour and a privilege that is, to be able to serve your country as you do. If you have the capacity to make Bill C-210 a reality, please pave the way for us. The question is not only about denying our rights, but about acknowledging our value in today’s world.”

● (1835)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his well-delivered speech and the initiative he has brought forward.

I am curious if he can comment on the fact that no other jurisdiction, whether provincial or passed on from a province to a municipality, seems to have taken up this initiative to lower the voting age. I am wondering if he is aware of any consultation that provinces have done and what that consultation might be.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, the issue of provinces is an interesting one. It was a certain Saskatchewan premier, Tommy Douglas, the former leader of our party, who first brought the initiative to lower the voting age to 18 in Saskatchewan all those years ago. Therefore, there is a precedent.

I was talking to my wonderful colleague, the member for Nunavut, about their experience. In Nunavut, several organizations that represent Inuit people hold elections, and the voting age for those elections is 16.

I think this is a matter that would be very interesting for provincial governments to consider, but what we are talking about here this evening is the federal government, the government that we are involved in, the government for which we create laws and establish precedents. I hope that this place will lower the voting age to 16 and strengthen our country.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to commend my colleague for his speech. This is an interesting bill, but I would like my colleague to elaborate on a few things.

First, it is said that someone who votes gets in the habit of voting, which means that the first vote is important.

For the vote at 16 to be effective and have an impact on voter turnout, the participation rate for those between the ages of 16 and 18 has to be higher so that these voters quickly develop this good habit and remain consistent in their voting practices.

Testing has already been conducted. I would like to know whether there are scientific studies based on these tests that can provide us with proof. If so, we would like the names of those studies so that we can see whether voter turnout was higher for those between the ages of 16 and 18 than for those between the ages of 18 and 25, for example.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, yes, there is evidence that when the voting age is lowered, the voter turnout is higher among 16- to 18-year-olds than it is for those between 18 and 24, and the older of the young voting cohorts. That information and that research were shared with us just recently by Dr. Jan Eichhorn.

We have a long record now, because we have countries such as Austria, which lowered the voting age in 2007. In Scotland, it was lowered for the independence referendum in 2016. We have seen the effect over the years, and the effect is positive on overall voter turnout. I think this is something we need to consider very seriously when we look at the potential benefits of this bill.

• (1840)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, not only for his leadership with this important bill, but for his grace in acknowledging the number of other members in this place who have introduced it in past sessions, including the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. No doubt, she and I will be strongly supporting this, for many of the reasons that he shared.

My question is with respect to the other jurisdictions from around the world that have already taken this step. He mentioned Austria and Germany, for example. Could he share more about their experience and the efficacy this has had in increasing voter participation?

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, that was an excellent question from the member for Kitchener Centre. I would encourage him to talk to some of the researchers in this field, because they will do a much better job than I can of explaining the data and some of the nuanced findings from the research they have done.

Private Members' Business

There are some very interesting findings, and many of the research findings really contradict some of the stereotypes that we have of young people. They found that young people are less partisan, that they consult more sources of information, and that they have an impact on their parents and are not simply influenced by their parents.

I think that when we look at the experience of other countries, which we have the benefit of, it becomes very clear that this is something that would move our country forward.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always interesting to debate the parliamentary process and the pillars of democracy, and elections are obviously one of them.

Back in the early 1990s, I belonged to a relatively small caucus in the Manitoba legislature as an MLA. A discussion took place between me and Jon Gerrard, the leader of the Liberal Party at the time, which led me to take on the initiative of looking at what we could be proposing in the Manitoba legislature for electoral reform. I came up with a series of debating points, and one of them happened to be lowering the voting age to 16. I was quite enthusiastic about lowering the age, but I wanted to be as objective as I could in approaching the issue.

Whether it was at high schools in Dauphin, Winnipeg or out in Steinbach, I was quite surprised that the greatest amount of opposition to lowering the age was there. Young people themselves tended to object to the idea of lowering the voting age to 16. It surprised me, as it surprised a number of the teachers who were involved in some of the discussions that took place. At the end of the day, it was not just the high schools that were at play, as other factors were brought into it. Ultimately, in the report that I provided, there were reservations concerning lowering the voting age to 16.

When I reflect on it today, it is an appropriate question. We have 10 provinces and two territories, and independent election agencies throughout Canada and Elections Canada itself. I think it would be appropriate for Elections Canada or one of the independent election outlets under provincial jurisdiction to look at this issue. On the surface, there are many arguments as to why we want to move in that direction, but if we conducted consultations, it might change some of the thinking on it.

In the member's speech, for example, he said that to a certain degree we are already moving in that direction because, after all, someone who is 14 can become a young Liberal, a young New Democrat, a young Conservative or even a young Green Party member. We all value the contributions that young people make to our political organizations. I know because I have witnessed firsthand the type of enthusiasm that is there, and I do what I can to encourage that enthusiasm.

Private Members' Business

Many members of the Liberal caucus will remember one of the first days that we came back as a majority government and the Prime Minister challenged us to develop youth councils, to work with young people and to get them engaged in politics. There are currently all sorts of mechanisms that enable young people to get engaged in politics. I would hope we would see more involvement on this particular issue and other issues that are, I would argue, of equal importance and need to be addressed on electoral reform.

I am a very strong advocate for how we can get more people to participate in the democratic process. One thing, for example, would be voting at malls. We should allow people to vote where they are going. We see that in limited ways, and I think we can do a lot more to enable wider and better participation in voting.

● (1845)

I remember sitting in on some discussions where some people would say, "Well, voting should be made mandatory." That is not something I would advocate, but there are some countries in the world that have mandatory voting. Others would say that there should be a carrot to encourage people to go out and vote. I have even heard some people say that there should be a flat fee for people who show up to vote to provide them a credit. I think that everyone wants to see our democracy in a very healthy state. One of the ways we can do that is to ensure we are encouraging people to get out and vote, and find some of those mechanisms so that we can.

I do not think we can underestimate the true value of youth today, and of those who are 12 and under. I will go back to one of my first volunteers, Walter Krawec, who was eight years old when he showed up at my campaign office back in 1988. At eight years old, he showed up, and was probably in a better position to vote than many people I knew who were over 18. I could not see him at the time, but he was at the front of the campaign office. Fifteen minutes later, I met young Walter, who pointed out three spelling mistakes in my brochure. Every political party has had that sort of experience. We should capitalize not just on the 16-year-olds, but go all the way down to an age when young people do get engaged.

If we want young people to vote, whether in a provincial, territorial or federal election, at the age of 18, the best thing we can do is encourage school divisions to have civic programs to encourage youth parliaments, whether they are in legislatures or in local high schools, and encourage young people to get engaged in political campaigns. We see many schools telling students that they can get a credit if they go to a local campaign. They do not say to support a political party, but teachers often encourage students to get involved in a campaign directly. By doing that, students are getting that first-hand experience. They will go home to tell mom or dad, or whoever their guardian is, that they were candidate X or Y, and that is not limited to 16-year-olds.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, as I said, the age of maturity is that turning point, and if we take some basic 101 psychology and sociology courses, we will find that it is not necessarily age that makes the determination. However, as legislators and as parliamentarians, we have an obligation not only to 16-year-olds but also to all young people to come up with ways we can chal-

lenge them at that younger age to get engaged in the political process.

At the end of the day, I would like to see a body, such as Elections Canada or a provincial or territorial legislature and their independent election offices, look at ways we can get young people more engaged, whether it is through scrutineers, voting, or Elections Canada going into the classrooms more. We are starting to see that with some of the independent election agencies. Elections Canada going to a grade 9 classroom would send a very powerful message.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, there are many ways we can approach this, and I appreciate the fact that the member has brought forward a bill that allows for some discussion, at least for a couple of hours here in the House of Commons. However, my challenge to young people, whatever their age, is to get engaged. My challenge to parliamentarians who know these young people is to get them engaged. They will not be disappointed. I also would like to see these young people inspire their parents and others to get out and vote.

● (1850)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that, if they want to have conversations or if they have questions and comments, then they will have to wait until the appropriate time. Unfortunately, during PMB, it is only the first speaker who gets questions and comments. If members have questions and comments, they might want to go to the member who did the speech after the fact. That would work better to ensure that we can all hear what is being said in the House.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Shepard has the floor.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate on Bill C-210. This is a difficult bill to debate because it is a responsibility of citizenship and that is the fundamental question before us. What is a citizen? What are their duties and responsibilities? Often times, people talk about what rights they have as a citizen. They rarely address the responsibilities of a citizen.

I, like many Canadians, did not have the benefit of having been born in this country and, therefore, gifted with citizenship. I have taken an oath of citizenship to gain it and to have and enjoy all the freedoms and rights that every single citizen of Canada enjoys. However, with this comes the responsibility to vote. Our civic duty goes beyond just voting. There is much more to being a good citizen than simply voting, forgetting about it between elections, and moving on. This is where a lot of people should and could get involved.

I have concerns with the way this legislation is drafted. I have concerns also with some of the arguments I have heard here and online from advocates and academics who are pushing the idea of reducing the age of voting from 18 to 16. I want to show that I have done my homework on this and that I am approaching this thoughtfully.

Private Members' Business

The election reform committee report in late 2016 did not recommend reducing the age of voting from 18 to 16. The minority dissenting report filed with the House of Commons by the Liberal Party, the Liberal government caucus members, only asked that 18-year-olds be registered. The minority report that was filed jointly by the New Democrats and the Green Party asked that future referendums on electoral reform allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote, which I guess is an idea they got from the Scottish experience.

Prince Edward Island's legislature actually considered reducing the age of voting in its provincial elections to 16 just last year, and that was voted down at the provincial legislative level.

The voting age restriction in Canada has actually been charter tested before, not at the Supreme Court of Canada level, at least not that I am aware of, but in *Fitzgerald v. Alberta*. It was tested in that court and the judge found that, while it was a violation of the right, he could, under section 1 of the charter, find reasonable grounds for it and explained the reasoning therein.

One of the examples I have heard was the Austrian experience. In the last federal election in Austria, the voter turnout was about 75%. If we go back 40, 50 and 60 years, voter turnout was over 90% in Austria, and that has actually been the experience until very recently, when voter turnout started to dip. It is true that before the 2019 federal Austrian election, Austria did have a voter turnout that was higher. It has gone down, so I do not think that is a good example to use, this unique situation of reducing the voting age to 16 being the cause of voter turnout going up, because it has gone down since then. Looking at it historically, it is lower than it was 40, 50 and 60 years ago.

The issue of 14- to 17-year-olds voting in partisan leadership elections in political parties has been raised. I have seen this repeatedly, so I want to address it. Typically, people have to pay to join a political party in Canada to be eligible to vote in a leadership race. They do not pay to become a citizen. Let us very much hope that people do not engineer a situation where they are essentially paying for the rights and benefits of a citizen of Canada. It was definitely not the situation in my case. That is a fundamental difference between becoming a member of a political party, and paying to vote at the age 14, and being a citizen of Canada, which comes with responsibilities and duties. I will lay claim that these duties are a lifetime of responsibilities to our democracy, our Parliament and our monarch, which every citizen of Canada bears the responsibility to protect.

I have heard the argument that it would improve voter turnout as well. I have a concern here with how the argument is being framed. It is just basic mathematics. The potential could be a million or a million and a half new voters being added onto the voter rolls. I will go into a bit more about these voter rolls and the actual Elections Canada campaigning. Unless every single 16- and 17-year-old were to vote thereafter in a federal election, effectively, voter turnout would go down if only half, or even 75%, of them voted. Everything else would be exactly the same, but because the pool would be increased and all the new additions would not all vote, the voter turnout would actually decrease. There might be a high level of enthusiasm for their first election, but it would still effectively decrease the overall voter turnout. That is just a word of caution.

• (1855)

I spoke about the responsibilities of citizenship. One of them is serving in our military. Some choose to take up the responsibility by wearing the uniform of our armed forces and serving Canada. People cannot join the regular armed forces at the age of 16. They can only join the primary reserves with parental consent if they can prove that they are a full-time student. They can join at age 17 with just parental consent, and at the age of 18 they can fully join any of the regular armed forces units and go through basic training in the army, navy or air force.

The age for alcohol consumption and purchase in Canada is 19 in most provinces, 18 in Quebec, 18 in Manitoba and 18 in Alberta. The age for cannabis consumption and purchase is 19 in all provinces except Alberta, where it is 18, and Quebec, where it is 21. The age to obtain a driver's licence is 16, but we get full driving rights at 19 in about half the provinces. Four provinces use 18 and two provinces use a graduated system.

We place limits on young citizens and those who are 16 and 17 in what I would call the basics of becoming a full citizen. They get all rights and benefits as they come of age and are able to take on all these extra responsibilities.

The issue is not maturity. I have met incredibly mature young people who are 16 or who are 12. In fact, I trust my 11-year-old daughter much more with my car keys to grab something out of my car and pick something up than my 13-year-old son. My 11-year-old daughter is far more mature and ready to take on way more responsibilities than my 13-year-old, who still loves to play video games, especially Minecraft, which is still a big one in the household.

Age is not a good indicator of maturity. I have met 40-year-olds and 30-year-olds who are so deeply immature that I question their ability to give a rational vote at the ballot box. However, they are allowed to; they can vote. That is the great thing about Canada. People can cast a vote for any reason once they reach that age, whether it is for a political party, for the leadership or for a single issue they care about. If it is something that strikes them as a good idea, they can do that.

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I talked about some of my deep concerns with the voter rolls. Let us say the voter rolls were reduced to allow 16- and 17-year-olds. Once they make it onto the voter rolls, their contact information would be shared with political parties by Elections Canada. It would thereafter be shared with MP offices, which would then directly communicate with these new voters. We should be able to communicate with voters.

Then I wonder about a basic question on access to high schools. Should members of Parliament and candidates choosing to run for public office ensure that we have equal access to high schools to campaign there? Is that something we want? Is that a place where we want to be able to campaign? How would that work? It is the interaction between federal government legislation and practice and local rules at the high school and school district levels. That is a concern I have. It is not clear to me how this would work.

There are municipalities and cities that have considered allowing voting as early as the age of 16. I do not think that is a terribly bad idea, and it is interesting. Voting at a younger age gives an opportunity for people to practise a habit. I have heard this said, and it has been mentioned in this debate as well.

I have saved my Yiddish proverb for last. I know many members await it. “A quiet fool is half a sage.” Hopefully by rising to speak on this, I have not made a fool out of myself. I propose some caution, perhaps, as we proceed through debate and to a vote on this piece of legislation and the idea behind it. I do not believe this is something we should rush into. There are very good areas that we could debate, but things need to be more finely considered here.

Again, I hope the sage matters that I have brought to the House, including the consideration from Prince Edward Island's legislature, which voted this down in 2021, the full responsibilities of citizenship and the limits we place currently, are considered as we decide whether to lower the voting age from 18 to 16.

• (1900)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on this subject that keeps coming up. Obviously there is interest in it.

It also seems to appeal to young people, even though the member for Winnipeg North said that young people do not want to vote. In reality, 16- and 17-year-olds have gone to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice to seek the right to vote by challenging the constitutionality of the law.

My colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley talked about the benefit of having 16- to 18-year-olds vote. If these young people vote, participation in the democratic process is sure to increase as the pool of voters gets bigger. It is simple math, and it does not take a Ph.D. to know that. The question is more whether these young people will actually go out and vote, but I will come back to that a little later.

First, I want to respond to what my colleague from Winnipeg North said. He stated that we need to encourage people to vote and we need to find ways to encourage them. He is looking for ways

because he is a dynamic guy, as we know. Everybody in the House knows him.

I can give him some ideas. When I was in Quebec City, sitting as part of the opposition in the National Assembly, we asked questions, and the ministers usually gave us answers. When they did not, we invoked a standing order to remind the ministers that they had to answer.

When I arrived in Ottawa, I was told to brace myself. Ministers in Quebec City do not always answer questions, but the federal government gives nothing but nonsense answers. No matter what question is asked, the government reads from the same talking points, even if the answer is completely unrelated.

If the Liberals really want to help get the vote out, they need to respect the voters' intelligence and answer the questions put to them by the opposition, because those questions are coming from the voters. If the government really wants to increase voter turnout, it needs to start treating the public and voters with respect and answer the questions.

If they respected the public, they would remember that on September 25, 2021, the people elected a minority Liberal government and the NDP was relegated to the opposition. That was what the people wanted, what they decided.

Had the government respected voters' intelligence—had it respected voters, period—it would have respected the fact that this government was supposed to be a minority government and that the NDP was supposed to be an opposition party, but the very people who make a big to-do about boosting voter turnout are the same ones saying that the way people voted does not matter and that they are entering into an alliance for whatever reason and giving a minority government a majority.

Maybe if people felt respected, more of them might vote. Voter turnout has been in free fall for forty-some years, and even though it edged up recently, that is nothing to get excited about. The point is, let us start by respecting voters 18 and up before we start talking about the 16- to 18-year-olds.

Let us look at voting rights for 16- to 18-year-olds. I find this so interesting. There are some main ideas I would like to work on with the member.

First, it has been proven that a voter who votes for the first time tends to vote more often throughout their lifetime. It is a habit. Some people pick up bad habits; others pick up good ones. Voting is a good habit.

Technically, if 16- to 18-year-olds vote more, that high level of civic participation will continue throughout their lives. That will make democracy in Quebec and Canada more accessible.

I am not against the idea. On the contrary, I find it interesting. That is why I asked my colleague the question. He answered me, perhaps because he is not in government. I asked him some questions, and he did not answer that the dog ate the answer. I thank him for that because it is rare to get answers here. I find this interesting, and I wrote it down in my notebook.

● (1905)

We now have examples, and since this is being done elsewhere in the world, we are watching and wondering how it could happen here. The member for Calgary Shepard also said something interesting. He looks startled, but I can assure him that I found it interesting. I did not fact-check what he said, but I will take his word for it. He said that in Austria, voter turnout increased initially, but it went back down once the excitement wore off. That is interesting.

It is important to understand that the ultimate goal is to allow 16- to 18-year-olds to vote. Someone once said that you do not need to be old to be wise. I think it was Xavier Dolan, but I am not sure. It means that a person can be very bright even at 16 or sometimes younger. I have met people in that age group who were really into the news, who read the newspaper and so on. I think it is an interesting idea, and I think something could potentially be done with it.

We in the Bloc Québécois sat down to begin reflecting on this issue. In fact, my colleague pushed us to do so by introducing this bill and asking our opinion. I weighed the pros and cons, and I will briefly outline what I came up with.

First we have those who are in favour. They argue that the school setting may encourage 16-year-olds to vote because, generally speaking, people that age still go to school. Their teachers will talk about this and explain who has the right to vote, and so on. Discussions could be geared to encourage voter turnout. Some studies show that this is not necessarily true, but I still find it interesting.

I have already talked about the fact that voting is a good habit to get into. Another important point is that party members have the right to vote in leadership races. The Conservative Party seems to have a lot of leadership races. Its members must have strong legs, because they are always running.

Young people are more affected by the climate crisis. I am looking at the members of the Green Party and the Bloc Québécois, not to mention the NDP, because we must admit that we are all part of the same team when it comes to the climate crisis. It would be good to hear from young people on this issue. I think that would be worthwhile.

People have the right to join the army at age 17, which is interesting. At age 16, they can get a driver's licence, and why not? Although it is true that you can kill someone with a car, that is uncommon. We can certainly give them the right to vote.

At 16, people can drop out of school. They can get a job and pay taxes, depending on the tax bracket they are in.

I will now talk about the cons. A person is a minor until they are 18. There must be a reason for that. It was decided that a person is a minor before age 18. Parental consent is required for getting married or enlisting. Maybe there would be more successful marriages

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if that were required. I probably should have asked for my parents' advice before I got married, but no matter.

Some say that 18-year-olds sometimes act like adults and sometimes act like minors. It is still the same thing. There may be reasons for that.

At 16, people are prohibited from smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol. At least, they are prohibited from buying cigarettes and alcohol.

Quebec and the other provinces are not there yet. It would be rather strange for youth to have the right to vote in federal elections, but not in provincial elections. I do not know how that would work, but it is something we could study and work on.

Research has been conducted on this. My colleague mentioned some research findings. It is interesting. Is the research indisputable? No, it is not. It may be too recent. Not many jurisdictions have lowered the voting age, and often the countries cannot be compared. That affects the nature of the sample.

The issue is simple: People must vote. Will lowering the voting age to 16 increase voter turnout? I am not referring to the number of voters, but the actual percentage who vote. I believe this is something we must fight for to ensure that our democracy moves in the right direction, to improve the way we do politics so that we are seen in a better light and people vote because they know it is worth the effort.

● (1910)

[English]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, today is a very important day for young people as we debate a bill that will increase the political representation and participation of youth in Canada.

I am dismayed to hear many of my colleagues in the House misunderstand or misrepresent the interests of young people in this discussion. I hope to clarify, for many of my colleagues, the importance of enfranchisement for young people by offering the reality that, here in Canada, we have not always done our very best to ensure enfranchisement.

Let me rewind the clock. In 1959, indigenous people did not have the right to vote in this country. Do members want to know why they did not have the right to vote? It is because people in this chamber said that indigenous people, like myself and my family, were unfit, unready, immature and could not make decisions for themselves. It sounds pretty darn familiar today.

Bill C-210, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act, would finally allow those who are truly competent, those who have our future in their hands and those who have the most at risk, to have something. This is something we can truly give them by welcoming them into our democracy.

