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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, May 5, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*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 four petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ST. LAWRENCE RIVER CAPACITY AND PROTECTION ACT

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-271, An Act to give legal capacity to the St. Lawrence River and to provide for measures respecting its protection.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased and honoured to rise in the House to introduce this private member's bill to give the St. Lawrence River the right to defend and protect itself.

We know that we are experiencing a major environmental crisis, likely the sixth mass extinction, and the mass destruction of our ecosystems. The current legislation and our economic model are inadequate and are not working. That is why we in the NDP feel we need a paradigm shift to adopt a new approach focused on granting rights to nature.

There is a huge international movement under way, in countries like Mexico, New Zealand, Ecuador, Panama and Colombia, to confer rights on natural entities. That is what we aim to do, in co-operation with local communities and first nations in the area, so that we can protect the St. Lawrence River, the source of so much wealth and pride for all Quebecers.

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

[*English*]

EMPLOYING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-272, An Act respecting the development of a national employment strategy for persons with disabilities.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the employing persons with disabilities act, with great thanks to my colleague, the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, for seconding the bill.

This legislation would provide for the development of a national employment strategy to increase the economic participation of persons with disabilities. Across Canada, persons with disabilities continue to face barriers and stigma when looking for work, seeking accommodation or trying to advance in their careers. As a result, over 400,000 working-age Canadians with disabilities are unemployed despite being willing and able to work.

People with diverse needs also have diverse skills and have a great deal to contribute to our society, like my daughter Cerys, her friends Calum, Melissa and Elliott, and many others. We must do more to support their participation in the workforce.

I call upon all parliamentarians to support this vital initiative because when people with diverse abilities succeed, we all succeed.

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

* * *

• (1005)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC) moved that the third report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, presented on Thursday, March 31, 2022, be concurred in.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise this morning to speak to the third report of the committee, and I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Routine Proceedings

All of us can recall the summer of 2020 when news was emerging about the WE Charity scandal and how impactful that was to the debate in this country. Of course, Canada was at the height of a pandemic, and we were seeing all kinds of programs being announced. The WE Charity scandal came to light as a result of media reports that spoke specifically of sole-source contracts to WE Charity for the implementation of a program that the government in some way felt was going to benefit young people. However, what it was benefiting was the Liberals' friends at WE Charity, the Kielburgers.

All of us were seized, through the summer of 2020, with the committee reports and the committee proceedings. The Prime Minister testified. Other very serious allegations were made. People testifying before the committee talked about the impact this was having on Canada in general and about the fact that the \$900 million given to the charity for a program was a direct financial benefit to that organization.

Canadians were definitely seized with this, but again, this was a pattern throughout the hundreds of billions of dollars that were being spent. The deficit at the time was \$400 billion, and we saw an increase of \$1.3 billion. Many programs were being put out to help support Canadians, and the Conservatives initially supported many of those programs at the onset. However, then we started seeing a pattern develop. It is a historical pattern with the Liberal Party whereby its members start taking care of their friends and family, the connected and corrupted insiders who were benefiting directly as a result of this.

There are numerous examples of this that have been publicized, not the least of which is former Liberal MP Frank Baylis receiving \$237 million for ventilators that were never delivered. There was the \$150 million provided to SNC-Lavalin for mobile hospital beds. I am still waiting for a response to a letter I wrote to the Auditor General about what happened to that money.

However, nothing came to the attention of Canadians more than the WE Charity scandal, and the opposition party at the time was really trying to get to the bottom of what was going on. Of course, subsequently we heard concerns about fraud within the organization. I remember that a witness from the United States, Reed, whose full name I forget, was talking about the money that he had given to the WE Charity thinking it was purposefully being used for good. However, we saw exposés on television shows about how the WE Charity was recycling announcements about money and people were calling into question where that money was going.

Our job is not to provide an indictment of the WE Charity. It is to provide oversight, despite the fact that I think the government does not want us to do this. As the official opposition, it is our constitutional obligation to hold the government to account, verify, account for and provide transparency so we know where this money was going.

As the committee studied this issue, numerous reports were produced, not the least of which was the third report of the ethics committee on this issue. There were serious concerns about the minister at the time possibly providing false information to the committee.