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I would like to thank and applaud my hon. colleague and dear friend, the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, for tabling this truly historic piece of legislation. It is time to do what is right. Enfranchisement in a democracy is one of the most critical steps of making our democratic institution stronger. When we deny that fact and when we deny young people this truth, we deny them their future.

I want to address the important contributions of young people so that my colleagues can better understand how young people play a critical role today, right now, not only in our economy but also in our society, our academics and our culture. They also play a critical role in how communities function. There is a saying where I come from that when children and young people walk the earth in front of us, that land is truly blessed because we know they are still here, and it will be their children who will walk that land.

Let us not discredit the value of young people here. I do not want to continue to hear how young people are unfit and how they cannot do things. Young people are doing far more today than many leaders around the globe. Young people are not just the leaders of tomorrow in some far-off imagination: they are the leaders of today, right now.

Young people are facing unprecedented challenges. We often talk about the affordability crisis. We often talk about the housing crisis. We often talk about climate change in the House. Who is it going to affect most? It is going to affect young people. It is going to affect our children. Why not give them the right to have a say?

Young people have to deal with not only the reality of what is to be a diminishing future, but they also have to deal with the lives they are leading now. They are dealing with racism, just as I have. They are dealing with gender identity and their own sexuality. They have questions about how their inclusion in this place, and in all of Canada, can be valued.

I was only 16 years old when I went to work in the oil field in Alberta. Many of my Conservative colleagues often talk about how important it is that we support workers in the oil field. Not once have they come to talk to workers, such as me. I got laid off four times when I was 17. Not once. I did not even have a vote to protect myself. Even though I was paying taxes and I was paying this country's bills, I still could not have a say.

● (1915)

Many young people put their bodies on the line for this country, in many more ways than one, and we still do not give them respect. That reminds me of something I mentioned at the very beginning of this speech: we ignored indigenous peoples' rights to enfranchisement forever, until 1960. My mom did not have the right to vote. As indigenous people were excluded from this place and excluded from enfranchisement, it was a struggle. It still is a struggle today to ensure that they feel safe at the ballot box. Let us not repeat that.

Let us think about the leaders in our world who are young people, and who have made our world better. I think about Greta Thunberg, for example. She is a politically strong, bright young woman leading young people because they know this future is more theirs than ours.

I think of Autumn Peltier, a fellow indigenous youth, who is doing that work here in Canada. We turn our backs so quickly to those who lead our country.

We are seeing more and more young people take action. In light of this vacuum of power, they are taking action in their schools, in community centres and in our campaign offices. Every single one of us has had young people offer up their intelligence, their volunteerism, their spirit, their knowledge and their labour. The least we can do is protect them.

I want to highlight that this is not only a principally correct bill, but it is also one that has proved political merits, as seen in other nations that provide for 16- and 17-year-olds' enfranchisement. Many experts agree that this is a great idea to strengthen a democratic study and is something we have to talk about right now: freedom and democracy. Now is the time to truly put freedom and democracy in the hands of those who have the most to benefit from, but also the most to lose, in our country.

Many experts, such as Jan Eichhorn, an associate professor at the University of Edinburgh, say that this move will increase young people's interest in politics as well as impact our society in a positive way. This is good news for Canada, should we have the courage to do what is right.

From Cuba to Brazil, Malta and Scotland, several countries around the world have already lowered the voting age and are seeing positive results. Canada must follow suit. For example, during the Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014, 16-year-olds were allowed to participate. That is amazing. According to Democratic Audit UK, that not only allowed participation but it also increased non-partisanship. It increased civil debate and good discussion. That is what our country needs.

Flourishing democracies do not rely on exclusion. They rely on inclusion. That is why indigenous nations in this country have already taken a leadership role on this. Many indigenous organizations already allow our 16-year-old people to vote, because we know the importance of bringing them in. In fact, in Austria, studies have shown that 16- and 17-year-olds have reasonable political knowledge and are able to act with higher civic literacy than voters who are 18 or over. This is shocking. Many of our colleagues here have said the opposite. The level of political interest is not only determined by age: that is what I mean to say here. In no case should we believe that. Young people at home do not believe that. They are valuable. They belong in this country. This country is theirs and they deserve a say. The arguments for lowering the voting age have reasonable evidence.

New Democrats stand with young people in their call for enfranchisement. I personally know that in my constituency of Edmonton Griesbach, many young voters who worked on my campaign when they were just 16 or 17 would make fine voters. Campaign volunteers like Elyasu and Callum are the backbone of civic engagement at the end of the day. They are the ones participating the most. To conclude, the future of our country truly depends on young people. They have the passion.

Again, I want to thank my hon. colleagues for allowing me the opportunity to speak. I would also like to thank my hon. colleague in the New Democratic Party for taking a strong and principled role here and always.

• (1920)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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.

Pursuant to an order made Tuesday, May 3, the House shall now resolve itself into committee of the whole to consider Motion No. 12 under government business.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

(House in committee of the whole on Government Business No. 12, Mrs. Carol Hughes in the chair)

The Deputy Chair: Before we begin this evening's debate, I would like to remind hon. members of how proceedings will unfold.

[Translation]

Each member speaking will be allotted 10 minutes for debate, followed by 10 minutes for questions and comments. Pursuant to an order made Tuesday, May 3, 2022, the time provided for the debate may be extended beyond four hours, as needed, to include a minimum of 12 periods of 20 minutes each.

Members may divide their time with another member, and the Chair will receive no quorum calls, dilatory motions, or requests for unanimous consent.

[English]

We will now begin tonight's take-note debate.

Hon. Marc Miller (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

That this committee take note of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

He said: Madam Chair, *kwe, kwe. Unnusakkut. Tansi.* Hello. *Bonjour.*

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I want to start by acknowledging that Canada's Parliament is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Nunavut.

The tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls is ongoing. Tomorrow, on May 5, thousands of red dresses will be hung in city squares, on porches, in trees, on fences and in gardens across Canada. These red dresses are a reminder of the pain and loss felt by families, survivors and communities of missing and murdered first nations, Inuit and Métis women, girls, two-spirit and gender-diverse people.

Last June, together with federal, provincial, territorial, municipal and indigenous partners, we launched the missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people national action plan. This includes the Government of Canada's contribution: the federal pathway to address missing and murdered 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Is the federal pathway perfect? No, it is not. It is an evergreen document that is intended to evolve, constantly adapt and be trauma-informed, with input foremost from survivors and their families.

• (1925)

[Translation]

Naturally, it will take a government-wide and Canada-wide approach, involving more than 25 federal departments and agencies, the provinces and territories, indigenous organizations and other partners throughout the country, to put this plan into action and bring an end to this tragedy.

This is a national responsibility. The calls for justice in the final report urge governments and society in all its forms to act, and we must fulfill that obligation.

Indigenous groups have long expressed the need for safe, culturally relevant spaces as a key component to move forward on self-determination. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission called for this, as did the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in section 2.3 of the final report. We are listening and will continue to listen. We are taking action and will continue to take action.

[English]

As part of the federal pathway, budget 2021 announced a total of \$2.2 billion over five years, notably with \$160.9 million ongoing, to end violence against indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+. However, I would like to focus on a particular section of that funding: the \$108.8 million over two years that was allocated specifically for the cultural spaces and indigenous communities program that I mentioned just now in French, which responds directly to call to justice 2.3. The program offers opportunities for indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse people to access culture and language to help them strengthen their identities, which in turn can enhance their safety and security.

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Last month, I had the opportunity to visit several communities to see the impacts of these projects, which they had been fighting for, in some cases, for over a couple of decades.

[Translation]

In the territory of Kahnawà:ke, for example, we announced \$16 million in funding for the construction of a new building to house Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitióhkwa, a language and cultural centre with space for the Turtle Island Theatre Company.

These new buildings will help them preserve and enrich their culture, as well as empower new generations of Mohawk learners in a safe and accessible space so they can learn about their community from their peers.

[English]

Across the country, in 108 Mile Ranch, British Columbia, we announced a \$4-million project. We are funding the construction of a cultural centre in northern Secwépemc territory. Five communities have come together and have been fighting for 17 years to obtain it.

These will be key moments. When the projects are built, people will have safe spaces in which to learn their language and culture, and can expose others to them.

[Translation]

We are currently reviewing other proposals, and there will be additional announcements in due course.

[English]

Clearly, as we are making progress, much more needs to be done to answer all of these calls and fully implement the federal pathway. Quite frankly, nobody in Canada should be satisfied until all indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people are safe.

Meegwetch.

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Madam Chair, I want to thank the minister for his comments today. I know he is sincere.

In September 2016, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls began. In June 2019, the final report was completed. In December 2019, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations at the time promised to table the national action plan by June 2020. After an extra year, the plan was actually tabled. In that plan, there were seven immediate steps for governments and indigenous organizations to focus on in the immediate 12 months. We are now at the 11-month point.

I am asking if the minister can tell us how many and specifically which of these steps have already been completed, how many are in progress and how many have yet to be started.

• (1930)

Hon. Marc Miller: Madam Chair, I want to take a moment to thank the member opposite for his advocacy. I know that his interest, compassion and advocacy are genuine.

It did take time to come out with a federal pathway. This is something that has been informed by survivors who are going

through an awful time that has only been magnified through a world pandemic. When it comes to the steps that have been accomplished, the federal pathway had a three-year plan. In the next month, I plan to update the House specifically on that progress.

Clearly, what communities and survivors are looking for are results. We are investing, but obviously the results are trailing. I think we will be very clear-eyed in the next month on exactly where we are and will give Canadians a clear, transparent picture of where we are doing well, where we are not doing well and where we need to do more quickly.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Chair, my colleague clearly acknowledges the seriousness of the crisis of violence, something that the Prime Minister noted as a genocide against indigenous women and girls and two-spirit people.

In spite of this seriousness, it is three years since the release of the final report of the national inquiry, and although money has been allocated, it is slow to get out the door. What does this look like? It looks like women, girls and two-spirit people going missing and murdered, with a lack of response from the government. This is a life-and-death matter.

I would ask my hon. colleague if there are targets, timelines and specific budgetary allocations in place to ensure that money gets out the door so that we can ensure more resources are provided to save lives.

Hon. Marc Miller: Madam Chair, I want to acknowledge that the riding the member opposite represents, as she knows well, is part of the epicentre of the tragedy. Her advocacy is key in making sure that this tragedy ceases to continue and in fact ends. We all know, sadly, that it will not end tomorrow. However, investments that we have made, particularly in her riding for the Ka Ni Kanichihk, for example, very recently, thanks to the member opposite's advocacy, will be key in continuing to accompany survivors and people who are suffering violence.

What we have seen in the last two years is an escalation of that violence, due in part to the pandemic. It is something we have to be very clear-eyed about and acknowledge. The work that has been done over the last six years by this government, whether it is the passage of UNDRIP, the passage of the Indigenous Languages Act or the passage of the child and family services inherent rights in Bill C-92, is part of this immense puzzle that, without being resolved, is continuing the tragedy.

There are steps and goals over the next three years that we will have to be very bloody-minded in achieving. Clearly we will need to accelerate the path on this, and that is something I have undertaken to do.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for his speech. It is clear that this issue is very important to him.

I heard him bring up COVID-19 twice in response to my colleagues. I would like to know what has been done. We know that crises have serious repercussions in a lot of areas, most notably in cases of violence against women.

I would like to know what the government did when it found out that this was already impacting women—

The Deputy Chair: The minister has time for a brief response.

Hon. Marc Miller: Madam Chair, that is an excellent question. It will be hard to keep my comments on this matter brief. However, we know that violence increased when communities entered lockdown. This phenomenon was observed in communities and in major centres.

We will obviously build on the investments we have made in housing. Take, for example, the key investment we made in Pauktu-uit. We invested tens of millions of dollars to help build five women's shelters over the next five years.

That is just one example of the pressing needs we must continue to address. Furthermore, we recognize that there are significant needs in terms of mental health and staffing, so our investments will only increase in the coming years.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I want to thank the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations for sharing his time with me. I am dismayed that I have to stand today and that we still need to debate sustained funding and commitments after so much work has already been completed to ensure that all Canadians understand the injustice experienced by Inuit, first nations and Métis families.

On June 3, it will be three years since the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA published "Reclaiming Power and Place". The inquiry made 231 calls for justice. The report concluded that the acts of violence against indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse people in Canada constitute genocide. The calls for justice stated:

Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people in Canada have been the targets of violence for far too long. This truth is undeniable. The fact that this National Inquiry is happening now doesn't mean that Indigenous Peoples waited this long to speak up; it means it took this long for Canada to listen.

In the 2022 budget, there were no new funds to stop the genocide. The events leading up to this debate show that Canada still does not know how to listen. With great leadership by the member for Winnipeg Centre and the New Democrats, we have advocated for solidarity and support for victims and their families. Not including new funds for MMIWG must only be allowed to stop when all indigenous families have found justice.

We have to be inspired by the stories and testimony of the courageous people who started this important work. Included in the engagement during the inquiry were over 2,380 people, 468 family members and survivors of violence, 15 community gatherings with almost 750 people sharing statements in gatherings, and 84 expert witnesses. We must not shut down the momentum that was started.

I asked a question on April 8 during a debate: Why are no new funds committed in budget 2022? The response was to indicate how much was promised in the past.

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I now turn to an Inuk woman who went missing. Mary Papatsie was the youngest of eight siblings raised in Pangnirtung, Nunavut. She was a hockey and volleyball coach who loved to fish. Mary later moved to Ottawa's Hintonburg neighbourhood but spent most of her time in the Vanier neighbourhood.

Mary Papatsie was 39 years old and a mother of 10 when she was last seen on the afternoon of April 27, 2017. She was last seen east of Ottawa's downtown centre in the area of Montreal Road and Marier Avenue. Mary is missed. Mary is still missing. When Mary first disappeared, there was very little support to make sure there was a proper search for her. I want to thank Billie Jo for sharing her story.

I will complete my statement by amplifying the work of YWCA Agvik Nunavut, which provides a women's shelter, a transition house and other programs. Agvik has organized a red dress march in Iqaluit for tomorrow, starting at 2:00 p.m., starting from the Elders Qammaq and going to the Nunavut Court of Justice.

• (1935)

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Chair, first we need to acknowledge that no single budgetary cycle can address this tragedy adequately. There will have to be sustained investments. We also have to acknowledge that in every budget, survivors and families should recognize the investments as responding specifically to this tragedy. If there is a criticism to be levelled on the budget, it is that while there are investments from MMIWG across the government, the language does not fit the investments.

I read a statistic that should have been top of mind, and it should be a good reminder to all Canadians. In Nunavut, for the period of 2001-14, the rate of murdered women was 12.4 women per population of 100,000. In the non-indigenous population it is 0.71, so it is roughly 20 times worse.

We know that housing is a real challenge. It has been for some time for many reasons. The current budget does have \$4 billion plus \$2 billion for housing specifically to deal with the indigenous housing crisis.

Perhaps the member opposite could speak to the crisis in her community, as it has a direct impact on women in Nunavut.

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• (1940)

Ms. Lori Idlout: *Uqaqtittiji*, it was, disappointingly, provided with commitments that are never sufficient. First nations, Métis and Inuit communities do experience, as the minister mentioned, atrocities when it comes to violence. Inuit women specifically continue to experience higher levels of violence in intimate partner relations. I was told a story of a family that left Nunavut. The woman is being physically abused by her life partner, whom she refuses to leave because he is the father of her children. There is no justice for her.

I really am sincerely dismayed that we are having this debate today. The funding announced is not enough. The genocide is continuing, and we must continue to make sure that funding is sustainable and that new funding is announced.

I am hopeful that changes can be made and that the great work of the member for Winnipeg Centre is recognized. We must continue to do more for our first nations, Métis and Inuit women and girls and gender-diverse people.

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Chair, I want to thank my colleague from Nunavut for the work we do together on the INAN committee.

The Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in B.C., the Ontario Native Women's Association and Quebec Native Women are groups that asked to be included in the process in developing the national action plan but were excluded.

Does the member believe that the exclusion of the voices of the grassroots in the development of the national action plan will impact the long-term success of that action plan?

Ms. Lori Idlout: *Uqaqtittiji*, I believe the human rights of first nations, Métis and Inuit people continue to be ignored too much. We must do what we can to make sure that the human rights of first nations, Métis and Inuit's are as equally recognized as those the rest of Canadians enjoy. I agree we need to make sure that funding is not cut and that communities out west are also recognized for the funding they need.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for her heartfelt speech and her advocacy.

In Vancouver East, we have a situation where family members consistently have to search for their loved ones. They are not funded by government at any point in time. It is so dismaying to hear that in her community this is also happening.

Does the member think the government, as a first step coming out of today's take-note debate, should fund families to do the search so they are not left alone when their loved ones are murdered in our communities?

Ms. Lori Idlout: *Uqaqtittiji*, I absolutely agree that this funding must be provided. All too often, first nations, Métis and Inuit families have been oppressed for generations and it is very hard for first nations, Métis or Inuit to advocate for themselves. Those resources need to be provided so that first nations, Métis and Inuit can be the self-determining, self-reliant people we always were. We must return to that mindset as first nations, Métis and Inuit communities.

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time with the member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

I rise tonight to take part in this debate with a heavy heart. Unfortunately, the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls is too prevalent in my northern Saskatchewan riding, and one does not have to look very far to find heartbreaking stories.

Just last September, during the election campaign, the communities of Meadow Lake and the neighbouring Flying Dust First Nation were rattled to the core when a local schoolteacher was shot and killed by her estranged husband. Charlene was 34 years old and the mother of two children.

It is a tragedy when this happens, period, but for indigenous people across the country, it happens at alarming rates, and we all need to be part of changing that. The fact is that indigenous people are overrepresented as victims of violent crime. More specifically, they are over twice as likely as non-indigenous people to experience spousal violence. When looking at the most severe form of intimate partner violence, homicide, a similar pattern emerges. While about 5% of the population is indigenous, one-quarter of intimate partner homicide victims between 2014 and 2019 were indigenous.

I share the story of Charlene because I believe it is imperative that we, as legislators, remember that these are not just statistics but real people with families who are impacted.

I want to focus, in what little time I have, on several positive initiatives that I believe are raising awareness and respectfully remembering missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

Tomorrow, we will mark Red Dress Day across Canada. It was Métis artist Jaime Black who helped inspire the red dress movement. Her REDress art installation evolved into the annual Red Dress Day and sparked a grassroots movement across North America. Every year, people hang red dresses in private and public spaces to remember and to stand in solidarity with family members and loved ones.

Walking With Our Sisters is another community-based art installation that honours missing and murdered indigenous women and children. Beginning in 2012, people were asked to design and create moccasin tops for their missing and murdered loved ones. Men, women and children from all backgrounds and all parts of Canada sent in 1,600 of these vamps, more than doubling the initial goal of 600. In 2019, this art installation travelled to more than 25 locations across North America.

Another initiative is the faceless doll project. Created in 2012 by the Native Women's Association of Canada, the faceless doll project encourages people to make dolls to represent missing and murdered women and those affected by violence. As I shared earlier, often we can look at the enormity of the problem here in Canada and forget that behind each number and each statistic is a life, and this project reminds us of just that.

Next week, on May 12, Canadians from coast to coast will mark Moose Hide Campaign Day. The Moose Hide Campaign is an indigenous-led grassroots movement that encourages men and boys to stand up against violence toward women and children. With that goal, their challenge to men and boys across Canada is to stand with women and children and speak out against violence toward them; support each other as men and hold each other accountable; teach boys the true meaning of love and respect and how to be healthy role models; heal ourselves as men and support our brothers on their healing journey.

I would like to end by referencing a blog post written by Heather Exner-Pirot and Angela Pratt. Exner-Pirot is a senior consultant with Morris Interactive, and Pratt is the director of economic and community development at the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations in Saskatchewan. The main theme is providing a better future for indigenous women, which I believe is a very important aspect that needs to be addressed in tonight's debate.

They discuss the link between income and safety and quote a study outlining how the rates of domestic violence are impacted by women's income. They write, "Besides exposing Indigenous women to violence, the lack of a decent, stable income and the resulting poverty has many other negative impacts." Specifically referencing Saskatchewan and accessing good-paying jobs, they continue, "Closing the wage gap for Indigenous women means making sure they can access the best-paying jobs in the province. And for Saskatchewan, that means the natural resources sector". They end the post with a challenge: "Creating a better future for Indigenous women in Saskatchewan, and for the province as a whole, means removing the many barriers that have prevented Indigenous women from financial independence."

Indigenous women and girls have been the target of violence for far too long. Canada, as a country, cannot fulfill its full potential until this crisis is solved.

• (1945)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Chair, when we dive into the calls for justice, they are clear and they are critical for the remaking of this country. I wonder if the hon. member would agree that when we look at the history of racism, colonialism, oppression and violence, one key recommendation of this report is fundamental: a guaranteed livable income for all, to end poverty in this country, thus ending marginalization.

• (1950)

Mr. Gary Vidal: Mr. Chair, actually, I disagree with the hon. member on that discussion about a guaranteed basic income. I have spent my four years in this world talking about opportunity for all. What I mean by that in northern Saskatchewan is creating the opportunity for people to participate in a prosperous economy.

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I am so proud of the fact that in the last few months in my riding there have been projects in the forestry industry and some projects in mining that are going to create 3,000 jobs in northern Saskatchewan. I firmly believe in the value of having a good job and a stable income. The self-worth that comes with that is invaluable in the context of solving many of the social issues that we have in a riding like mine in northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Chair, I could not idly sit by when I heard the previous speaker suggest that it is only through their employment that people find self-worth.

I will give the hon. member the opportunity, given the context of the debate that is before us today, to rise in this House and suggest ways in which he would be willing to support the basic dignity around housing, income supports and health care that go beyond settler-colonial resource extraction, which, quite frankly, is often at the heart of this continued perpetuation of genocide against indigenous women and girls.

The Chair: Before we move on, I want to remind the member that a tie might have been necessary there.

The hon. member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River.

Mr. Gary Vidal: Mr. Chair, I may fundamentally disagree with the member on some issues, but if he is interested, I have some information that was provided to me recently from someone I am going to call "Estella".

Estella is an indigenous woman who grew up in northern Alberta, a first nations woman who ran away from an abusive home many times. She felt compelled to write this op-ed, she says in this document. She says, "Today I am a heavy equipment operator at an oil sands mine in northern Alberta. I make a good wage, more than twice what I made in the city". I am going to leap ahead to where she talks about the opportunity to have income and have a good job. She says, "To get training, to get a good paying job, and to support their family and feel proud about it. The resource sector provides that opportunity to tens of thousands of us. I wish it was more. Instead of pitting us against the resource sector, the government should be ensuring that more of those jobs are available to people like me."

I remind members that Estella is a member of Cowessess First Nation and a board member from the Indigenous Resource Network.

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Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Chair, one of the things we talk about here is education. We are doing a lot of work and a lot of discussion here. How could the learning in the public education sector in each province be coordinated so more people might learn about this within the public education sector, which is the responsibility of the provinces?

Mr. Gary Vidal: Mr. Chair, education is absolutely fundamental to the success of many on their journey out of poverty, out of some of the social challenges that we find in a riding like mine in northern Saskatchewan. I would remind the member that my riding has the second-largest indigenous population in the country. I have been working with people in northern Saskatchewan to make sure that they get access to a quality education. To upgrade that quality of education, we must work in conjunction with the federal department that is responsible for education on first nations and with the provincial folks who are responsible for the education off the first nations. We have to have a coordinated effort to educate young people, enhance their opportunity and give them that chance of success.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Chair, I rise today in the House to speak to a matter that evokes strong emotions on all sides, a matter that speaks to the tragedy of racism and discrimination and a matter that requires continued vigilance to overcome. Of course, I speak of the horrors of the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls in this country.

Before I get into my speech, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, for sharing his time with me this evening.

The stats speak for themselves. Indigenous women and girls in Canada are disproportionately affected by all forms of violence. Although indigenous women make up just 4% of Canada's female population, 16% of all women murdered in Canada between 1980 and 2012 were indigenous. The 2019 general social survey on victimization, along with Stats Canada, has indicated that indigenous women were more likely to experience intimate partner violence than non-indigenous women.

Furthermore, during our study on sex trafficking of indigenous people last June, experts told us that 52% of human trafficking victims are indigenous and that the average age of exploitation of an indigenous girl is, shockingly, just 12 years.

Although the indigenous population up to the age of 14 makes up 7.7% of all Canadian children, they represent 52.2% of the children in care. We also know that studies have highlighted that having a child in the welfare system is the most common feature among women and girls who enter prostitution.

Most alarmingly, the statistics may be even more tragic, as experts told the committee that one of the biggest problems is how difficult it is to accurately track how many victims there are of human trafficking and sex trafficking, as well as to accurately track the correct number of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. Without real effort from the government to ensure that a robust framework is in place, with adequate resources that are made available for indigenous data collection, in consultation with in-

digenous experts and organizations, the true story of their reality may never be truly known.

The final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls made 231 calls for justice in 2019. It took two years of waiting for the government's action plan on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, a plan that many involved called toxic, flawed and unsafe. The government has failed to address one of the core elements in the inquiry: that any plan has an obligation to the victims, their families and all indigenous women and girls, to ensure their voices are reflected so that indigenous women today and future generations of women and girls can live their lives free of violence.

Unfortunately, the government's most recent budget implementation act also fails in this regard. With respect to investments in the budget to address the safety of indigenous women and girls, the Native Women's Association of Canada described its concerns: "We're very concerned that on the surface of this reading of the budget announcement, we don't see where the investment is going to be and we have a very serious concern about that."

The track record of the government has become abundantly clear. Instead of tackling the systemic inequalities, violence and unsafe conditions for indigenous women and girls in this country, it simply throws money and hopes those issues go away. This will do nothing to empower indigenous women and girls. Rather, it will simply grow bureaucracies here in Ottawa. To be fair, past governments must share the blame in continuing this broken "Ottawa knows best" system, a system that has a profoundly lasting and damaging impact on indigenous culture, heritage and language. For true reconciliation to begin, this paternalistic approach to indigenous people and issues must end.

We must not sideline off-reserve and non-status communities either. Women and girls tend to gravitate to urban centres to escape violence, and that creates greater problems, because they cannot access employment, adequate housing or even shelter, and they become victims of a cycle that has been perpetuated by a lack of resources and inadequate supports for them.

In closing, indigenous women and girls need a safe, culturally supportive environment in which they are free from violence, sexual trafficking and exploitation. If we are honest about reconciliation, the current and succeeding governments have an obligation to honour indigenous perspectives when addressing underlying factors that create the unsafe conditions for women and girls, such as precarious housing, poor living conditions, high rates of unemployment, unstable employment, low working wages and the lack of access to social and economic resources.

I look forward to the questions ahead.

• (2000)

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Chair, my colleague touched on a subject that is very important to me. In fact, at yesterday's general meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, I was re-elected vice-chair.

We have studied this issue extensively. My colleague mentioned that 54% of human trafficking victims are indigenous women. That is huge. He also said that before concrete solutions to help these women can be proposed, a lot more data and studies are needed.

During the pandemic, some of these numbers were lost. The pandemic really complicated the research being done to get a more accurate picture of human trafficking and its impact on indigenous women. I would ask my colleague to comment on that.

[English]

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Chair, I thank my friend for Shefford for that question. She is absolutely right. Even in committee, the experts said that the numbers were not as accurate as they probably could be, because the correct information was not there and the data was not there.

We heard a number of recommendations from committee, all the way from changing how indigenous police services are able to operate, act and still have the same power as off-reserve police services, to how they can use their officers who know the community, know the people in the community and use traditional methods to deal with certain situations. That was one in a very long series of recommendations that I hope the government takes into account. I hope it actually acts on some of them, because I think we can have real change and help a lot of people.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqagtittiji*, I would like to thank the member for his intervention. That was great. I am glad that he outlined some of the factors that lead to the incidents that we see all too often. I wanted to ask the member what he thinks about all those indicators impacting indigenous people's and indigenous women's perspectives on what they need to rely on, including the perceived need for resource industries and gaining employment in those kinds of sectors, because those sectors are the places where most of the violence is being caused.

Could the member share what his thoughts are on that?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the question from my friend for Nunavut. She is a great advocate for her territory in committee. I enjoy working with her. In fact, I have learned a lot from her and respect everything she has to say. I truly enjoy my time with her. I see the member for Winnipeg Centre right in front of her, who also spent time on committee. I learned a lot from her as well.

In terms of the resource part, we heard that as the economy recovers from COVID, indigenous people have a very large, young population. I think if we want to actually reach full potential, we need to have strategies so they at least feel included. I think they would, and I think that is a shortfall of governments past. It has been a big failure all the way through.

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On resources, I was at a conference not too long ago in Vancouver. A lot of the conversation was on an estimated \$2-trillion worth of minerals in first nations communities, and they think that number is low. That could provide an economic boost to a number of communities, especially in the north and remote areas. That is just one part.

There is a not-for-profit in my riding that does coding for students in Nunavut. There is a whole series of opportunities. If we stop the top-down approach and actually listen to people on the ground, we can make some changes here instead of the Ottawa-knows-best approach.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Chair, I noted the member's conversation about what police services should do. It has not come up yet in the take-note debate. I want to ask about the risk to indigenous women and girls who are murdered by police.

Does he have any comment on the problem of wellness checks and how we might be able to remedy that problem?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Chair, I would be open to hearing anything that helps solve this problem and makes it safer for indigenous women and girls anywhere. As we did here in committee, there are a number of changes that can be made so that indigenous police services have a level playing field with non-indigenous police services. That might help people feel safe and change that relationship a bit. I would support that, and any other measures that might help the situation.

• (2005)

The Chair: I want to remind members that I want to keep this discussion as organic as I possibly can without having to cut folks off. The quicker the answers are, the quicker the questions will be, and we can get more people participating in the debate.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Manicouagan.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Chair, I rise today as a parliamentarian, but also as a woman and as a mother. This is an issue that has impacted my life, so what I have to say is quite personal.

Let me begin by saying that I went into politics because I am a woman, but I asked myself one question during my second pregnancy when I found out the baby was a girl. I remember thinking to myself that it was going to be hard to have a girl in this world. I actually thought having a second son would be easier.

I say this as a woman, a white woman. If I try to picture what that would be like for an indigenous woman, I cannot even imagine what I might have thought at the time. Indeed, this world we live in is, on the whole, still hard.

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Just look at the take-note debate we are having this evening. In French, it is called “exploratoire”, but to me that is exactly the wrong thing to call it. We do not need to explore the topic, to take note of it as though it were something new. It is not new.

These reflections began about 15 years ago. My daughter is now 14. Roughly 10 years later, I found myself working as coordinator of the Regroupement des femmes de la Côte-Nord, a group that focuses on advocacy and rights organizations. I also found myself working in shelters and addressing gender equality issues and, a little naively, I organized a march with many people, including indigenous women, of course. I would like to salute my friend Béatrice Picard, from Pessamit, as well as Michèle Audette, whom I invited to the march just before she was appointed commissioner. We marched through the streets with other women, and to me at that point, it was all very theoretical.

However, women came up to me on those streets and shared their stories with me, stories that often began with something unthinkable and often had no ending, because, as some of my colleagues have mentioned, some of these people are still missing. We do not know what happened to them, and they may never be found. It was a very symbolic march for me, because I was also there with my daughter. I must say that this is very important for the people of our region, but also for the entire population, both in Quebec and in Canada.

Today we are being told that this is a take-note debate and that we are looking at what is happening in committee. I must admit that makes me think of the song “Fatigué”, or tired, by Renaud. There are some topics like this one that we are tired of, not because the topic is unimportant, but because we are still talking about it today. We have to keep talking in the House and bringing up statistics. I do not think we need any more statistics or quotes or commissions to realize that it is time to do something about this.

I have a really hard time with this. Earlier one of my colleagues said that we ask questions in the House when we know we will not get a valid response. We are truly engaging in a soliloquy, a dialogue with ourselves, a monologue in the House.

I know someone who is here this evening in our gallery who has worked hard for the rights of indigenous peoples. He has done a lot, and I would like to acknowledge him. We are talking about legislation, but not implementation. We need to reach the implementation phase.

We often talk about systemic discrimination. In fact, the Indian Act is a prime example. It harms women. We talked about how residential schools are a form of systemic discrimination, institutional discrimination, but they still stemmed from a desire for cultural genocide.

Thinking back to the women I marched with who knew people who had disappeared, thinking back to the impact of the residential schools and the Indian Act, I can say that there are multiple factors at play, not just one.

I agree with the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, who is full of good intentions. However, when I asked earlier what had been done for women experiencing violence during the COVID-19 crisis, given that we knew violence was on the rise, and why more

funding had not been made available when the government had been able to find money for so many other areas, I was told that cultural centres would be built in a few years.

• (2010)

It is interesting. The government cannot do one thing and not do other things; it is complex. We also need cultural centres. When we talk about cultural genocide, we are talking about language and culture. When I hear that in the House, I think we are still overlooking so much.

I mentioned our work in committee, where exactly the same thing goes on, when we bring up all the government's spending, budgets and supplementary budgets. I heard it again earlier, when it was said that \$60 million has been allocated to British Columbia, and someone was told that \$2 million had been allocated to her riding and that it would be so great. I would like to stay above the fray and say that perhaps what we need is drastic action. That is what the people here in the House tonight are expecting. Quebeckers, and Canadians as well, are probably expecting drastic action.

We were talking about housing recently in committee. We have known for ages that this is one of the key difficulties that indigenous communities are facing. Housing is connected to many things. In any case, it is a basic need.

We keep being told that targets will be met, that it is very difficult to build in the north, and thinking that living there and having a house means that it must be possible to build it. In short, I find that there is a lot of bad faith.

I know that we are constrained by our budgets. However, for me, the government is talking a good game and making it look like it is taking action by sprinkling money around, acknowledging that people have been waiting for a plan for three years, and saying that it will be presented soon. Tonight's take-note debate applies a bit of pressure. I do not think that the government can be taken seriously.

Personally, even if I am not the right person to ask the question, if I told first nations people in my riding, who make up about 15% of the population, to watch tonight's debate, to listen to everything going on in committee and to consider everything we do here concerning indigenous affairs, I believe that they would not be satisfied. I do not think they would be satisfied with the answer I was given earlier.

People are saying that we should not play politics in the House. It is a little hard not to play politics. That is what I heard, but I do not think they would be satisfied. No, they want houses. They want security. They want the same thing everyone does.

What we hear in the House is the same old rhetoric. People are saying that they are doing their best, but they are not doing their best. I call on all members of the House, especially the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and the government, to show that they truly do want reconciliation.

If we want to reconcile with someone, we cannot unilaterally impose terms. That is not how reconciliation works. We must listen to what the other person wants and accommodate their requests. Of course it is hard. Money certainly plays a big part, but I do not think that it is the only factor. I think there are measures that can be taken.

I have been in the House for seven years now, and I certainly would not say or imply that I am naive, because I am not. We come to the House because we want to serve our constituents. We are humble, but we very much want to serve them. I feel as though it is one disappointment after another. I find myself thinking, “my God, they are making things up as they go along”. I see a lot of this. When the government does not have a plan, it makes things up. I am disappointed by what I see.

If there is one thing the government can do tonight and in the weeks and years to come, maybe it can provide some reassurance about that. What I heard tonight from the minister himself is not satisfactory. My daughter is very young right now and tells me she absolutely does not want children, but I really hope we will all have the courage to do the work to ensure that, when she is a woman a few years from now, she will not ask herself the same question that indigenous women ask themselves, about whether they even want daughters because our girls are always in danger and come into this world without benefiting from the same conditions, the same actual rights. Yes, we do have theoretical rights, but we also have the actual reality of our existence to contend with.

I would like every indigenous woman to come into this world knowing they have the same rights and need not fear being assaulted or killed.

• (2015)

I would like the government to take concrete action. I expected nothing less from the minister than bold action, but that is not what we saw this evening.

[English]

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Chair, my colleague, like myself, represents many indigenous women, who have sought and persevered through great challenges and sacrifices in their lives. They have grieved the loss of so many among them. I also know she understands that reconciliation does not come easy.

It is a very difficult conversation, and it requires a tremendous commitment of government, one that our government, for the first time in history, has stepped up to do. The member talks about next steps and what needs to happen. I would ask her to tell the House today, if there were one thing she could do on this path to help missing and murdered indigenous women and their families who are suffering, what would that one thing be? What would she pose to the government and to the House of Commons this evening that needs to happen?

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Chair, I replied earlier by saying that all the reports and recommendations have been written. They are there, and I am not about to reinvent the wheel. If I did, as a white

woman, I would find myself pointing out which of the recommendations are the best.

As a parliamentarian, however, I would really like to see a plan for these recommendations. The government has said that it will fix the issue of indigenous housing by 2030. We can see pretty clearly in the government's own numbers that it is not going to work, and it is not that hard to calculate. It is a simple rule of three. We are not going to get there by 2030. This is the kind of thing we see in the House of Commons.

I want to see a concrete and realistic plan. What I want to hear is that there is a real desire for reconciliation, that steps must be taken and that the government is ready to take them and ready to make proposals. Again, consultation is needed, because reconciliation is not a unilateral process. The plan must therefore include first nations.

It might seem like I am asking for something huge, but it is really just a plan, and I think that anyone who wants to achieve anything needs a plan.

[English]

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Chair, I listened intently to my colleague from the Bloc. We work together on the INAN committee, and I appreciate her advocacy and the work she does there.

Since 2015, Canadians have seen from the government a lot of announcements, a lot of media headlines and a lot of promises related to solving the long-standing issues facing indigenous people. The problem is always in the follow-through. My colleague spoke about the frustration and some of the concerns with that.

In this case, tonight we are talking about the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls public inquiry, which began in 2016. It issued a final report in 2019. There was then a year delay in tabling the action plan.

Would my hon. colleague comment on how detrimental these delays are, how frustrating some of these unfulfilled promises are, and how they impact the trust relationship that is necessary with indigenous people, a relationship that so desperately needs more trust?

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Chair, I have a lot to say about that.

First, the government always has a good reason for the delays. I am being sarcastic, of course. The 2021 election was mentioned. I am pretty sure I was not the one who decided to call the election; the government did, so it only has itself to blame.

Then it talked to us about COVID-19. Obviously it cannot do two things at once. It shuts down Parliament and then it says there are delays. It is not even funny.

I think this is completely appalling and irresponsible of the government. I have to say that it has the opportunity once again to do something, but it keeps offering nothing but red herrings. I hope it will listen to us.

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I would also like to go a bit beyond the question. I am talking about my seven years here, but it seems like all we have done in those seven years—I believe my colleague talked about this—is nothing more than communications. We can associate the word “reconciliation” with the Liberals, but I currently have no idea what has been done for reconciliation. We are truly dealing with a PR firm in which the government gets the top role. To me it is all just smoke and mirrors.

Sadly, that is what I have to say this evening. I would like to see something tangible and not just a PR firm possibly focused on vote-buying.

● (2020)

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Chair, the member noted the lack of housing. In fact, there is a lack of support from the government for a dedicated “for indigenous, by indigenous” housing strategy. Further to that point, there is also a lack of specific allocation to indigenous women's and girls' housing. I wonder if the member can comment on that and on how the government's inaction is enabling the continuation of the genocide of indigenous women and girls.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Chair, I am going to talk a little about my experience with housing, not my personal experience, but what I experienced while helping women. Housing really is about safety and security.

I come from a vast riding that covers 350,000 square kilometres. Some people live 1,000 kilometres away from one another, and there are not always roads. Due to the lack of housing, sometimes a woman will “agree” to stay with a violent partner. It is terrible to use that term, because she does not really agree, she just has no other choice. That is just one example.

Imagine being trapped in a very hostile environment and having nowhere else to go. Often these northern communities are very isolated. A woman may choose to stay with her violent partner because she does not have the financial means to leave. She may fear becoming culturally assimilated, because she will have to leave behind her children and all that is familiar.

This woman could be experiencing physical and psychological abuse, but this could also happen outside that home. Therefore, this woman is given a choice but really has no choice. That is why housing is vital for indigenous women and girls.

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for that impactful speech.

I am aware of what is happening because indigenous women in my riding, Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, are experiencing the same thing. Women are still disappearing in Val-d'Or. Sometimes they are found, sometimes not. How can this still be going on? I cannot understand it.

We know the government is not doing anything. It is not walking the talk, as they say, nor is it listening to what indigenous women and communities want. I would like my colleague to tell me what

she thinks of this government's response to everything that happened with the national inquiry into indigenous women and girls.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Chair, my thoughts about the inquiry are the same as my thoughts about the royal commission on another issue in 1996. They consult and consult and consult without ever reinventing the wheel. There is a huge need for consultation here, but it results in precious little action. That is certainly what I am seeing yet again. I may not seem very upset, but I am kind of tired of hearing what amounts to lip service.

I just want to give my colleague an example. Something happened two days ago in my riding. Two bodies were found after the snow melted. Without really thinking about it, my immediate reflex was to wonder whether they were women, children or girls. It is unbelievable, but that was my first thought. It shows how traumatized people are, including me. Obviously, this hit home. This violence is embedded in our collective imagination. We cannot shake it, and it is frightening.

It was two men this time, and I would like to tell the community of Nutashkuan and the people of Natashquan that I stand with them. They know that, but I wanted to say it again.

Talking about building cultural centres does not at all reflect the vision and purpose of tonight's take-note debate.

● (2025)

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Chair, today's take-note debate, a day before the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People, is a crucial one. It is a debate about why, once again, families of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls and survivors of violence have fallen by the wayside, just like in budget 2022, where the amount allocated to implement the 231 calls for justice to address this ongoing genocide is zero.

This is a crisis of violence. Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit peoples are 12 times more likely to go missing or be murdered and are five times more likely to experience violence than any other population in Canada. In fact, 56% of indigenous women have experienced physical assault, which is more than half of all indigenous women, and 46% have experienced sexual assault. These stats are staggering, but sadly, they are not surprising to indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people, who continue to endure this violence.

Violence and mistreatment does not just affect indigenous women. It even impacts a disproportionate number of young indigenous girls. Forty-two per cent of indigenous women report having experienced physical and sexual abuse during their childhood. This kind of exposure to violence and trauma has lasting impacts and consequences, yet the budgetary allocation from this government to deal with this crisis is zero.

This is not an oversight; this is a choice. This is a statement about the normalization of violence against indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people. While bureaucratic discussions persist, women, girls and two-spirit individuals go missing or are murdered, or have to endure out-of-control levels of violence.