• (1010)

There was contempt. Despite the will of Parliament, there was contempt on the part of three connected members of the Prime Minister's Office and the government. They did not show up and were told to obstruct the work of the committee by not showing up. Within this timeline, numerous questions of privilege and points of order have been raised on this. However, at the end of the day, what ultimately happened was the government used procedural tactics to avoid any and all accountability related to the WE scandal.

When things got really hot for the government, members will recall that the Prime Minister prorogued Parliament. In 2015, when he ran, he said that he was never going to use prorogation as a tool to dodge accountability and transparency. However, things really started heating up, and it was a political firestorm at that time in 2020, when not just the official opposition party but all parties, including the Bloc Québécois and the NDP, were forcefully trying to get to the bottom of the WE Charity scandal.

We believe there are unanswered questions. We believe there is still work the ethics committee can do with respect to the issues that I brought forward about ministerial accountability and about the accountability of the individuals who were directly involved in this scandal. They should come before committee and answer the questions that need to be answered to get to the bottom of the involvement of those particular individuals as it relates to the WE Charity scandal.

As I said, in 2020, the Prime Minister prorogued Parliament. He reset and had a throne speech, and everything that was on the Order Paper and on the table was basically off the table at that point because that is what prorogation does. The committee reports and committee studies that were being done were basically ended at that point. However, that did not end this issue, because there were still questions that needed to be answered.

As Parliament resumed again, which was well in advance of this coalition agreement that has now come to light between the NDP and the Liberals, the NDP was forceful. I remember watching those committee hearings and listening to the member for Timmins—James Bay and the member for New Westminster—Burnaby. They were forceful in getting to the bottom of the WE Charity scandal. However, what we are hearing now is relative silence from those members; they do not want to talk about it anymore. Of course, the Prime Minister went to an election just last year, and any of the work that was continuing fell off the table again because the Prime Minister decided to use an election to hide all of the issues. The reason these types of scandals are so profoundly scandalous is that there are well-connected insiders who are benefiting as a result of this pandemic.

Routine Proceedings

I rise today to propose an offer to the government House leader. The offer is that we move through this debate for the next couple of hours and then have a vote on it. We can find out exactly how all members intend to vote. With a recorded division, members will have to stand up, including NDP members. If we get to that point, I will make the offer to the government House leader that we extend the sitting this evening to do the work that Motion No. 11 calls for and debate what the government deems as important pieces of legislation. I apologize, but we are giving enough notice to extend the sitting into tonight.

We have to get to the bottom of this. We have to be able to vote on this motion to refer it back to committee so that the committee can continue the work and pick it up. I am hopeful that despite the Liberal-NDP coalition, the NDP will do the right thing, vote on the motion and get this back to committee so that we can get to the bottom of it.

• (1015)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was not that long ago when the Deputy Prime Minister stood in this place and presented, through the House of Commons to all Canadians, budget 2022-23, a budget plan that I believe has been accepted quite well across the land.

For me personally, what I have witnessed, day in and day out, is a Conservative Party that continues to use what I term character assassinations, whether of the Prime Minister or other ministers, as opposed to getting into the substance of the debate. That is what we are supposed to be debating today. Instead of going into this ridiculous motion, the opposition House leader wants us to focus, and continue to focus, as he has for the last six years, on personal attacks.

Does the member not feel any obligation to Canadians to have some sort of a discussion on the budget?

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, maybe the hon. member missed what I proposed. What I proposed was that we get to a vote on this, that we move concurrence on this, get it back to committee and extend the hours so that we can do the work on Bill C-19.

Conservatives are willing to work. We are willing to work, and that is why I put that proposal. Only a Liberal would think that accountability and transparency are a character assassination or a personal attack.

We are responsible, all of us on all sides, to Canadians for the way money is spent in this place. If money is spent in an inappropriate manner, then the Liberals, for the sake of all Canadians, should want to get to the bottom of this as much as we do, as well as any member of the NDP and the Bloc.

I encourage the government to accept the proposal. Let us move to a vote on concurrence. We will stay late till midnight tonight to debate Bill C-19.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I like hearing the member, even when he gives the same speech three times in a row. All members are honourable, except that he said a number of things that are factually incorrect. He contradicted you on a number of rulings that you have already made. I

think the official opposition House leader has a responsibility to respect the Speaker's rulings, which have been repeatedly contradicted by what Conservatives have been saying in the House.