Our lives are there for the taking, as though our lives or the loss of our lives is of no consequence. We are objectified, stigmatized and minimized. How much has this government invested in budget 2022 to deal with this crisis? It has invested zero. This is a choice. It is a statement about how we have been devalued since the time of colonization.

I am not the only one with this view. Marion Buller, the former chief commissioner, said, “I just find it appalling that the federal government, through the prime minister, had admitted to the situation at least amounting to genocide and yet they’re allowing it to continue without any sort of responsibility”. She also stated, “There is no looking forward. If there is an implementation plan, I don’t know about it and they’re keeping it quiet. But, they have quite literally fallen flat on their face in terms of their responses.”

The Native Women's Association of Canada, which fights for indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people, gave the federal government a failing grade for not delivering on a national action plan to respond to the national inquiry. The Native Women's Association of Canada criticized budget 2022, stating, “The national inquiry report was handed down with 231 calls for justice and we’re very concerned that on the surface of this reading of budget announcements, we don’t see where the investment is going to be and we have a very serious concern about that.”

Again, this is a choice. It is a political choice. It is a human rights issue that continues to be out of control because of government inaction. It is a result of policy choices deeply rooted in the Indian Act and violent colonization that has left us fighting for our right to live free of violence, insecurity and indignity. By refusing to act, the government is telling indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people that we have zero value. This is something my mom learned as an orphan living in a Catholic convent at five years old.

● (2030)

My mother was one of the most kind, gentle and loving persons I have ever known. She had this way of making everyone she met feel like they were special, and everybody thought that they were my mother's special one. I like to believe that I was her special one. Her gentleness was truly remarkable, considering the violence that she had to endure throughout her younger years of life, including being passed through 15 different child-welfare placements.

Yes, it was 15 times before she aged out of care without a place to go at the age of 18. It was a common existence for young people to age out of care and end up on the streets, which are a breeding

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ground for murdered and missing indigenous women and girls and two-spirit people. There were not too many spirits that she met along her journey who showed her any level of kindness, aside from a woman named Maude who noted my mother's gift for music and taught her how to play the piano, and a local librarian who shared my mother's love of reading and learning and spent hours with my mother mentoring her and showing her care.

I remember my mom sharing a memory about her time in the Catholic convent where they housed orphans. She did not share very much about her childhood, but for whatever reason, she shared this memory about chokecherries. My mother loved chokecherries. One of her favourite feast foods in the world was wojapi: a traditional Lakota dish made with chokecherries.

The convent where she stayed had chokecherries all around its grounds and the children were often tasked with picking the berries from the chokecherry bushes, with very strict instructions not to eat any of their pickings. The chokecherries were not for them, but in true five-year-old style, my mother would pick the berries and snack on a few and then violently wipe off her stained teeth with her white bib on her uniform. Nobody wanted to be caught by the nuns not following the rules. After a day of picking and indulging, her delightful innocence was put quickly to a halt after an interrogation by one of the nuns: “Marjorie, you were eating chokecherries.” My mother tried to lie about her indulgence, something that gave her great joy, until she looked down at her bib, covered in purple chokecherry juice, and knew she was caught red-handed. It was a tragic ending to a moment of joy for a five-year-old.

When she shared this memory with me, she had a sad chuckle when describing her moment of defiance to just have the brief moment of joy that she relished in that moment. It was something that the nuns ended up abusing her for. I cannot even imagine the punishment she had to endure as a result of her decision to participate in this normal and youthful act of joy over chokecherries. At five years old, she learned that abuse, violence and mistreatment were part of her existence as an indigenous girl. This made her feel like a zero: worthless. She even described trying to scrub off her brown skin with Comet as a young girl.

The government's lack of investment reminds indigenous girls that the government is still treating them like they are worth zero. As my mother grew older as a kid in the system, she would ask all the girls running away to escape the system about the futility of their actions because “nobody cares anyway.” It breaks my heart that the government is still giving indigenous women and girls that message: zero.

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My mother was not a zero. She will always be my hero. Neither are we: We are not zeros. We are heroes, thriving despite all the obstacles in front of us. I wept when I saw that the government decided we were worth zero in the budget. I am tired of listening to the million excuses and the list of a million complications that seem to justify inaction, as if our safety is of no relevance. This is not okay. Stop hoarding money from the last budget with a million excuses about why it cannot be done while another girl, woman or two-spirit person goes missing, is murdered or has to endure violence. Where is the action plan?

Like my beautiful mom who endured so much, we are valuable, precious, loved and resilient. We are still here and we have a right to joy. The Prime Minister acknowledged this as a genocide. Now is the time to stop making excuses and give us the justice we deserve. It is time to end this crisis of violence and genocide now.

• (2035)

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I want to thank the member opposite for the words that she has shared tonight and for her continued advocacy, both on the floor of the House of Commons and outside. I want her to know that we are continuing to accelerate the work that we are doing based, in part, on her advocacy and the work we need to do as a country and as a government.

I want to talk about the issue of forced sterilization in this country, because while we are justly outraged at the apparent reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, we still need to acknowledge that in this country forced sterilization is taking place. Perhaps the member opposite could speak to that and the continued systemic racism in the health care system.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Chair, I think that question goes into the whole notion of eugenics and how we are not worthy of life in terms of the forced sterilization of women and girls. It is the right to live, the right to have choice over our bodies and the right to have control and choice over what happens with our children. This is still happening today. In 2019, there were cases of forced, coerced sterilization still being inflicted violently on indigenous women, without choice. There have been calls on the federal government to collect data to do its part in ending this genocide: this vile practice of forced sterilization. It is 2022, and not only are we still begging and advocating to have the resources we need to live, but we are even having to advocate over our own bodies, so we can choose whether we want to bring life into the world.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Chair, I will be honest: this debate can be extremely intimidating, especially as I am a girl from Sparta, Ontario. I have not been part of the communities where people are seeing this violence. However, I can thank my friend, the member for Winnipeg Centre, for teaching me and for sharing the story about her mom, because those are things that, each and every day, make me say I can do a lot better. I thank her very much for that.

I think, as we are looking at this, we need to be honest. We know there is so much intersectionality on what we are looking at. What would this member like to share with all members of Parliament, including me? What is the one piece of information I can take home today that will mean I can start making that change right now?

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Chair, I have a really wonderful time working with the hon. member on the status of women committee, particularly right now as we are currently having a study on the relationship between resource development and increased levels of violence against indigenous women and girls. I have enjoyed working with her and learning from her, as well.

I think one of the frustrations is that there seems to be a culture of picking and choosing to support human rights when it suits economic and political interests, and brushing them aside when it does not. It is picking and choosing calls to justice that do not threaten the status quo, but then not responding to those that would really result in systemic change.

It goes bigger than relationships. Relationships are not positive without action. If we want to improve relationships in this country and we want to really address the crisis of violence and genocide against indigenous women and girls, that requires resources and sustainable funding. That requires working with families and survivors of violence on the ground. We have been clear. We are just waiting for people to respond, not when it suits their interests and not 10 years later, but now. We are in a genocide now, and that requires an urgent and immediate response.

• (2040)

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague, with whom I serve on the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. I must say that it is an honour to work with her.

She was appointed to the committee in the new Parliament. Since I joined the committee in 2019, practically every study the committee has done shows that indigenous women are disproportionately affected. We did a study on the impacts of COVID-19, and we are currently doing one on the impacts of resource development. We have also explored rural issues and the mental load. Every study the committee conducts shows that indigenous women are more likely to be victims.

Why are we still having take-note debates in 2022? When are we actually going to do something?

Taking a first step is indeed important, but what does my colleague think of all these studies that are piling up?

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Chair, it is such a pleasure working with my hon. colleague on our committee. I think we need to stop pathologizing indigenous women and girls and two-spirit people, and really look at the heart of the matter of where this is happening. We can go back to the Indian Act: It legislated the marginalization, including the economic marginalization, of indigenous peoples, and more violently toward indigenous women. Never mind that we still live in a country where an indigenous woman does not have the same rights as men: under the law, I still do not have the same rights as other women.

We have built a country on the wrongful dispossession of land and ongoing genocide of indigenous peoples. One only has to look at the resource extraction projects and the kind of violence that is perpetrated against girls and indigenous women in the community to see that the ongoing colonial agenda persists.

If we want changes, we need to be honest about how and what this country has been built on, and how we want this country to look going forward. That takes truth, and that takes all of us in the House looking at our privilege and seeing which of us need to give up some privilege to ensure everybody in this country, including indigenous women and girls and two-spirit people, has their human rights upheld.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I want to thank the member for Winnipeg Centre for her very inspiring story and her leadership. I very much appreciated her story about her mom, because that is a direct example of how deep the impacts are of colonialism and what those behaviours continue to do in generations that have had to follow in those traumas.

I want to ask for her expertise and knowledge about how deep the impacts are on the reliance on the resource industry, and how there is a misperception that first nations, Métis and Inuit want to rely on those resource extraction companies because of the gainful employment that they might provide. At the same time, those are the same places that are exercising the genocidal activities resulting in too many first nations, Métis and Inuit women and girls being lost to murder and going missing for years.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Chair, I have so much respect for my colleague and the work she does fighting for human rights, particularly for indigenous peoples.

In terms of resource extraction, I think it goes into the free, prior and informed consent of nations: Free of coercion, prior to development going through, and informed, knowing what the development means. Only then do we have consent. That is rarely achieved in this country.

One only has to look at the unceded Wet'suwet'en territory and an example I used of two unarmed indigenous women having their door ripped down with a chainsaw, an axe and a guard dog. If we are using state police violence and great force against unarmed indigenous women, where are we in this country in terms of really responding to genocide? The very actors within the genocide are supported by government, including actors like the RCMP.

It is not up to me to tell indigenous peoples what to do in their territory. One of the things that does need to happen in this country

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before any development occurs is to obtain true free, prior and informed consent.

• (2045)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time with the member for Labrador. Before I proceed with the substance of my remarks, I want to take a moment to acknowledge and thank the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre for sharing her lived experiences and those of her family. It crystallizes why it is so important that we continue the work of reconciliation, to ensure that the rights of indigenous people are respected and that we have a relationship that is based on dignity, equality and the recognition of the right to choose their own paths. That is why this debate is so important.

Violence against indigenous women, girls and the LGBTQ2+ community is a devastating reality across Canada today. It is one of the most significant public safety issues facing our country, and has taken far too many sisters from indigenous communities across Turtle Island. That is why the entire Public Safety portfolio is engaged in extensive efforts to prevent and end the violence and to protect indigenous women and girls, as well as their rights.

Today, I want to outline a few of those efforts. The calls for justice from the national inquiry point toward the need for urgent reform to policing. That is why we are investing over \$1 billion over the next five years in culturally responsive and sensitive policing and community safety services in indigenous communities.

[Translation]

We are stabilizing and improving the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program by improving the RCMP police services funded through this program.

[English]

In addition to our investments in indigenous policing, we are devoting more than \$80 million over the next five years to indigenous-led crime prevention strategies and community safety services, stopping crime before it starts by supporting initiatives that have already helped nearly 60 indigenous communities to keep themselves safe, and empowering them.

[Translation]

This initiative supports the healing of first nations communities through a facilitated community process that seeks to solve the many problems of security and well-being.

[English]

An area of particular concern that was raised during the national inquiry is the horror of human trafficking and its disproportionate impact on indigenous women and girls.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

In 2019, the Government of Canada launched the national strategy to combat human trafficking. The strategy, led by Public Safety Canada, is based on internationally recognized pillars, namely prevention, protection, prosecution, partnerships and empowerment.

[English]

The national strategy provides over \$22 million in funding to 63 organizations that deliver trauma-informed and culturally relevant supports and services to survivors of human trafficking. Thirty-three of these serve indigenous people and 10 are indigenous-led.

The RCMP has a unique role to play in reconciliation and is committed to improving relationships with indigenous communities, supporting survivors and families, and ensuring investigations are robust, professional and respectful.

[Translation]

In response to the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the RCMP has deployed the following efforts: it developed courses for RCMP employees on trauma-informed approaches as well as on cultural awareness and humility; it updated courses on human trafficking at the Canadian Police College to include elements of first nations awareness and preventing human trafficking; it created a pilot project to recruit Innu police officers in Nunavut; and it enhanced the mobilization of first nations leaders and elders at the national, divisional and local levels.

• (2050)

[English]

The RCMP has also established new partnerships with the Pauktutit Inuit Women of Canada and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, both of which include co-operation to address violence against Inuit women, girls and two-spirited people.

Work to address the national tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and LGBTQ2+ people and to respond to the calls for justice cannot be done overnight, but it is some of the most important work the Government of Canada has on its agenda. That is why I am so honoured to participate in this debate and to continue to shed light on the work that the government has committed to doing with all members of this chamber, indigenous communities and indeed all Canadians in the path to reconciliation.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Chair, I know the hon. minister across the way will be very familiar with this issue.

Having met, albeit in a limited way, with indigenous people, I have heard them talk about the police services they have on some indigenous nations. One of the things they have asked about is the fact that they receive program funding for it, not guaranteed funding. It creates a lot of difficulty to create a safe environment when the police services on indigenous nations do not know from year to year whether they will be funded.

I know the minister is well aware of this, and maybe he could explain where the government is in terms of developing that relationship with indigenous police services that is needed for safe communities.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Chair, my hon. colleague's question allows me to elaborate on the work the government is doing to ensure that we are working closely, collaboratively and respectfully with indigenous communities right across the country, through the first nations and indigenous and Inuit police programming initiative.

We have invested about \$1 billion. This is a historic amount of financial support that will be channelled in partnership with indigenous communities so that they can be empowered to provide public safety for themselves.

In addition to that, there is a commitment from the government to work, again in a very respectful and collaborative manner, with indigenous leadership across the country to co-develop legislation that will recognize that indigenous policing is an essential service.

This is another important step on the path to reconciliation that we are committed to taking, along with indigenous individuals right across the country.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Chair, I believe this is an example of exactly what I was trying to illustrate in the speech I gave earlier.

Once again, I feel like the government is making a commercial about the money it has handed out. When it talks about millions of dollars, hundreds of millions of dollars and billions of dollars, it always sounds impressive.

However, I would also like my hon. colleague to tell me about the results. The government always talks about the investments it has made in this and that community, but it never talks about the results. I believe that what members and people want are results.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for her question.

It is important to start the work of reforming policing in indigenous communities in a spirit of good faith. It is not just words that are important.

I completely agree with my colleague that there must be concrete results. Historic investments and partnerships with all indigenous leaders in Canada will enable us to make more progress on the ground, in communities. We must work in collaboration with indigenous peoples.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Chair, the public safety minister will recall that one year after the tabling of the calls to justice, Chantel Moore was shot during a wellness check in Edmundston, New Brunswick. Right now, we are waiting for the inquest, which begins on May 16, but at the time, the government made commitments to reform policing and to look at policing in general.

A very important report was tabled in June of last year, and in the mandate letter for the minister, the Prime Minister said that he would continue police reforms. However, they have not started on any of the reforms.

One of the reforms that was very important was to ensure that there were indigenous people on oversight boards. There still are not independent investigations by indigenous people when indigenous people have been killed, especially missing and murdered women and girls.

Judith Sayers, president of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council, stated that indigenous peoples must be given an opportunity to be the pen on new policing legislation, rather than being allowed to comment or respond to regulations written by politicians.

When is the minister going to begin reforms? Will indigenous people get to be the pen?

• (2055)

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Chair, I wholeheartedly agree with the comments of my hon. colleague. I assure him that this transformation has already begun and that there is a commitment to ensuring that there is indigenous representation in our police forces. I have explained the work that we are doing in the first nations and Inuit policing programming, but I agree with him that there is more work to be done, not only in terms of oversight but on the ground. That is work I am committed to doing with the commissioner of the RCMP.

The Chair: I just have a reminder before we go back to debate. The quicker we can ask a question, the quicker we can get an answer, so that everybody can participate in tonight's take-note debate.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Northern Affairs.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Chair, first, I want to acknowledge that Canada's Parliament is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people, a very proud people.

I also want to take a moment to recognize all of the indigenous partners who have worked so hard to bring together in their communities the commemoration of Red Dress Day.

We are here this evening to debate a very important issue. It is an integral part of this government's efforts in the shared journey of reconciliation with indigenous people.

Tonight, I have listened to many of my colleagues on both sides of the House as they have spoken. They have spoken with tremendous insight and understanding. They have spoken after listening. They have spoken with action, and I truly appreciate their words. The violence that indigenous women and girls have suffered and the pain that this has caused survivors and their families is an injustice that has ripped at the very fabric of indigenous communities, of communities like mine.

Tonight, I would like to read into the record the names of some of those sisters who have been stolen in Labrador, some of the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls we continue to

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mourn every day, whose families suffer. They suffer silently, they suffer in communities and they suffer while holding close in their hearts those whom they love and now miss: Nellie Broomfield, Dina Semigak Igloliorte, Molly Pardy, Daphne Mesher Brown, Anne Hilda Abraham, Sharon Murphy, Henrietta Millek, Hannah Obed, Pamela Asprey, Elaine Flowers, Dr. Mary Kerohan, Deborah Carreen, Joanna Andersen, Misty Dawn Boudreau, Deirdre Marie Michelin, Marguerite Dyson, Mary Evans-Harlick, Sarah Obed, Kimberly Jararuse, Martina Ford, Bernice Joan Rich, Katie Obed, Loretta Saunders and her unborn baby Saunders, and Regula Schule.

What we do to support missing and murdered indigenous women, to help end the suffering of families, to rise up wherever we can, all indigenous women in Canada, we do in memory of women like those whose names I have read into the record tonight, women I have known whose lives are lost and whose families continue to suffer.

In our culture we have a ceremony. It is the lighting of the sacred qulliq, which is a traditional Inuit soapstone lamp. My colleague from Nunavut would know of it and practise lighting it in her culture very well. It honours the fact that women are the life carriers. It raises women up. It holds them in a place where they are teachers, where they show the strength and resilience to lead the way that is best for their families and for their communities.

As a government, we have a responsibility to shine a light as well. To shine a light on the injustices is our responsibility. I say that our government has been shining that light. We have been moving forward with missing and murdered indigenous women by providing different encouragement and investments as they have been identified through our dialogue and through our process of reconciliation. We will continue to do that in the path forward with each and every one of them.

I ask my colleagues to learn more, to share more and to continue to advocate more, because in doing so we are saving lives and saving heartache and grief for so many families in indigenous Canada.

• (2100)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Chair, I thank my hon. colleague, the parliamentary secretary, for focusing on the names of the women, girls, mommies, aunties, sisters and daughters who are missing from her territory.

The report that we hold in our hands and that we study tonight is one that calls on us to do much more than anything we have even imagined, which includes ending the culture of misogyny, patriarchy and racism, and of extraction from and oppression of the land itself. I want to ask the parliamentary secretary if the government she serves is prepared to look at the recommendations that the extractive industries themselves, the transient industrial workers along pipelines in mining camps throughout the country, are actually a threat to indigenous women and girls.

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Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Chair, my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands always provides insightful thoughts in her questions in the House of Commons.

I am open to looking at all aspects of society that infringe upon the rights of women and girls. No woman, no girl, no individual should ever feel unsafe within their homes or communities. Whether that perpetration comes from within family, community, workplaces or any form or aspect of the society we live in, then we have a responsibility to address that.

I would tell my hon. colleague that I am always open to learning where harm is being done and doing my part to correct it.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Chair, it is unfortunate to hear the member from the Green Party try to single out one particular sector. We know there are problems of violence against women from people in all different sectors and all different parts of the economy. It is a problem we need to address more broadly. To single out workers in one sector is very unfair and reflects another agenda.

I want to ask the member a follow-up question from the speech given by the minister with respect to human trafficking. We know that human trafficking disproportionately affects indigenous women. There were concerns raised by members of our caucus with respect to Bill C-5 and the fact that amendments to Bill C-5 opened the door for possible house arrest for people involved in human trafficking. It is our contention that tough sentencing in response to human trafficking is part of the solution to combatting this. I wonder if the member has a comment on that.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for pointing out that violence against women and girls is not sector-related. It is happening in all aspects of society. I think we all recognize that, and we all have a responsibility to do what we can to end it. That is our job here as parliamentarians. That is what Canadians look to us to do.

In terms of human trafficking, the story of human trafficking around the world is one that we all look at with tremendous sorrow. We wish that we could stop it today and that we had the means and ways to end it in every single aspect of the world that we live in. We have many tools available to us to be able to do that. It is a matter of having the ability and resources to stop it before it happens. Educating people and making sure we have the right stops in place to stop human trafficking before it can start is the path we need to be on now, a path that really singles out perpetrators, as well as others who could be involved.

• (2105)

[Translation]

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for her speech and for taking the time to put names to this tragedy, which I think could be called the shadow pandemic, because it happened during this pandemic. These are people we are talking about; these are numbers. In the case of missing and murdered indigenous women, it is difficult to get numbers and statistics because it is not spoken about. It is hard to speak up on behalf of these women; they have been completely forgotten.

How does my colleague think that we could get a lot more numbers and statistics that would help bring this issue out of the shadows so that we can finally address it and find concrete solutions for these women whose disappearances have gone unacknowledged?

[English]

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Chair, the real information we need is the stories of victims and the stories of families. Many of them could only enable themselves to tell their stories with the health supports and victim support services that they have around them.

That is why the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was so important. It was important so we could lay out the investments that were needed, not only to get to the root causes that contribute to the tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, but also for the health supports and the victim services that are needed in so many communities, and the infrastructure that is needed. That is the road we are on. I just wish we could, in society, take that road a bit faster than we have been.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Chair, it is truly an honour to be standing in this House speaking on this. I have heard, especially when I speak of the member for Winnipeg Centre, passionate voices, and I am learning about these things. I would like to thank all of the members who have so far participated in tonight's debate because they are bringing so much genuine thought and care to this discussion. That is why tonight I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill, to discuss the things we need to have genuine discussion about, such as murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. This is something we must focus on.

Throughout this pandemic, we have seen an absolute increase in violence against women. If we want to look at the statistics and want to be embarrassed, we should look at what those statistics are for indigenous women. The statistics are truly undeniable for people to disagree with or to not take into consideration. Indigenous women do face the highest levels of violence of any other women in this country. We need to recognize that. We need to say, "How can we do better?"

As the member mentioned earlier, we are doing a very important study at this time. It is a study where we can talk about what is happening in the resource sector. What can we do to make sure the lives of families and the lives of women and girls in those communities are better? What can we do to ensure that, when we are talking about human trafficking and sexual exploitation, when we are talking about the lack of resources and lack of supports for indigenous people in their communities and when we are talking about the intergenerational trauma, what is it that we can do to help? What can we do?

We know that indigenous-led and indigenous solutions are where we need to start. We have heard that from all of the members in here. It cannot be a top-down approach. It needs to be a time when we are looking at women who are facing extreme circumstances in their own homes. Sometimes, it is because of addictions. Sometimes it is abuse. We know from the past that so much healing needs to be done.

That is why I really am enjoying listening to this debate and listening to the members. I can feel that we are in a room where people actually care. People actually want to do something. I am hoping that the tone of this debate stays there. We can sit here and try to divide. We can try to wedge people. We can try to put in a question that might get a lot of likes on Twitter, but it is not going to help one single woman or girl who needs that help in indigenous communities.

That is why I am speaking about this tonight. What can we do when we are talking about this? We need to talk about the intersectionality. We need to talk about things like the gender-based analysis, which we do talk about, and the gender, sex, age, citizenship and immigration status, income, and education, but, most of all, we need to talk about the location in Canada. The location in Canada is so important because, when we are talking about resources, we recognize that in rural and remote communities these resources may not be available. We are looking for shelters. We are talking about women having to get in a plane to fly to another community because they may not have any health care within their own communities. We are talking about an issue where we know that when they want to speak to the authorities, there is no trust. That is something that I have heard time and time again.

We need to work to rebuild that trust. That is why, as I am listening to this, I am hoping for a non-partisan approach where we are actually trying to do what is right for the women and girls who are indigenous. We are trying to improve, so I am very excited to participate in this debate today, and I am looking forward to the rest of it.

• (2110)

Mr. Vance Badawey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I thank the member for her comments, and I agree that this is a non-partisan issue. I see three of the member's colleagues sitting behind her who sit on the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs with me, and I see some members from the NDP here as well. We do work together, in a bipartisan manner, to get to the job at hand.

The federal government has created policies, and we have had legislation pass recently in these past few years, such as the Indigenous Languages Act; An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families; as well as UNDRIP.

The question I have for the member goes to her comments. We know what the “what” is, but now let us concentrate on the “how”. As we move forward, we want to accelerate our efforts. All of us in this House are committed to that.

My question to the member is this: How? How does she think we move forward? How does she think we accelerate this? How can we work closer together to in fact deal with the job ahead?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Chair, I think those are some of the hardest questions I have been asked in the House of Commons in the last seven years. How do we do something that is so overwhelming?

We talk about elephants, and we talk about one bite at a time. However, I think we have to take direction from indigenous leaders

and indigenous communities to say what that first bite is that we need to take.

We know that the government has stated that it is moving forward on things. I know that it is moving slowly, because we hear that. The member for Winnipeg Centre asked about where the money was, because we are not seeing it allocated.

We need to sit down and be accountable, transparent and do what is right with indigenous leaders.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Chair, I appreciate my hon. colleague's openness to learn and to support an end to violence, including for indigenous women and girls.

We are currently studying the connection between resource extraction and increased violence against indigenous women and girls. No matter how you feel about resource extraction, is it not urgent that indigenous women and girls around the resource extraction projects are immediately provided with supports and resources to mitigate this crisis of violence and genocide?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Chair, the member is going to think that this is a very odd answer, but the other day when I was sitting in the status of women committee watching her speak about some of these things, I thought, “That girl and I need to go out and take charge.” That is how I feel on some of these things. I do not know exactly how we do it, but I do know that we need to work together, and we need to be there. We need to ensure that everybody is being listened to.

The trust issue, I think, is the number one issue that we have to deal with because for years and for generations people have been told that things are going to be done, and they are still waiting. We need to see more movement on this, and I will do everything I can to be part of that movement.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Chair, in Canada, we know that there are different campaigns and organizations that exist to raise awareness and honour indigenous women and girls who have either been murdered or gone missing. As some members have mentioned, tomorrow is Red Dress Day. There is also the Moose Hide Campaign Day, the Faceless Dolls Project and many others.

In addition to participating in events such as those, how does my colleague for Elgin—Middlesex—London plan on engaging on this important issue and encouraging others to take part in some of these campaigns?

• (2115)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Chair, I believe that if one wants to learn how to cook, one goes into the kitchen. This is the same thing, and that is the way I want to approach it.

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If I want to learn, I have to speak to the people who are living these lives each and every day. I need to be able to see it, and then I will be able to ask, "What can I do?" That is just the way I work, and that is the way I will be moving forward.

[Translation]

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for her speech. She is the chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

Earlier I touched on the fact that the Standing Committee on the Status of Women does a lot of studies. We hear from witnesses from different indigenous communities and different groups that work with indigenous communities. The committee hears solutions during our studies.

These studies are important, but so is action, and so are the reports we could be taking into account, such as the report from the Standing Committee on the Status of Women that suggests various measures to prevent another indigenous woman or girl from going missing or being murdered.

[English]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Chair, when I look at the member's question along with the question prior from the NDP, I wonder what we should do with resource extraction. We need to make sure that everyone is held accountable, from the person working elsewhere to the people working within the community, so that social infrastructure is there. We know that populations increase and we need to make sure supports are there as well.

There are lots of things we need to do, but I think the most important thing is to drop the idea that dropping resource development is the solution. It is going to continue. Let us look at other things. I have asked people if they have walked into a frat house or a place with many people, and sometimes we see this mob mentality. We need to do more on that.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Chair, in the spirit of reconciliation, I acknowledge that the people of Calgary Nose Hill live, work and play on the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region, which includes the Blackfoot First Nation tribes of the Siksika, the Piikani and the Kainai; the Stoney Nakoda Nation tribes of Chiniki, Bearspaw and Wesley; and the Tsuut'ina Nation. I acknowledge that the city of Calgary is also homeland to the historic Northwest M  tis and to M  tis Nation of Alberta Region 3.

I hate these debates because I find that even though we mark annual events, so little progress is made. I know we have to talk about the progress that has been made, but it is never enough, particularly when the issue we are discussing is still so prevalent.

Many of my colleagues, in the spirit of good faith, have shone a light, and rightly so, on the statistical evidence of the hardship, violence and misogyny that many indigenous and first nations women experience. It is very important for us to wake up to those realities and hear them, but again, as the parliamentary secretary said earlier, what next? What do we do?

I have with me the master list of the report recommendations from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous

Women and Girls, and I have read the subsequent reports. What really strikes me is that there are short-term solutions that we need to move on and there is longer-term systemic action that needs to be taken as well. With the brief time that I have tonight, what I want to focus on is the lack of representation of first nation indigenous women in the Government of Canada and the organizations that are tasked with implementing these recommendations.

What strikes me tonight is this. If I asked anybody here how many first nations women and indigenous women held positions of power in the RCMP and in the bureaucracies of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, Public Safety and Health Canada, I think the answer would be woefully inadequate.

Even when we look at representation in this chamber or in the other place, where are they? That lack of footprint and lack of voice speak most starkly to the violence and misogyny that these women face. Even when they are here, it is not easy. We all know one colleague from the NDP in the previous Parliament who gave heart-wrenching testimony, which will stay with me forever, about her experience here. We cannot erase these stories.

Tonight, in debate, the topic of violence near resource extraction camps is coming up. I believe we have to acknowledge that this is happening while not impugning everybody working in these industries. At the same time, we should say this is a problem and actually address it. These women are counting on us and they are not here. Who is going to speak for them if we are not being precise and if we are not trying to get them to positions where they have control in their hands on the levers of power?

There have been many a day when I, so close to the levers of power, have felt the violence and misogyny of this place, and that is me from a position of privilege. They are not even here. If we are truly going to change the "what next?", these women have to have the equal say, equal voice, equal power and equal agency that they deserve and are owed as inhabitants of this shared land. That is just the reality.

More importantly, we all have a duty to be their allies and fight for them while we fight to bring them here. We have to change the patriarchal system of power that works against them. We cannot gloss over it. We cannot let the inertia of bureaucracy work against them, because every day more of these women die and more of them are just another statistic.

I hate these debates being about victim porn and talking about what happens next. We have to have action, and that is what I call on all of my colleagues here to take.

• (2120)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Chair, this is an issue that all members take very seriously on all sides of the House. I cannot help but think of the red dress in a window just before the Salter Street bridge in the north end of Winnipeg. It is a constant reminder, and I think that is important.

Symbols matter, but action is more important. That is why, whether it is with reconciliation, the calls for action or the calls in the report for murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, we all have a role to play, not only the national government, but our local governments and our community leaders. Part of reconciliation is understanding the past, taking a holistic approach and encouraging and taking the actions necessary to ensure it. Today, we still see murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, and it needs to end. We all need to play a role.

Could the member provide her thoughts on that?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, yes, I agree.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Chair, it was nice to listen to the intervention of my hon. colleague. I do agree with her. I think part of the problem is that decisions are made about us without us. Our voices are often excluded in decision-making circles, including on things that directly relate to our safety and well-being.

I am wondering what my colleague thinks needs to happen immediately in the House to ensure that women are safe, particularly women who are Black, indigenous or people of colour. In the House, there have been so many incidents reported of racism and misogyny that it has become unwelcoming for indigenous women and girls and people of colour to even consider being in here.

• (2125)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, I am not here to make people comfortable. That is number one. When we speak truth about these experiences, our colleagues need to listen to them. It is a violent place here for women, and when we add the intersectional issues and lenses of racialized women and women from the LGBTQ+ community, I cannot even imagine what it is like.

Every person in this place has tacitly stood by, watched this violence occur and been silent, and what needs to change in here is the culture. We repress people and punish them for speaking out, speaking their mind and having their own positions. That needs to end, and anybody who is comfortable with doing that is comfortable with this culture continuing.

What needs to change? People in here need to look inward and ask themselves if they are comfortable with the environment here and if they are comfortable with the lack of diversity and equity in the voices this place contains.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Chair, I want to thank, from the bottom of heart, the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill for such a thoughtful and inclusive approach to talking about the take-note debate tonight. I particularly appreciate her perspective on what the report calls out.

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To my hon. friend from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, I did not invent this or pull one industry out of many. The extractive industry is the only industry mentioned in the report as a threat.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill is so correct, and I want to ask her to expand on this, if we can accept that it is a thing and it is happening. Nobody would ever suggest that it is every single person in that industry. That would be appalling. However, there are other recommendations in this report that would make things safer for women near those extractive industry camps, such as safe ground transportation, which is also called for in call for justice 4.8.

Does the hon. member have some thoughts on how we can face this reality and make it safer?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Chair, I say yes to safe transportation and yes to all these things that make women safer, but to say this is the only industry where first nations and indigenous women experience violence is wrong. What about sex work, just to start? What about any downtown core? I grew up in Winnipeg. My family has lived in the member for Winnipeg Centre's riding.

I think we can acknowledge that in some industries and specific areas there are problems to fix and work on, but are we trying to suggest that they are the only places? I can only feel and imagine the frustration of women from these communities who are asking, "Are you kidding me?"

I would just ask everybody to take a moment and take a pause. Let us make extractive communities safer for these women, but let us not pretend those are the only places where this happens, because it is dangerously laughable and disgusting to think otherwise.

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Chair, it is such an honour for me to be here today. *Kwe kwe. Unukut. Tansi. Hello. Bonjour.*

I will be sharing my time with the member for Fredericton.

We are talking about this tonight, and tomorrow, May 5, is Red Dress Day. Tomorrow, many across the country will wear red or hang a red dress in a public space to grieve and remember the far too many missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in Canada.

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I will take this moment to remember just two people from my city: Sandra Johnson and Rena Fox. Both of their deaths were violent. Both are unsolved. Both leave devastated families behind. I acknowledge Sandra's sister Sharon who, long before many others, worked so hard to bring this ongoing tragedy to light. Sharon's full moon walk has inspired a nation.

Tonight's debate is essential not only to demand more from ourselves, but to reinforce that we must move forward with concrete and measurable steps on a path to healing and ending the cycle of trauma and violence that still exists for far too many. The final report of the national inquiry, "Reclaiming Power and Place", outlines concrete steps that we must all take to address the historic inequities and better protect indigenous women and girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

I know that so many have spoken tonight from a true sense of commitment, passion, grief and determination. I share all of those feelings, but this is indeed a crisis that has many roots. We can only do better if we recognize that the underpinnings of safety are choice, equity and the existence of equal access to the social determinants of health.

That is why we have made investments in child welfare, ensuring children get access to health care and supports through Jordan's Principle. There is also our work addressing anti-indigenous racism and health care, building shelters and supporting indigenous-led development, delivering mental wellness supports, delivering much-needed infrastructure including renewed and brand-new schools, expanding access to education and adult training opportunities, and providing supports for survivors. These are all responses to these calls to justice. These are just the responses directly from Indigenous Services Canada.

I agree with my colleagues that colonialism has led to this scourge of violence and breaking the cycle of violence is, indeed, multi-faceted. Addressing the social determinants of health is perhaps nowhere more apparent than when we look at the treatment of children.

Indigenous children and families have the right to grow up surrounded by their culture, their loved ones and their language. The coming into force of the Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families on January 1, 2020, marked a historic turning point for first nations, Inuit and Métis children and families.

This act puts in place what indigenous people across this country have been asking of the government for decades: that their jurisdiction over child and family services be affirmed so that they can decide what is best for their children, their families and their communities. I was so honoured to be in Wabaseemoong as the coordination agreement was signed with Ontario. Agreements like this are going to change lives.

This is the work we have to continue to do. Children deserve all the support they need to grow up healthy and to grow up full of life, no matter where they live. Jordan's Principle, for example, makes sure that all first nations children living in Canada can access products, services and supports that they need when they need them. The funding can help with a wide range of health, social and educa-

tional needs, including the unique needs that first nations, two-spirit and LGBTQQIA children and youth, and those with disabilities, might have. This has been backed by \$7.1 billion of new funding since 2015.

The inquiry also made it clear that we need more safe spaces for women, girls and gender-diverse people escaping violence, so the construction and operation of indigenous-led emergency shelters and transition homes is an important step toward the Government of Canada's federal pathway. Since last June's announcement of 12 new shelters, three are already under construction in Lil'wat, Hol-low Water and Whitefish Lake.

The violence prevention strategy is backed by \$724 million, which includes funds to build at least 38 indigenous-led emergency shelters and 50 indigenous-led transition homes across Canada. Let me stress the words "indigenous-led", because indigenous-led services are demonstrated to provide better refuge, culturally relevant programming and treatment to help the survivors of family violence heal and recover from trauma.

As a minister of the Crown tasked early on with launching the inquiry, I will forever carry with me the stories of survivors, friends and family members of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. It is their voices and stories that push me to work as quickly as I can to implement the calls to justice, and to push our partners at all levels to do so as well.

• (2130)

I know we can do better together. The federal government will continue to lead work across many departments and sectors to put women and girls at the heart of our actions. Our country will be much stronger when everyone is safe. Thank you. *Meegwetch. Merci.*

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to thank the Minister of Indigenous Services for her important intervention, and thank her for confirming that she has read "Reclaiming Power and Place". Many recommendations included in there are calls for sustainable funding in many different service areas impacting first nations, Métis and Inuit.

Would the member agree that not renewing funding in the 2022 budget is an indication by the Liberal government that it plans not to provide sustainable funding for this important issue?

• (2135)

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Madam Chair, I do not agree with the member's assessment, although I do agree with her firm commitment to ongoing sustainable and equitable funding for indigenous communities.

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I will say that the \$2.2 billion in budget 2021 was about the framework for the actions and the plan. The billions of dollars in budget 2022 over many different files relate to indigenous communities for housing and infrastructure and continue the work on ending boil-water advisories. There is \$500-plus million for wellness and mental health, and those commitments will continue to underpin those actions and ensure that the multi-faceted action plan can indeed be brought to life in communities across the country.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Chair, one of my frustrations in looking at the calls for justice is how many of them should have been in the budget to assist with the tragedy, and the ongoing nightmare, for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and their families. They are also part of building a healthy society, such as having decent ground transportation. That should be in the budget for all Canadians. It is particularly urgent.

Could the minister tell us if, around the cabinet table, things like guaranteed livable income, which is a recommendation in the calls for justice that most members of Parliament in this place support, and these much more all-encompassing transformational programs could find a place in a budget so that we could respond to this immediate crisis and improve Canada, right across the country, from coast to coast to coast?

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Madam Chair, it is important that we continue to stay focused on the most vulnerable in our communities. The member opposite knows that I share the perspective that when those among us who have the least opportunity are empowered by a government that invests in things like affordable housing, access to clean water, supports for mental health and wellness, and ensuring that no child goes without supports and care through Jordan's Principle, our communities will be stronger.

I will continue to be an advocate, as I know the member will.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Chair, in the wake of various government announcements last year, as my colleague from Manicouagan mentioned earlier, it is important to really listen, in a spirit of dialogue and a true spirit of reconciliation.

However, I read that the group Quebec Native Women felt that Ottawa's action plan targeted and established measures that did not reflect the reality of indigenous women and their families.

If we are truly taking part in this dialogue, in a spirit of reconciliation, how can we listen more closely? There are indigenous groups that still do not feel heard right now, based on what the government is proposing.

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Madam Chair, indeed, I met with a group of women from Quebec just recently to talk about their concerns and to talk about the opportunities ahead for indigenous women and indigenous women in leadership. I will continue to meet with indigenous women's groups, and indeed all indigenous communities and families across the country, to make sure that we can course correct as we do this important work together.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Madam Chair, I wish to thank all of my colleagues in the House tonight for having this take-note debate. This evening, we have the gut-wrenching task of trying to sum up the true travesty of missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and two-spirited peoples in Canada.

It is important that I emphasize that because I feel like we have been saying these terms, such as "MMIWG", and we are losing the emphasis of what this really is and how serious the discussion is tonight.

I am deeply humbled and fully aware of my white privilege, also, while addressing the House on this solemn day.

Tonight I speak from unceded Wolastoqiyik territory, where my ancestors settled on stolen land, where the Crown signed peace and friendship treaties with Wabanaki sovereign nations and agreed to share the land.

In the eastern woodlands, grandmothers, *nukumzugs*, raise up the chiefs. Matriarchs are leaders and life givers, knowledge keepers and dream weavers. Two-spirited people are cherished and gifted. They became targets for the colonizers, who had no intention of sharing the land but cleared the way for Canada.

The proliferation of missing and murdered indigenous peoples in the country fits the international definition of genocide. It is the manifestation of sustained, overt and systemic racism in its most perverse and deadly form.

Red Dress Day is a day of honouring missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and two-spirited peoples. It is a day to raise awareness, and it must also be a day centred on action for a human rights crisis.

Indigenous women are three times more likely than non-indigenous women to be victims of violence. Homicides involving indigenous female victims were four times higher than those of non-indigenous female victims. This current public data on MMIWG oversimplifies and under-represents the scale of the issue. It still clearly demonstrates a complex, pervasive and disproportionate pattern of violence against indigenous women and girls.

We should all be outraged but not surprised, knowing our painful history and ongoing injustices in the country. It is an inconvenient truth that continues to claim the lives of mothers, sisters, aunts and daughters all across this country, including here at home in Fredericton.

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MMIWG are not numbers. They are loved and missed. They are part of the fabric of our communities, and we are failing them. We need to be asking more questions about impacts on women when we make decisions in this country and, as has been aptly discussed this evening specifically, when certain types of industry bring transient workforces to the doorsteps of indigenous communities. Studies show this leads to increased rates of reported violence.

Systemically, police are not investigating cases at the same rates as for non-indigenous victims of crime. In some cases, police have even been found to be involved or complicit. I ask for justice for Chantel.

Human traffickers are out in full swing. Serial killers, gangs and domestic abusers seek and find their preferred targets. Our society has sexualized and objectified indigenous women for so long, and it is so embedded in our society, that we find ourselves now scrambling to grapple with the magnitude of a crisis that the very history of our nation created.

We passed the UNDRIP Act in the House, which was an incredible feat. My concern then, as it is now, was that we have not fully come to terms with what we have finally acknowledged about ourselves. We have yet to face facts, Canada, even as the act spells it out for us.

To bring justice, to bring healing and to bring peace, we have to decolonize, in the fullest sense of the term. That is where the gaping wound begins. Decolonizing can be a scary word for some, but what is really scary is the reality that indigenous women in Canada have to wonder if they are next.

What can we do? We can honour the work of the MMIWG report and the national inquiry entitled “Reclaiming Power and Place”, and follow the path graciously and courageously laid out for us.

We need to listen to, believe and support survivors and families, fund healing initiatives such as resiliency lodges, justice projects, friendship centres and women's organizations, equip task forces and indigenous policing services, educate the public, and deal in honesty and transparency every step of the way.

There is a commitment by our government to address the wrongs. The time is now for transformative action. It was actually many years ago. For Turtle Island, it is now time to be a safe, supportive and honourable place where indigenous women, girls and two-spirited peoples can thrive. When that happens, we will all be better for it.

I say no more stolen sisters. To the community of Sitansisk in my riding, and to all of Fredericton, let us bring Erin home. Let us break the cycle of silence.

Wela'lin.

• (2140)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Chair, I thank the member for her passion and thoughtful speech.

I wonder if she would like to identify some specific policy changes that she would suggest that the government could consider in terms of addressing this problem, given the ongoing nature of the

problem. Could she propose any specific ideas that the government should be doing differently to respond to it?

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Madam Chair, I have pointed out a couple of things that were specifically highlighted in the report, but I would like to highlight as well some of the words from the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. A guaranteed livable income was pointed out as a means to support those who may be fleeing domestic violence situations. This can happen to anyone across the country but, as we know, it disproportionately affects indigenous women in particular. That is an example of something transformative. We can do incremental pieces and we can look at funding long-term programs, but really it has to be something on a societal level, something that is going to create the space that is going to ensure that women have safe places to go when they are facing increased rates of violence.

That is just one example, the guaranteed livable income. Transportation was another piece that was mentioned, and that is critically important. Those are a couple of examples. Again, if we read the report, they are laid out there for us.

• (2145)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Chair, the member talked about how the government continues to support the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls calls for justice, but the reality is this. The Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in British Columbia was shut out of the process, and after the inquiry and after the final report was tabled, to this day it has not received recognition from the government to ensure it has a voice at the table to see its implementation. Who is in the coalition? It is made up of family members, women's organizations, indigenous people and indigenous women who have done the hard work in our community and are calling for this national inquiry.

My question to the member is this: Will she call on the Liberal government to do the right thing and provide supports to organizations such as the coalition in British Columbia, so it can have a seat at the table to ensure that real and meaningful action is taken on the path forward in implementing the calls for justice?

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Madam Chair, I respect my hon. colleague's work in this House.

I specifically joined the Liberal Party of Canada to have these conversations, to be a voice and empower those voices, not only from my local community here but from coast to coast to coast, as well as critical organizations such as the Native Women's Association of Canada. There are many times when those voices are shut out of these processes, which is part of that systemic racism we continue to see. It is ongoing.

I certainly did not use my time in my speech to sing the praises of the work that has been done; we have that commitment now. I see that with the members in the House speaking together. We are united in this. I want them to know that the government I am a part of, in the conversations that we have, is absolutely committed to righting the wrongs. I would not be here if I did not believe that.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Chair, the hon. member for Fredericton very briefly mentioned justice for Chantel. It has been almost two years since Chantel Moore was murdered in Edmundston by a municipal police officer. I ask the hon. member if she is, like me, completely dissatisfied with the cover-up of her murder.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Madam Chair, my heart breaks for Chantel, her family and her daughter. I will be marching tomorrow with our local communities here in Fredericton. I will be holding with me a tiny yellow wooden T-shirt that represents Chantel. Her daughter Gracie gave it to me. I think about her many times when we have these conversations. I am absolutely outraged that she has yet to find justice. I will continue to be a voice for her, her daughter, her mother and her family in the pain they suffer, which is ongoing.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Chair, before I begin my remarks, I will indicate that I am happy to be splitting my time today with the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, who we know often contributes quite meaningfully to the debates that we have on a number of issues in this chamber. I appreciate the work he does on behalf of his constituents and all Canadians.

This is an incredibly difficult discussion to be having here this evening, but I am honoured to be here and I feel it is quite important for me to be here as the member of Parliament for the Kenora riding to speak about this important topic, which, unfortunately, has touched the lives of far too many people in my riding. I will touch more on that in just a moment.

I will begin by indicating that it has been nearly a year since the national action plan was released by the government. From the discussions we have been hearing on all sides of the House today, respectfully, I think we all agree that there has not been enough action to this point. Many short-term priorities were outlined in that plan, such as services being provided for families and survivors and developing public education and awareness campaigns, which are so vitally important and, as the plan mentions, are needed immediately. From what I have been hearing so far today from all sides, I am heartened to know that all members recognize the importance of moving more quickly to implement this and put it into action, because we have gone far too long without adequately addressing these important issues.

As I noted, the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls hits very close to home for many in my riding. I would like to quote a statistic that I have previously noted in this chamber, just a couple of years ago, from Grand Council Treaty No. 3. The Kenora riding encompasses three treaty territories, Treaty No. 3, Treaty No. 5 and Treaty No. 9, which is 42 first nations, as well as the Métis homeland, but Treaty No. 3 is an area that represents a large portion of the population in my riding. Grand Council Treaty No. 3 indicated in 2020, so perhaps it is a bit dated, that over the last eight years, half of Ontario's identified cases of murdered or missing indigenous women actually happened in the Kenora region.

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That is an incredibly troubling and incredibly startling statistic, especially looking beyond the actual statistic and understanding what that means for the families and communities, recognizing that those individuals are daughters, mothers, sisters and valued members of their communities who, unfortunately, have faced a tremendous amount of abuse and, in some situations, we know had their lives taken from them.

A TVO report put out in 2018 highlighted the human trafficking problems that exist across the Kenora region, something that was under the radar for far too long, and arguably still is. There is not a lot of data to back up what is, for lack of a better term, conventional knowledge on the ground from the Kenora Sexual Assault Centre and other organizations, knowing that Kenora has, as the TVO report indicated, served as a hub between Winnipeg and Thunder Bay for human trafficking. There is certainly great importance and great urgency in the Kenora riding for all of us in this chamber to move forward together and work together to address these very real and very important issues.

I want to make one final plea in the remaining moments I have. It is important that we take this action because we have had discussions like this before, but if action is not taken, if the government does not move forward and work with everyone in this House, and if we do not work together to put these ideas into action, unfortunately we are not getting the job done. I want to make sure I emphasize that point because of the importance of this and what it means for people across the Kenora riding.

• (2150)

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Madam Chair, one of the things we have talked about a little bit tonight is the fact that we have seen lots of announcements and media headlines and many promises from the government since 2015 on the long-standing issues facing indigenous people.

Sometimes the issue is with the follow-through. There are promises and commitments, but a lack of follow-through. Can my colleague from Kenora talk about how the delays and the promises that are not fulfilled in a timely manner create a lack of trust in a relationship that requires such an improved level of trust?

Mr. Eric Melillo: Madam Chair, I would simply say that the lack of follow-through has led to a lot of frustration. I hear it on the ground in my riding. The fact that we are here after all these years still having this debate and still having this discussion is frustrating for many people, because we know what needs to be done. We know there need to be more supports put in place. That is something that I think we even heard from the government members. They recognize that they do need to move more quickly on this, and I can appreciate that.

I hope we will continue to have fruitful conversations going forward on how we can best take the proper action and support indigenous women and girls across the country.

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• (2155)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Chair, this year marks the 10th anniversary of a group called “Butterflies in Spirit”. The group was founded by Lorelei Williams, an indigenous woman who lost her aunt and her cousin in this ongoing genocide of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. She used culture and dance as a means to reclaim their culture, but also to give voice to family members. Her entire group is made up of indigenous women who have lost loved ones.

To that end, in terms of actions that the government can take, does the member think the government should be investing in indigenous culture, so that indigenous people can reclaim their culture, thrive with it, and counter the colonial practice of genocide where successive previous governments tried to eliminate indigenous peoples?

Mr. Eric Melillo: Madam Chair, I am not very familiar with that specific group, but I would be very interested in learning a lot more about it.

To the question, I think those are absolutely the types of initiatives and supports that the government should be looking at. I would certainly support that and I would be happy to contribute to further discussion on that. I know how important culture is, especially to many of the communities in my riding. In many of the remote communities, that sense of community and that sense of culture are so vitally important and can really be incredible in the healing process.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Chair, my hon. colleague's deep sense of grief and connection was very clear in his speech, with the disproportionately high number of indigenous women and girls who have gone missing from the area of his riding.

I want to specifically ask him if, in reading the report, he took on board the notion that it is time to stop looking at indigenous women and girls solely as victims and look at them as individual human rights holders and defenders of their own rights in a human rights issue that permeates this whole debate.

Mr. Eric Melillo: Madam Chair, I appreciate the question from the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands and some of the comments I have heard from her throughout the debate today. Absolutely, I think that she raises again a very important point. There is a lot more to this discussion than we have been talking about, really, on the surface of it.

Unfortunately, in five minutes of comments I do not think we have quite enough time to get into it all, but I would certainly agree with the premise of her question 100%. I think this is an important discussion we should continue to have.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Chair, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this important take-note debate on combatting violence against indigenous women in Canada.

In each parliamentary caucus, we know that there are individual members who share information with each other and who shape our understanding of this particular topic. I want to recognize the member for Kenora, who just spoke, and many other members from our

caucus who have contributed to my understanding of these issues, and members of other parties who have given excellent speeches tonight.

I want to express particular gratitude to my friend from Peace River—Westlock, who was such a champion for victims of violence and for indigenous peoples in his riding and beyond. His insights in particular have helped me and have informed my understanding. I have appreciated the legislative initiatives he has brought forward as well. Many important points have been raised by colleagues during this debate. In the brief time I have I do not want to repeat what has been said, but rather try to discuss some new points and some particular initiatives that we can pursue that will make a practical difference in terms of reducing violence against women, in particular, and against all victims.

My colleague from Peace River—Westlock has recently tabled Bill C-270. This bill would require that anyone making, distributing or advertising pornographic material must be able to demonstrate that those depicted in that material are over 18 and have given consent. The same member put forward Motion No. 47 in a previous Parliament to advance a study to examine the public health effects of easy access to violent and degrading sexually explicit materials. These initiatives are an important part of the fight against violence.

The fact that many boys are exposed to violent sexual material at a young age can shape a false perception on their part that violence in the context of sex is normal and desirable. Studying the effects of early exposure to violent sexual images, combatting the depiction of violence and pornography, and requiring meaningful age verification for those accessing pornography would go a long way toward combatting the normalization of sexual violence.

The taking of sexual images of minors, with or without consent, can contribute to cycles of violence and exploitation. Members from various parties have done important work holding Pornhub and other companies accountable for a failure to prevent non-consensual images from appearing on their platform, but more work is needed. The non-consensual distribution of intimate images is a form of violence in itself, and it contributes to further violence.

While private members' bills such as Bill C-270 are important ways of addressing these issues, legislation proposed by the government would have the potential to move much more quickly in this place, and we would welcome government action in this regard. Criminalizing the distribution of intimate images without clear age verification and the confirmation of consent would help to reduce the victimization of children, women and all Canadians.

I also want to highlight the action proposed in Motion No. 57, a motion I tabled in this House a few weeks ago. Motion No. 57 seeks to promote bystander awareness and intervention training as critical tools for combatting violence. Often, when we talk about violence, we think about the role being played by the perpetrator and the presence of the victim, but we need to think more as well about the role of the bystander, the person who is neither the victim nor the perpetrator, but who sees or is aware of the situation and has some capacity to do something about it.

Too often, well-meaning bystanders fail to intervene. Even if they do not lack for good intentions, they could fail to intervene because they do not react fast enough, because they fail to notice what is happening, because they are scared or because they do not know what to do that would be effective. I understand how it can happen and that good, well-intentioned people could fail to intervene, but as the saying goes, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. We can take concrete action to empower bystanders to know how to step up and make a difference, and that means providing potential bystanders with the tools and the information to react quickly.

Motion No. 57 is about asking the federal government to promote training so that more people have the tools and more people would be able to intervene effectively. Data consistently shows that bystander intervention training reduces violence. It may even deter crime if potential criminals are more likely to expect intervention by bystanders. I hope that Motion No. 57, as well as Bill C-270 from my colleague, will have the full support of colleagues and perhaps will be incorporated into government legislation.

We know that acts of violence disproportionately affect the most vulnerable communities that are already disadvantaged as well as victims of colonialism and other forms of violence, past and present. Indigenous women are particularly likely to be victims of violence. It shows up in the data on sexual assault, on all forms of violence and on human trafficking. I believe it is our obligation to address violence in general, to pay particular attention to those who are most likely to be victims, and to work on recognizing universal human dignity and empowering the most vulnerable.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that a great deal of harm has been done to indigenous people because of a lack of esteem and recognition for the value and dignity of the family. The horror of residential schools, in particular, involved children being taken away from their communities, and it also involved children being taken away from their families. This attack on the sacred bond between parents and children by a system that thought it had a right to replace parental authority with state-coordinated enculturation in dominant values was deeply evil. One of the key lessons that we should draw from this era is about the need to preserve and defend the parent-child bond from attacks by the state and by its institutions.

• (2200)

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Chair, I do appreciate that the hon. member made reference to the horrors and atrocities of residential schools, and he did it in the framework of the sanctity of the family, but I do not recall hearing him talk about the atrocities of the murdered children who are being recovered from these institutions, which were often led by faith groups, including church organizations.

I wonder if the member would reflect on those atrocities given the context of the continued genocide within this country and offer any comments that he might have on the communities that are actively in the process of recovering those children today.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Chair, I appreciate the opportunity the member has given me to continue my remarks, and I would very much agree with him that the violence that occurred, the lack of attention, the neglect that allowed disease and the direct abuse of

children that took place in these places, which were created by government policy.

Shamefully, many different organizations, including church organizations, participated in the implementation of the government policy, and they were wrong to do so. All of us as individuals, this institution and the Government of Canada must do much more as well to address these injustices and to ensure nothing like it ever happens again.

• (2205)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Chair, I thank my hon. colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, particularly for the lens he brought to the questions around sexualized images and groups like Pornhub.

It is rare chance, in this take-note debate, to actually exchange ideas, so I want to clarify and perhaps come to the same place, along with the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, because I want to clarify what I said and make sure it is understood.

This report, after extensive expert testimony and an extensive review of the issues, only focused on one legal industry that is identified as a source of a threat to indigenous women and girls in remote locations. It is only the resource extractive industry that is named. That is not to say that there are not illegal industries, such as the sex trade and human trafficking, that are grievous issues, or to say that there are not systemic issues, such as racism, misogyny, poverty and marginalization.

All of those issues are real, but to the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, I did not pick it out of a group of possible industries that could be identified like the film industry or agriculture. The only industry mentioned by the inquiry report is resource extractive industries, and we need to find solutions.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Chair, it is very clear that there are individuals in every sector of our economy that commit crime, and they commit heinous crimes. Let us talk about some of the revelations that have come out about violence against women that people in politics have been involved in in the past.

It would be wrong to deny that it exists in every sector, regardless of where we stand politically. We also need to acknowledge the immense opportunity for empowerment that indigenous peoples are choosing to embrace through resource development. Supporting the rights of indigenous peoples includes the right to choose to develop their own resources.

I do not want to have a debate on resource development in the context of tonight's conversation, but we need to acknowledge as well the opportunities for empowerment that come through the choice to develop resources, and many indigenous communities are choosing through their democratic representatives to do that.

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Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Chair, the hon. member raised a very important point in the context of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, and that is the culpability of men. He talked about the need for greater attention to young boys and the perpetration of toxic masculinity. I would like the hon. member to have the opportunity to expand on what he feels we could be doing better as a society to end the talks of masculinity that results in the violence against missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Chair, so much of the teaching of young boys starts in the home and starts with the examples set by families. I spoke about the importance of strong families and the instruction that is provided in the home, as well as the importance of young men receiving a positive image of masculinity and how to treat women and all people they come in contact with respectfully. Having a strong family to model that positive image, as well as doing what we can around access to violent images, are steps we can take as legislators on that side, along with supporting strong families.

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Madam Chair, *kwe, unnusakkut, tansi*, hello and *bonjour*.

I will be sharing my time with the member for Sydney—Victoria, whom I respect so much and who has taught me a lot about indigenous people and their culture.

I am here today speaking to members from the traditional, unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

Last week, I had the opportunity to rise in the House to speak to the impacts of gender-based violence within my riding of Mississauga—Streetsville. I also spoke in detail about the increase in targeted hate and violence in this country, and how budget 2022 was addressing these items. It is proven that violence and abuse can lead to poor physical and mental health, serious injuries and even homicide.

Today, it is difficult talking about indigenous missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, but it is a topic that is much needed and necessary to help all of us learn and be a part of change.

Culture is the foundation on which we build identity, our sense of self. In Canada, colonialism has robbed generations of indigenous people of their sense of knowing and of their community. It robbed indigenous peoples of their languages, spirituality, and ways of interacting with the land and in the world. It forcefully disconnected indigenous people from each other and their communities. It stripped indigenous women, girls, two-spirit, LGBTQQIA+ people of their vital role, undermining their inherent value and positioning in society.

To heal, indigenous peoples must be able to reclaim, preserve and practise their culture. They have the wisdom and resilience to do this. However, it is the responsibility of the federal government to support this work with steadfast listening and actions that match our words.

The Government of Canada is committed to a renewed nation-to-nation relationship with indigenous peoples based on the recognition of rights, respect, truth, co-operation and partnership. Historic investments have been made to support indigenous priorities and

their path to self-determination, but there is so much work to be done, and our government will continue to be there to work alongside indigenous peoples to address historic injustices.

This evening, I would like to highlight some of the Canadian Heritage programming that responds to the calls for justice from the report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls addressing the violence against indigenous women, girls and two-spirit, LGBTQQIA+ people.

As the lead for the culture thematic for the federal pathway component of the national action plan, Canadian Heritage has worked closely with colleagues at other departments, portfolio organizations and indigenous partners on advancing this work. The culture theme for the federal pathway outlines three ways for us to do that. One is supporting the retention, revitalization, maintenance and strengthening of indigenous languages, cultures and spaces. Two is strengthening opportunities for indigenous cultural expression, participation, promotion and representation in the arts, cultural industries and media. Three is addressing systemic anti-indigenous racism in the public and policy spheres to see lasting change. As we have talked about in this House this evening, we absolutely need lasting change.

The government has shown its commitment and support for the culture thematic priorities through budget 2021 and budget 2022 investments. Budget 2021 provided \$453.1 million over five years and \$4.9 million per year ongoing for initiatives under the culture theme, and budget 2022 provided \$25 million over three years. The funding has been used to support a number of activities.

First, progress continues to be made on the implementation of the Indigenous Languages Act, which responds to a number of calls for justice. Canadian Heritage will administer \$275 million for the implementation of the Indigenous Languages Act with \$2 million in ongoing support. This funding supports the reclamation, revitalization and strengthening of indigenous languages as a foundation for culture, identity and belonging. This funding has been used to support various initiatives, including language and culture camps, mentor apprentice programs and the development of indigenous languages, resources and documentation. Ensuring that indigenous women, girls, two-spirit and LGBTQQIA+ people in Canada have meaningful access to their culture and languages is absolutely fundamental.

● (2210)

Second, Library and Archives Canada was provided \$14.9 million for the preservation of indigenous heritage. To further this work, budget 2022 proposed \$25 million to support the digitization of documents related to the federal Indian day school system—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member may be able to complete some of her speech during questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

• (2215)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Chair, it took two years for the government to come up with an action plan, and there does not seem to be any urgency on the part of the government when it comes to implementing the plan. That can be seen in the fact that there really is not anything in the budget.

Does the member have any concerns that the delayed duration will have short-term and long-term impacts on this plan?

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: Madam Chair, budget 2021 invested \$18 billion to narrow the gaps between indigenous and non-indigenous people, supporting healthy, safe and prosperous indigenous communities.

Of that \$18 billion, \$2.2 billion and \$160.9 million ongoing is directly dedicated to addressing root causes that contribute to the tragedy of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Chair, the member spoke about the importance of culture, and I absolutely agree with my hon. colleague, even as a foundation.

I am wondering if the member agrees with me that in addition to culture, it is important to have these issues led and driven by indigenous women, girls and diverse-gendered people in terms of decisions that directly impact our lives and our safety.

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: Madam Chair, what I appreciate about this evening is the fact that we are having open dialogue with each other. This is the type of dialogue we must continue to have with each other to be able to learn and grow and implement the type of change that is necessary to prevent this from happening in the future.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Chair, I thank the member for Mississauga—Streetsville for speaking from her heart, as she always does in this place.

My question is with respect to call to justice 4.5, with respect to a guaranteed livable income, a policy that has really been championed in this place by the member for Winnipeg Centre.

Would the member be willing to offer her comments on the importance of following through on a guaranteed livable income?

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: Madam Chair, the Government of Canada supports the national action plan released in 2021, which includes a short-term priority of a guaranteed annual living income. I acknowledge that a guaranteed annual living income for indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people would provide autonomy for individuals as well as addressing the broader root causes of violence against indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Chair, the hon. member mentioned that this evening provided an opportunity for us to have open dialogue, and yet if it were not for the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre calling for this take-note debate, we would not be in this space and this would not be a priority of the government.

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Would the hon. member not finally concede that absent a push from the opposition side, the government would not be able to centre this particular conversation and critical issue in this moment?

Mrs. Rechie Valdez: Madam Chair, I just want to acknowledge my colleague. I appreciate her sharing her beautiful story about her mom and her experience. That was truly from the heart.

I just want to say that this government has prioritized reconciliation since 2015, and we will continue to work towards building our relationship and assisting with preventing any of these types of tragedies in the future.

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Chair, *kwe. Tansi.* Hello. *Bonjour.* First I want to acknowledge that Canada's Parliament is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people, and second I want to say a special word of thanks to the strong first nations, Inuit and Métis leaders, community members and allies who have been preparing for Red Dress Day this week.

According to statistics in Canada, more than six in 10 indigenous women have experienced physical or sexual assault in their lifetimes. Almost six in 10 indigenous women have experienced physical assault, while almost half of indigenous women have experienced sexual assault. More than four in 10 indigenous women have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner. This is unacceptable. While making up only 5% of the Canadian population, indigenous women now account for more than 42% of the female inmate population in Canada.

That is why this government is working to address injustices and the causes of violence against indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQ+ people. That is why we have invested more than \$2.2 billion over five years to address the missing and murdered indigenous women inquiry's calls to justice. At the same time, we have to support the survivors, their families and their communities that have been harmed by devastating acts of violence and ongoing crisis.

As part of the federal pathway, we have been developing ongoing, accessible and culturally relevant healing programs and support for children, survivors and family members. We have been working with indigenous partners across the country, as well as other levels of government. At every step of the way, we have been listening to indigenous partners for their expertise and insights into which culturally appropriate approaches will best help those who need the support.

So far, we have provided \$2.5 million to 20 indigenous partners who are working on projects to promote healing for survivors and families. I would like to recognize these organizations, highlight them a little and talk about their dedication and efforts toward helping families and survivors by designing and delivering culturally effective, sensitive programming.

To begin, I would like to talk about a project that takes place in the Atlantic region: the Wabanaki Two Spirit Alliance. 2SLGB—

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• (2220)

The Deputy Chair: I am sorry. The hon. member for Manicouagan is rising on a point of order.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Chair, we have not been hearing the interpretation for nearly a minute now.

The Deputy Chair: There seems to be an issue with the interpretation.

[English]

Is it working now?

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Madam Chair, to begin, I would like to talk about a project that takes place in the Atlantic region: the Wabanaki Two Spirit Alliance. 2SLGBTQ+ people have been ignored and erased by traditional colonial data collection and analysis. The Wabanaki Two Spirit Alliance will aim to lay the groundwork for improved methodologies and new approaches to produce better data around the safety of 2SLGBTQ+ people that are inclusive of indigenous world views and perspectives.

I would like to thank John R. Sylliboy and the team for their advocacy and hard work in our Mi'kmaq communities, including the Mi'kmaq community I reside in of Eskasoni. Another example is the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society that operates in the Kaska homelands in Yukon and northern British Columbia. They are supporting families and survivors in efforts to commemorate their loved ones and celebrate their lives. This is done through potlatch, a traditional feast and ceremony. The potlatch is held to bring a sense of balance to those who have been affected by losing someone close to them.

Another project is run by a group named All Nations Hope Network in Regina, Saskatchewan. The group is organizing individual counselling sessions and group sessions targeted toward the 2SLGBTQ community. That work will be coordinated by a two-spirited person.

All the projects that have received funding focus on supporting communities and giving compassionate, culturally sensitive care. These groups are conducting invaluable work, and I am honoured to witness this work.

Make no mistake: There is more work to be done, as healing and reconciliation do not come easily. They require difficult conversations and for Canada to take accountability and continue to support survivors, families and communities. Our relationships with indigenous people are strengthened when we collectively pursue truth, address injustice and combat prejudice, as painful as that can be.

I call on opposition parties to join us, along with indigenous voices across the country, as we work to promote healing and an end to violence. Thank you. *Merçi. Nakurmiik.*

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, indigenous women and girls have gone missing and have been murdered amid all these so-called investments. None of these so-called investments are reducing the impacts on the crisis that remains today.

What will the member do to ensure that he and his party are being accountable and ensure sustainable and targeted funding to end the genocide against first nations, Métis and Inuit people?

• (2225)

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Madam Chair, *qujannamiik*.

It is important that we look at the budgets that we have been moving forward on over the past two years. Last year's budget put \$2.2 billion into missing and murdered indigenous women over five years. We have also put \$1 billion into indigenous policing to make sure things are moving safely. In this year's investment, we looked at an agreement in principle that has brought a historic \$40 billion in funding. Also, in indigenous housing, there were \$4 billion.

These investments are helping and making sure that indigenous women are taken care of and remain safe, but the biggest thing we have to understand is that as a federal government, we have indigenous partners that we have to talk to also. As much as I would like to go as fast as we can as a federal government, as an indigenous person and as a first nations person, it is important that we have the dialogues with those stakeholders. It is important that they get their say, and if it takes one year, two years or three years, it is important that we get it right.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Chair, one of the points that has come up tonight, mentioned by a number of other members, is the colonial nature of the Indian Act. I would be curious to hear the member's reflections on whether we should be working to repeal and replace the Indian Act, and what he sees as an alternative system that could be in place.

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Madam Chair, the member's question gives me the chance to talk about Bill C-15, UNDRIP, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which will turn the page on the colonial legacies within the Indian Act by giving indigenous people the ability to implement that which they fought for at the United Nations for 30 years, that which the Conservative Party voted against.

Our plan and our way of moving forward is to make sure we implement what indigenous nations all across the world have been calling for over the past 30 years. Our government did that historically last year, on June 21, 2021, when it received royal assent, and I am proud to stand with this government, which made sure that was a priority.

[Translation]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Any conversation about missing and murdered indigenous women and girls is always a conversation about money. The government has done nothing to bring about reconciliation or take action since the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls three years ago.

Can my colleague help me understand why the government is so slow to take action?

[English]

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Madam Chair, I would say that our government has not been slow. We are moving at the pace of a federal government, but I want to talk about some of the things our government has done when we are talking about reconciliation.

We have ensured that we have the first-ever indigenous language commissioner. We are ensuring that we have UNDRIP passed. We made sure that we have the first-ever National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. With the calls for justice that have come, we are making sure that we are making those investments. We are making sure that we are talking to people and the stakeholders. The \$2.2 billion over five years is not a small amount, but it is an amount that we must ensure that we talk to indigenous stakeholders across Canada about, the first nations, the Métis, the Inuit, to make sure that we get this right.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Chair, we have heard the laundry list of investments, and by my calculation, there should be \$33 million going out to every province and territory. I am going to give the hon. member the opportunity to stand today and talk with specificity. Within the \$33-million envelope that should be going to Nova Scotia, what is being invested in missing and murdered indigenous women?

Mr. Jaime Battiste: Madam Chair, I thank the member for his passion and friendship over the years.

The \$2.2 billion over five years is an important amount, but what we need to also do is look at the entirety of the budget we just talked about. We are talking about close to \$28 billion. In my time being an MP, I have seen it go from \$18 billion for indigenous issues and indigenous investments to \$28 billion. Those are historic investments. I am proud of the indigenous caucus and all of the indigenous members who have helped make sure that we have gotten there.

[Translation]

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

• (2230)

[English]

I am humbled to rise in this place to participate in this take-note debate on murdered and missing indigenous women and girls and two-spirit people, especially given that tomorrow, May 5, is Red Dress Day. Red Dress Day is not only a day of honouring missing and murdered indigenous people, but a day that we stand, in the spirit of reconciliation, to raise awareness and educate about the tragic violence that indigenous women and girls have experienced, which amounts to genocide.

As the member of Parliament for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, which is situated on the traditional lands of Treaty 6 and Treaty 8, the territory of the Cree and the Dene and the homelands of the Métis people, I acknowledge that the people of the territory have been deeply impacted by the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. I honour and acknowledge the mothers, daughters, sisters, grandmothers, aunts and friends who are no longer with us. My heart also goes out to the many family, friends

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and indigenous leaders who have come together to share their stories and demand action from our civil institutions.

What started as a grassroots movement of an art installation called “The REDress Project” has sparked an irrepressible movement to highlight this national tragedy and call for justice. It has been said that red is a sacred colour that transcends the physical realm and calls the spirit of the missing and murdered back to their loved ones. Each dress, pin or ribbon is a visual representation of the stolen sisters and has a deep spiritual meaning.

The release of the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls three years ago was a key step as Canada confronts the historical and ongoing victimization of indigenous women and girls and LGBTQ2S+ people. In the years that have followed, there has been a renewed interest by all levels of government to set forth concrete actions to reconcile relationships with indigenous peoples and address systemic, cultural and institutional challenges that have maintained the status quo of violence, marginalization and intergenerational trauma.

To that end, I was proud beyond measure to have played a small part in the Alberta Joint Working Group on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, along with one of my former colleagues, the MLA for West Yellowhead, Martin Long, and Minister Whitney Issik. It was an honour to be a part of this group for a short period of time.

I want to take a moment to thank elders Jackie Bromley and Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack, who always opened our meetings with ceremony, sharing their wisdom and knowledge while keeping our group grounded. To them I say *hiy hiy*.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the amazing work that was done by the strong indigenous women on the joint working group: Lisa Higgerty and Rachelle Venne, our co-chairs; Josie Nepinak; and Suzanne Life-Yeomans. I was so grateful for these indigenous women. They shared their stories, experiences, perspectives and hearts. They really opened my eyes, and I thank them.

In order to address this issue, we must openly and honestly acknowledge the root causes that place indigenous females at such a high risk: harsh realities such as poverty, racism and inadequate housing. It is our collective responsibility to turn the tide on this serious and long-standing reality. We must move past seeing indigenous women and girls as simply statistics and move toward recognizing that there are contributing factors that place indigenous women and girls in vulnerable and dangerous situations.

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Systemic barriers exist regarding access to adequate housing, culturally appropriate medical care, community supports, coping, intergenerational trauma and so much more. We cannot change history, but together we can forge a path toward a brighter future while forever remembering the lives lost and supporting survivors. It is incumbent on all of us to move from talking to true action that will stop this from ever happening again. We must all be committed to walking shoulder to shoulder in the spirit of reconciliation to build a more inclusive society.

Since 2004, nine indigenous women from Nistawoyou have been reported missing or murdered. I would like to take an opportunity to speak their names into the record: Elaine Alook, Shirley Waquan, Amber Tuccaro, Janice Desjarlais, Shelly Dene, Betty Ann Deltess, Ellie Herman, Audrey Bignose and Sherri Lynn Flett.

It is time for justice in memory of all of these women. They have not been and will not be forgotten.

• (2235)

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Chair, in my riding of North Island—Powell River, a couple of indigenous women have gathered many indigenous women together to bead red dress earrings and pins. What they do is fundraise so they can support families that have lost indigenous women and girls. They fundraise so they can put up billboards of missing indigenous women and girls so that people know the faces of those who are lost from their families forever.

Can the member speak about how important it is that we not ask people to be charitable in this, but ask government to be responsible for the actions it takes in making sure that we find these women and girls?

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Chair, I want to thank the member for that incredibly important question. It really highlights the fact that it should not be incumbent on the communities to raise awareness. Government has to take a big step in this.

In my own community, just a kilometre from my house we had a tragic situation. It was the community that had to rally. I was so grateful that leaders from all levels of government did come together to help, but that needs to be larger. The federal government needs to have investments in place.

One thing I would love to see is a “red dress alert” to try to help get the information out quicker. We know that when women are found faster, they are more likely to be found alive.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Chair, my colleague mentioned various solutions, such as housing. For indigenous women to escape the cycle of violence, they must have the means to regain power over their own lives. However, some communities have truly appalling housing, others do not even have water and some do not even have electricity.

How can we give these women a safe and adequate environment so that they have what they need to break the cycle of violence and thereby prevent the disappearance of more women?

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Chair, I think my colleague raised an issue that is a real problem in rural and isolated communities.

I have housing problems in my riding and I believe many rural MPs have the same problem. I think the government really has to act on the recommendations from the inquiry because they were very clear, but the government has not done so.

[English]

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Madam Chair, we have heard tonight about many different organizations and many campaigns in Canada that are used to raise awareness and honour indigenous women and girls who have either been murdered or gone missing.

In addition to participating in many of these events and becoming part of them, does she have any suggestions for all of our colleagues on Parliament Hill on how we can engage even better on this very important issue?

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Chair, one truly important thing that we can all do is engage with indigenous communities and listen. We need to hear what they have to say and approach the solution understanding that they have the answers in their communities. It is incumbent on each and every one of us to have those conversations, carry that message forward and allow indigenous-led organizations to really shine through, especially on days like tomorrow.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Chair, as we say in my riding of Louis-Saint-Laurent and in Wendake, *kwe*.

Like most of my colleagues here this evening, I am participating in this very important debate about what the government and Canadians must do to address violence against indigenous women and about the measures that are needed to break this despicable, vicious circle for the country and more specifically for indigenous women. These kinds of debates are necessary.

My riding is home to the Huron-Wendat community. It always makes me smile to think about how lucky I am, because we cannot choose our family or our birthplace, as everyone knows, but I was very fortunate on both counts.

My parents came to Canada in 1958, and in 1962 they moved to what was then known as Château-d'Eau, which then became Loretteville and is now part of Quebec City. It was less than a mile away from the indigenous community of Wendake. I grew up and still live in Loretteville, so I have some very good, very close Wendat friends. These friends are and will always be lifelong friends. I therefore grew up with an awareness of the first nations. We should all have this awareness of the first nations, but it will never be deep enough.

It is not easy to fix 400 years' worth of damage, yet that is the reality of indigenous relations with the federal and provincial governments. It has been 400 years of misunderstandings, of battles, of totally unacceptable domination and, in many cases, that is what we are facing now, in the 21st century.

We must understand that we can never do enough to erase, or at the very least lessen, the pain caused over the centuries. The reality is that we must take action but, more importantly, we must reflect and understand what happened.

• (2240)

At the start of the 21st century, there was an awareness that dawned. It has always been there in Canada. No matter who held the title of prime minister, there was always a gesture or a thought, sometimes positive, sometimes abhorrent, but there was also a desire to be honest with first nations at times.

We must recognize that it was the late Jack Layton, the former leader of the NDP, whose passing we all lament, who took the first concrete step that led to today's recognition of the tragedy of indigenous women who have fallen victim to appalling violence.

In the early 2000s, Jack Layton suggested that the Canadian government should formally apologize for the tragedy of residential schools and the crimes that took place there, which led to the totally unacceptable abuse that was most recently condemned by the Holy Father himself.

Canada's prime minister at the time, the Right Hon. Stephen Harper, listened to Jack Layton. For the first time in Canada's history, the federal government offered a formal and sincere apology to first nations. It was the first and only time that a grand chief of the Canadian first nations ever addressed the members of the House of Commons, and it happened right here in Ottawa on June 11, 2008.

There was an apology, and there was action. The government created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission because there can be no reconciliation without facts and truth. That is why, over a long period of six years, Canadians travelled the country listening to first nations.

When I first entered politics as a member of Quebec's National Assembly, I clearly remember being at the meeting in Wendake. It lasted several days, but I was only there for a day. I should maybe have stayed longer. The participants could see and understand the pain these people were carrying.

In 2015, the commission released its report, which contained almost 100 recommendations and suggestions. One of them, call to action 41, was for the Canadian government to take action on the tragedy of indigenous women who were beaten, raped, assaulted or killed. We all know what happened next. The government waited two years before coming up with a plan.

As I said in my introduction, we can never do enough because fixing 400 years' worth of damage is almost impossible. We have to start by accepting that unfortunate reality.

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• (2245)

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Chair, I want to share with my hon. colleague how I appreciated his honest acknowledgement of the history in Canada and also that he spoke about apologies that have happened.

Certainly, I know that apologies are well received. We are at a point, though, where apologies are fine and good but now we need to follow up with action. I think my hon. colleague would agree, particularly with his acknowledgement of the level of violence and the level of inaction, that not enough has been done.

Does my hon. colleague believe that we need to move beyond apologies to immediate and urgent actions to mitigate this ongoing genocide?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Chair, I want to pay my respects to my colleague, who represents so much with such passion and such dignity her people here in the House of Commons. It is a privilege to have a member like her here in the House who serves so well the community, but also the country.

Indeed, we need action, but those actions will not come from here, the House of Commons, and especially not from a guy like me, but first and foremost from people like the member and the first nations, because first nations are part of the solution to that. If we think that only here in the House of Commons we can achieve something, it is just something that would start. If we want real, strong results, they will be coming from the first nations.

As a guy who grew up so close to a first nation community, I can assure members that we have to work hand in hand. That is exactly what happened for almost 400 years in Wendake in Quebec City. Yes, we can get inspiration from this great example.

[Translation]

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Chair, my question for the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent is on call for justice 4.8, specifically on the “adequate plans and funding...for safe and affordable transit and transportation services and infrastructure for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people living in remote or rural communities.”

Can the member talk to us about the importance of the investment mentioned in call for justice 4.8?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Chair, I want to commend my colleague. He worked in Montreal for several years, which means he speaks impeccable French. I thank him. He is an inspiration to us all.

I think he has once again put his finger on a situation that does not have an easy solution when it comes to the first nations.

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There are communities like Wendake back home that are literally embedded in an urban city like Quebec City. However, there are other so-called remote communities, although I find it pejorative to call them remote, as though we were at the centre and people who are not at the centre are remote. As far as I know, the remoteness is just as far as the centre. People who live in so-called remote areas could say that the people living downtown are remote. They would all be correct to say so.

The reality is that if we want to provide proper and appropriate services to first nations, we must consider the fact that these communities are not located in urban centres. We must provide services to ensure that the assistance we want to offer is made available appropriately and promptly in light of the daily reality of these first nations.

The Deputy Chair: We have just enough time for a brief question.

The hon. member for Manicouagan.

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Madam Chair, I would just like to ask my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent about his expectations for the outcome of the take-note debate on the issue before us tonight.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Chair, although it has unfortunately taken 400 years for us to engage in this reflection, let us hope that concrete action will be taken in the years to come with the support and co-operation of first nations.

It is not up to people like me, the son of an immigrant, to say what is good for first nations. Instead we should be listening to what first nations want and what they want to do, and then we should provide the support required so that we can all look ahead to a bright future.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Chair, it is an honour to rise today toward the end of the debate. We have some time left and some more speakers, but I think this take-note debate has been one of sincerity and has been heartfelt. I think we have seen some real change in the way we are able to discuss things in this place and to accept the inquiry.

I remember when the inquiry came out: it was not quite three years ago. When the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and two-spirited inquiry first said that this was a genocide, there was a great deal of response in the media as if that might not be the case. It has been stated by members on all sides of the House today without question. That gives a sense that we have made progress in understanding the scope, scale and gravity of the issue.

I want to start by acknowledging that we are here on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe peoples. I want to also acknowledge the territory that I am honoured to represent here in Parliament: My riding name of Saanich—Gulf Islands is a corrupted English pronunciation of WSÁNEĆ, the WSÁNEĆ nation of the Coast Salish peoples. I am deeply indebted to the peoples of our territory.

I want to also begin by saying that I will be splitting my time with the honourable and terrific member of Parliament for Edmonton Griesbach.

There is a lot that has been said. With the time remaining for me it would be hard to add a great deal more, but in preparing for this and whenever I think about the inquiry, I do not want to talk about statistics. I just want to say, as a settler culture woman, recognizing the privilege of the colour of my skin, that I am so lucky. I have a bunch of great women friends, but it is only my indigenous women friends who say things casually like, “I was left for dead in a dumpster”.

• (2250)

I hardly know any close indigenous women friends who have not had the experience of losing close family members, particularly in the downtown east side in Vancouver. That statement, “I was left for dead in a dumpster,” was actually in the context of sitting in a circle after this report came out in Victoria with a woman who I thought I knew really well. Her anglicized name is Rose Henry. She goes by the Tsilhqot’in name now of Grandma Losah. I had no idea that my friend Rose, as a kid, had been left for dead in a dumpster after being beaten and abused.

These experiences are not statistics. These are our friends, our mothers, our aunts and our children. The levels of abuse and casual violence against indigenous women and girls is appalling and a human rights abuse. We have not responded with the urgency that we must. We went for years, as I am sure colleagues will remember, demanding that we get an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. We got the inquiry. We got the recommendations, but women and girls are still going missing on a routine basis. Indigenous women and girls are still marginalized and at risk, and we have 231 calls for justice to make that not the case anymore. In the time remaining for me, I want to emphasize a few of them that stand out.

Call for justice 4.5, which I have mentioned tonight in questions and comments, is a call for a guaranteed livable income that will end the marginalization and take women and girls from being in a position of great risk to being safer by the security of having enough money to not be in poverty. It is pretty straightforward.

We also know from this inquiry that women who have gone missing are quite often, through their marginalized economic status, forced to hitchhike. They do not own cars. They are not going to be getting safe and affordable ground transportation because there is none. Our ground transportation system in this country is worse than that in most developing countries: Members should think about that. This report came out before Greyhound withdrew service right across Canada. I talk to my Nuuchah-nulth friends, particularly Chief Judith Sayers of the Nuuchah-nulth Nation. She has been a prominent supporter of a local bus company called Wilson's bus lines that has been trying to stay afloat and trying to connect services. The government needs to acknowledge that we need Via Rail to work for the marginalized.

We also need to address the huge threat of wellness checks in which indigenous women and girls die. A wellness check should not result in an inquiry and a coroner's report. This also needs urgent attention.

• (2255)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Chair, I have great respect for the member, but since she has brought us into a debate about the universal basic income, which I see as entailing a variety of different policy questions from the specific issue of combatting violence, I wonder if the member can share whether there is any data at all to suggest that somehow we are going to see a drop in violence associated with the particular implementation of this policy instrument.

Would we not be better off addressing causes of poverty, as in providing the specific support that people who are in vulnerable situations need, rather than providing simply a guarantee that anybody who falls below a certain level automatically starts getting paid by the government?

Does the member believe that we could finance this by cutting other social programs, or does she believe we could afford this on top of the existing social programs we are providing?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Chair, as I was calling out the calls for justice from the inquiry report, I will read it:

4.5 We call upon all governments to establish a guaranteed annual livable income for all Canadians, including indigenous peoples, to meet all their social and economic needs.

I could go into this at great length. We have a poverty caucus in this place made up of members of Parliament and people from the other place. We have had expert testimony for years. I recommend to the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan a great book by the great Progressive Conservative Hugh Segal: *Bootstraps Need Boots*.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I think the hon. member's speech was great. It has been interesting to sit here during this debate and hear all the empathy and understanding that apparently seems to be quite common about the realities and experiences of first nations, Métis and Inuit.

Unfortunately, we are not hearing a lot of calls for accountability.

I wonder this. Can the hon. member, with her long experience as a member of Parliament, share some examples of how accountability could be ensured, and to make sure we are seeing, with regard to the crisis of the murdered and missing indigenous women and diverse gendered people too, accountability from that perspective? *Qujannamiik*.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Chair, that reminds me of something that the great journalist Warner Troyer once said, which was that politicians are basically like single-celled organisms, susceptible only to heat, pressure and pain. We need more heat, more pressure and some more pain to make those who have the power to make these changes, make the changes.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Chair, I thank my hon. colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for her speech.

Government Orders

We are nearing the end of the take-note debate. I agree with my colleague from Manicouagan. I too have a problem with the term “take-note”.

There are 231 calls for justice, 231 ways to take action so that no more women or girls are murdered or go missing.

I wonder if my colleague could comment on the fact that we are having a take-note debate when there are 231 calls for justice, for action.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Chair, I thank my hon. colleague from Shefford.

She is right. We are here, at this late hour, when there are over 200 calls for justice. We all understand what needs to be done, and yet we are having a take-note debate, which is not enough.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Chair, I know that my granny went to residential school in Lejac from the age of four to 16. Unfortunately, when she was 16, the nuns arranged for a marriage for her and she was married to a 50-year-old white man.

When he passed away not too long after, of course, she was rejected by the family and lost her status and was not able to go home.

When I think about the history of Canada and how unsafe it makes indigenous women and girls, I am wondering this. Could the member talk about how this history continues to repeat itself?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Chair, these stories just break our hearts. History repeats itself because we do not take it on board as a situation. We would not tolerate this if, throughout society, at the same proportion of the population, women with my colour of skin were going missing at the same rate as indigenous women. We have to face facts. History repeats itself because racism remains systemic.

• (2300)

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Chair, today I want to acknowledge all my colleagues. Each and every one of them here today is participating in what has been a very difficult conversation for indigenous people not just here, but across the country. I want them to do more than sympathize, but to honestly ask themselves what it would be like without their mothers, what would it be like without their sisters, or what would it be like without their grandmothers. Every indigenous family in this country knows that pain, but I do not want to talk about the pain.

Government Orders

We talked an awful lot today about the pain indigenous people have suffered, but I want to remind members that with this pain it was not the current government or any government in the country that kept us alive: it was indigenous women. Indigenous women kept our nations alive, and they still do today. That is precisely the reason the government, and every government in Canadian history, has persisted to ensure this problem is not addressed. By evidence of what has occurred thus far, is the fact that our indigenous women continue to go missing. How can we say to the contrary?

I want to talk about the remarkable women in my life who have made a contribution to my presence here today. They are really the only reason I am here. Indigenous women have fought for our nations. They fought for every single child, and one woman who comes to my mind in particular is my mother. Her name is Grace Desjarlais. She is the sister of a woman named Brenda, who was taken through the sixties scoop.

The sixties scoop, the residential schools system and every government policy to date has not consulted indigenous women; however, they expect their labour. When Brenda, my biological mother, was working as a sex worker after aging out of the terrible foster care system that this country still has, she fought. She had an option presented to her. She said she could have given up and gone down the road that so many of our sisters do, but she fought and she stayed alive. She was able to live to the age of 42: a feat that many indigenous women do not get the opportunity to do in this country.

She asked her sister, a woman she barely knew, to do something courageous. She asked her to take her son and to save him from a system that would kill him. That was me. Women came together from my community and said “no”. We took a challenge against the court, and I was one of the very few children not apprehended even though the first person I met in this world was a social worker and an RCMP officer. The people who would save me were indigenous women.

This is a holistic issue, my friends. When we support indigenous women, they will continue to save lives. They will save our nations. I know this because I have seen it. I am here because of it. There has been no government program, no government policy and no government that has done this work for us. When I see the work of the calls to action, the calls to justice, I see mothers, aunties and kokums who did everything they could to make sure that the government listens.

Today, I hope this debate goes much further than just words. To every government member here today, I want them to imagine what it would be like not to have mothers, grandmothers or sisters and then ask themselves whether it is worth waiting and whether the government has succeeded. That is the one thing I hope they take from this debate.

• (2305)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Chair, hearing members in the House speak about their parents reminds us of how imminent some of the things are that we hear about: As younger members, they feel further away, yet they are not so far away. They are within living memory of so many people still alive: parents and members of the House.

I want to ask the member a question with respect to the dialogue that has happened between his party and the Liberals around the confidence and supply agreement. I think it is a fair question to ask. There have been many criticisms from the NDP of the government approach with respect to aspects of this issue. At the same time, there was no mention in that confidence and supply agreement of specific commitments around indigenous issues.

I wonder if the member could share some of his thinking around that. Are the NDP going to be pushing for other things in addition to what is in that agreement?

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for the question, and I understand it to be one of political importance, considering where we are today. However, I would ask the member how one would go about doing the work that he proposes with a process and a system that are so entrenched in a deeply colonial, deeply harmful and deeply problematic system.

What I mean to say is that this place, the building we are in right now and the governance system that we have are not conducive to the justice indigenous people deserve or need. There is no confidence and supply agreement that can fix this issue. What needs to be fixed is Canadians. Canadians need to understand that they are part of this problem and that we need a cultural shift. There is no confidence and supply agreement that can fix this issue. It requires that individuals and communities, including the member and his own family, understand their place in this country.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Chair, it is such a privilege and honour to listen to my very wise colleague. We share a common history, a history of family impacted by the child welfare system.

Would my colleague agree with me that one of the areas we need to focus on is ensuring that kids aging out of care age into a home and supports rather than on the street?

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Chair, my hon. colleague from Winnipeg Centre is a champion, and I do not have to tell anyone in this House how important the work she does is.

I know many members who have aged out. What we mean by “aged out” is that our system here in Canada provides the kick-boot treatment to young indigenous children in particular. When they hit the age of 18, they get tossed out on the street, just like my mom. She fought, by herself, to get to where she was. However, many indigenous people, particularly indigenous children who age out of the system, need far more than that.

I have a biological sister, the oldest of my family, whom I have never met. The only phone call I ever got was the phone call to tell me she passed away. That is the level of support we have in this country for families. I was told that she died and had a funeral, and no one was there. Members can imagine how that makes me feel.

The supports that we have to date are zero. Anything beyond this is critical. I believe that supporting indigenous women, as I said in my statement, is the path, because they save communities, they save lives and they saved me.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Chair, hearing the member for Edmonton Griesbach reminds me tonight, as always, how lucky we are to have him in this place.

He was talking about accountability that he was looking for from the governing party. With the time remaining, would he like to share more in terms of the accountability he is looking for?

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Chair, accountability is a process of understanding the harm, the pain and the true impact of what has happened to indigenous people in this country. It means digging deep into one's own family history and understanding that not everyone in this House has good ancestors.

We all inherit something. My family inherited a significant amount of pain. Many other people, particularly the people who benefited most from this country, continue to benefit. They are some of the largest oligarch benefactors still today. We need justice. We need to tax them, and they need to pay their fair share.

• (2310)

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Chair, it appears I have the thankless task of closing this evening's take-note debate. I am speaking, albeit with a great deal of disgust, as the Bloc Québécois critic for the status of women in this take-note debate on indigenous women and girls.

This debate is taking place the night before Red Dress Day, a day to honour missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

It is sad to see that even now, in 2022, attacking women is still seen as a way to endanger the survival of a people. It is sad that we are still talking about mothers, daughters, sisters, friends who have disappeared, women who are no longer here, who will never come back.

Nevertheless, I will approach my speech from three angles: the Liberal government's inaction, some of the issues discussed at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, and finally, a bit about Quebec's perspective on this issue.

After waiting more than three years, the Liberal government finally unveiled its action plan to end violence against indigenous women and girls last summer, yet indigenous women and many indigenous organizations feel the response is insufficient and long overdue.

When asked at a press conference about the federal government's progress on the plan it presented last summer, two years late, regarding the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the Minister of Justice admitted that the government had fallen behind because of the federal election in September 2021 and because of the war in Ukraine, which started on February 24. The government is finding excuses to explain its inaction. Why is the government not stepping up?

Government Orders

The federal government must take its share of the responsibility, but it is not doing so, especially with respect to the report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, on which the federal government has done little to follow up.

The figures are staggering. Between 2004 and 2014, while the homicide rate across Canada was declining, the number of indigenous women and girls who were murdered was six times higher than the rate among non-indigenous women. According to the 2018 figures for Canada, 25.1% of non-indigenous women report having experienced physical and sexual abuse by an intimate partner, but that figure rises to 43.7% among indigenous women. In addition, 38.2% of non-indigenous women report having experienced physical and sexual violence committed by someone other than an intimate partner, compared to 54.9% among indigenous women. The situation did not improve during the pandemic.

Obviously, these are the official figures, and in cases where women were willing to come forward, of course it is not easy to admit it and speak out against it. It is hard to get out of a cycle of violence. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls stated that ending it “requires a new relationship and an equal partnership between all Canadians and Indigenous Peoples”.

The calls for justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, presented as legal imperatives rather than voluntary recommendations, set out transformative measures in a number of areas including health, safety, justice, culture and ordinarily the following:

We need to establish the position of a national indigenous and human rights ombudsperson and establish a national indigenous and human rights tribunal. The report also talks about developing and implementing a national action plan to ensure equitable access to employment, housing, education, safety and health care.

The government must provide long-term funding for educational programs and awareness campaigns related to violence prevention and combatting lateral violence. Furthermore, the government must prohibit the apprehension of children on the basis of poverty and cultural bias. This is all great on paper, but the government must now stop shelving report after report and start responding to the calls to action.

After the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls tabled its more than 2,000-page report, chief commissioner Marion Buller even stated that despite their different circumstances and backgrounds, all of the missing and murdered are connected by economic, social and political marginalization, racism, and misogyny woven into the fabric of Canadian society.

Indigenous communities need to rebuild, and Quebeckers and Canadians need to acknowledge the collective trauma experienced by these communities, understand it and take steps to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again.

Government Orders

Moreover, the increasing pressure on the federal government, which until that point had disregarded the calls to action, finally gave rise to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2015, almost seven years ago. The commission came out in favour of a national inquiry into the violence disproportionately experienced by indigenous women and girls.

• (2315)

The national inquiry's final report was released on June 3, 2019, and all the long delays were unacceptable, especially on the part of a government that calls itself feminist. Its failure to act tarnished its international reputation. Béatrice Vaugrante, then executive director of Amnesty International for francophone Canada, said as much because numerous UN, U.S., and U.K. bodies asked Canada to end violence against indigenous women. She considered this Canada's worst human rights issue and said the government's failure to recognize the magnitude of the problem and take action was unacceptable.

In October 2004, in response to the tragically high number of indigenous women being victimized, Amnesty International even released a report entitled “Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women in Canada”, an unmistakable call to take action and implement concrete measures.

Five years after the initial report, Amnesty International followed up with a second report entitled “No More Stolen Sisters: The Need for a Comprehensive Response to Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women in Canada” to underscore the five factors that contributed to the phenomenon of violence against indigenous women. First, the role of racism and misogyny in perpetuating violence against indigenous women. Second, the sharp disparities between indigenous and non-indigenous women when it comes to the fulfillment of their economic, social, political and cultural rights. Third, the disruption of indigenous societies caused by the historic and ongoing mass removal of children from indigenous families and communities. Fourth, the disproportionately high number of indigenous women in Canadian prisons, many of whom were themselves victims of violence. Fifth, inadequate police response to violence against indigenous women as illustrated by the handling of missing persons cases.

At the committee on which I sit, we have seen in many studies—such as the study on the disproportionate impact that the pandemic had on women, the study on invisible work, the study on women in rural communities, and the study on intimate partner violence—that indigenous women and girls are almost always among those who are most affected.

We are in the process of completing a study on the impact that resource development has on indigenous women. In study after study, witnesses from different indigenous communities and organizations are sharing their harsh realities with us. They are also sharing concrete proposals.

As vice-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, I am also shocked to know that nearly 54% of trafficked women are indigenous. That seems extremely high to me.

I also had to address this issue while filling in at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. In fact, this issue finally made the news for the first time in 2014 when the RCMP released figures on the number of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. A total of 1,017 indigenous women and girls went missing or were murdered between 1980 and 2012. There are still 105 women unaccounted for who have disappeared under unexplained or suspicious circumstances. That is a lot.

Finally, I want to discuss some of the things we are experiencing in Quebec. I want to highlight the work being done at the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre. I hope to have the opportunity to visit it one day. We are also sensitive to the issue of restorative justice. Then there is the Viens commission that was launched by the Quebec government following the disappearance of Sindy Ruperthouse, a woman from Pikogan in Abitibi, near Val-d'Or. My colleague, the member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, could tell the House about this. She said that she has heard a number of indigenous women in Abitibi accuse the police of physical and sexual abuse, and the same thing could happen in many other ridings throughout Quebec. My colleague from Manicouagan can also testify to this.

Here is what an organization in Quebec had to say. According to Viviane Michel, a former president of Quebec Native Women, it is essential that indigenous women, families and communities have the opportunity to be heard as part of any inquiry. She also said that understanding the deep roots underlying the systemic discrimination faced by indigenous women is crucial to ensuring their dignity and safety. She also pointed out that the report itself recognizes that indigenous women are at greater risk of being murdered or going missing, and she wondered why the government was not taking real, concrete, tangible action that would make a difference.

In closing, the Bloc Québécois has been promoting this nation-to-nation partnership with indigenous peoples for several years now. Furthermore, during the election campaign, our party's position was clear. Modern treaties are needed. This position is extremely important to me and my colleagues. It will be up to the nations themselves to say what they want and decide what they want to negotiate with Ottawa.

I would like to mention one last thing. Last fall I travelled to the shores of Lake Memphremagog, at the invitation of the Eastern Townships chapter of World March of Women. Red dresses in varying sizes were hung up on a line. I realized that women and girls of all ages are among the missing and murdered, each with their own story, and they all had loved ones who were left to wonder what had happened to them.

• (2320)

[English]

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Madam Chair, the member from the Bloc spoke about some women's organizations, and she serves on the status of women committee. In saying that, the Coalition on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls in B.C., the Ontario Native Women's Association and Quebec Native Women Inc. are all groups that were excluded from the process of developing the national action plan, despite multiple requests to the government to join the process and have their voices heard.

Does the member believe that the exclusion of the voices of these grassroots women's organizations in the development of the national action plan will impact, or have potential to impact, the long-term success of this action plan?

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for the question.

This allows me to reiterate the importance of talking nation to nation. I mentioned it at the end of my speech.

The government cannot make proposals if it has not held consultations, if it has not opened a dialogue and if it has not listened to its local partners, the first nations communities.

In my opinion, this may unfortunately have an impact on carrying out the action plan. There is no doubt about that, because some communities will walk away. As my colleague said, some communities have withdrawn from the process.

How are we going to successfully follow through on the recommendations if the communities in question withdraw from the process?

Again, it is critical to talk nation to nation and keep the dialogue open.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Chair, as we sit here in this place, and we talk about indigenous women and girls and the realities that they face, and how many of them go missing or are murdered, I think of the many constituents I have in my riding who tell me the reality they face every day because they do not know, in one case for 35 years, where their sisters are. They just always have that haunting sort of history in their mind: What happened? Is she okay? Is she dead somewhere? How do we find her?

We are here in this place. We have calls to action. We know the pathway that we need to take. What we need to see is for the government to actually invest resources into that pathway so that we can move forward and so that, finally, indigenous women and girls can be valued the way they should be.

Could this member talk about how important it is to actually see those resources so the actions can happen, and so that the women do not have to have this experience anymore?

Government Orders

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Chair, as my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands mentioned earlier, there are more than 200 calls to action, to justice. My colleague is right: We know what they are, but we are still gathered here asking questions, thinking about what we might put in another report. It is sad.

As my colleague from Manicouagan was saying, when they talk about money, it is usually for publicity, for PR, to give the impression that something is being done. If there is no real political will to follow through on the recommendations and move forward, we will not make any progress. This is about more than just money. Other women and girls will go missing or get murdered.

As I said at the end of my speech, these are women we will never find again, and their loved ones will continue to wonder. The image of the dresses hanging up was striking.

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for her speech.

During tonight's take-note debate, we spoke about the violence perpetrated against girls, and about murdered women. This kind of violence happens all the time.

I would like my colleague to tell us about recognizing and understanding the root causes of this violence in order to support indigenous people in their recovery.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Chair, talking about recovery, I would like to address one aspect that we must discuss.

I am referring to the infamous Indian Act. We cannot consider recovery as long as this archaic law is in force. This law perpetuates all manner of prejudice towards indigenous communities. Furthermore, we cannot talk about recovery if we do not let them live with dignity.

As I stated earlier, too many communities still do not have safe drinking water in 2022. In a country such as Canada, that is unacceptable. Housing is decrepit and inadequate. This is not conducive to women breaking the cycle of violence.

An announcement told us that an indigenous community in Abitibi will finally have electricity. Congratulations. It is 2022, but this community still did not have electricity.

We cannot speak of recovery when we do not see the problem in its entirety.

Above all, the Indian Act is really outdated. We need to speak about this again.

Government Orders

● (2325)

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Chair, I was pleased to hear the member speak about the issue of racism in the Indian Act. I had asked a member of the government questions about that and the government member, in response, spoke about UNDRIP. That is an important question to discuss given the government's legislation around it, but it is a different question from the question about the Indian Act.

I was very struck by a comment made by the member for Edmonton Griesbach about how, in effect, culture is more important than politics. We are here discussing what politicians can do in our political response, but it is ultimately the underlying culture in Canada of how we treat and see each other that is of primary importance.

I wonder if the member could comment on both of those issues: on the need to address racism in the Indian Act and on the importance of cultural change in reconciliation being foundational.

[Translation]

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche: Madam Chair, reconciliation is essential, but we cannot talk about reconciliation unless we have discussions as equals, nation to nation.

I spoke about how Canada's treatment of its indigenous peoples has tarnished its international reputation. Canada did not want to sign the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and refused to do it for far too long. That is unacceptable.

The fact that Canada did not sign the declaration and even delayed these declarations and negotiations is unacceptable, especially when we are talking about opening a dialogue and engaging in these exchanges.

I think it is clear that we must open this debate and have real discussions, but the government avoided signing the UN declaration for far too long.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Chair, I always appreciate my colleague's contributions, especially those that relate to gender-based violence.

Would the member agree with me that the federal government needs to not only quicken the pace of spending the 2021 allocation of funding that was targeted to address murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, but provide additional funding to ensure that required resources are provided and that they are sustainable, with long-term and ongoing funding?

[Translation]

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche: Madam Chair, as I mentioned, the government must absolutely invest in these communities and work and plan for the longer term.

There is so much work to be done in areas such as providing housing, implementing the action plan or getting drinking water to various communities. The government clearly needs to do some long-term planning so that there is some stability here. That is also important.

I also think that the government needs to move forward with the money it has promised in its various budgets.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Chair, I had packed a whole bunch of different things into my last question, which was maybe unfair, so I will focus on one aspect of it.

We had an exchange earlier with another member about, on the one hand, saying there are some things that need to happen politically around combatting violence and, on the other hand, recognizing that some of the biggest changes are not actually about politics at all but are about culture. They are about the way people see each other and the way they interact with each other, and that is not our primary mandate as members of Parliament.

I wonder if the member wants to reflect on some of the cultural changes that need to take place.

● (2330)

[Translation]

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche: Madam Chair, with respect to cultural changes, I want to talk about something that I did not have the time to address.

In a conversation about culture and respect for cultures we cannot ignore what happened with the residential schools. I want to say it here because it was absolutely cruel. The purpose was to "kill the Indian in the child".

No one can talk about respecting culture and then go after children or go after these people's futures. For far too long Canada sought to kill these cultures.

I repeat: Never should anyone try to "kill the Indian in the child".

[English]

The Deputy Chair: It being 11:30 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 3, the committee will rise.

(Government Business No. 12 reported)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 11:30 p.m.)

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