For two months, we have had the Conservatives block everything in the House of Commons. When they are not putting up this committee report, and this is the third time the member has given the same speech on this one-paragraph report, they put up other reports. They have blocked Bill C-8. Teachers and farmers implored Conservatives to let it get through the House, yet for months they blocked it.

Now we have the budget implementation act, which puts into place two important things for the good people of Barrie—Innisfil. As colleagues well know, national dental care, which the NDP pushed for and forced the government to put into place, would actually help 29,000 people in Barrie and the immediate area. The national housing that the NDP has forced the government to finally invest in would also have significant positive impacts.

My question is very simple. The ethics committee has a responsibility, of course, to do its good work, but why are the Conservatives systematically blocking all pieces of legislation in the House of Commons? Why will they not allow good things to happen for Canadians?

• (1020)

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, it is not lost on any of us that the NDP House leader is parroting the Liberal government's talking points, since they are now connected at the hip and have been connected since the start of this Parliament. Subsequent to the coalition agreement, the NDP has supported the government on 95% of the legislation. Before that, from the time Parliament resumed up until the point of the coalition, they supported the government on 89% of the legislation. There is a consistent pattern there, and the House leader parroting government talking points is not a surprise to me.

We did offer to extend the hours to midnight, and I am wondering why the NDP does not want to work.

The Deputy Speaker: I want to remind members that the quicker we can ask the question and the quicker we can get an answer, the more people can participate in these kinds of debates.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise in this place and talk about the issues that are so important to Canadians. Before the Liberals and their partners in the NDP jump up and suggest that somehow accountability, ethics and a government that has this thing called character are not important, I would simply remind all members of this House that it is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that we uphold the highest level of integrity that is possible in this place.

Routine Proceedings

I rise to speak to this particular motion, and not for the first time. It is troubling to me that there have been continued efforts by the government to shut it down. With the amount of effort that the government puts into shutting down debate on the ethics investigations of the alleged criminality of the Prime Minister and many of the other challenges that the government has faced when it comes to accountability, ethics and the lack of integrity that it has shown over the last six and a half or so years, it screams from the rooftops. I hear from my constituents each and every day, and I am not exaggerating, how there is this culture of corruption that has grown, which has truly shaken the trust that Canadians need to have in their institutions.

My comment to all hon. members of this place is that the opposition House leader made a very clear and reasonable offer, so this will truly be a test. Was Motion No. 11 simply a power grab by the Liberals, or are they willing to take the official opposition up on our offer to have a fulsome debate on this important issue, the concurrence motion on “Questions of Conflict of Interest and Lobbying in Relation to Pandemic Spending”, an investigation that has been shut down multiple times in previous Parliaments and, unfortunately, in debating a similar motion in the last number of months? Our offer is very clear, that the opposition House leader would be that other House leader who would endorse a late sitting tonight.

Because I know the Prime Minister said he does not think much about monetary policy, I will do a bit of simple math. It would take about three hours for this concurrence motion to be done, and there would be about six hours of debate that could be done on the issues that the government finds very important. The government is quick to point out that Conservatives are conducting a character assassination, but there would have to be character for it to be assassinated.

It is ironic that whenever we talk about government accountability, I have heard more times than could be counted, between the heckles and the speeches, the government blaming Harper. The Liberals are quick to do so. Former Prime Minister Stephen Harper has a lot of free rent in the heads of Liberal members. They will talk about things that happened prior to seven years ago. In fact, in the early days of the pandemic, when they were looking for somebody to blame and could not find a reason to blame Harper, they even blamed Mulroney, and I find that very interesting.

It is interesting how time and again the Liberals are quick to say they do not want to look at ancient history when it comes to the Prime Minister's conduct. They do not want to look back at things that happened, such as in 2016, with the alleged criminality and the decision tree that we saw where the missing piece was provided by the Prime Minister to what could very well result in a fraud charge. Canadians deserve to know if their Prime Minister is a crook, and it is certainly a question that I hear on a—

• (1025)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, you will notice that even during the Senate scandal with Stephen Harper, I never called the former prime minister a crook. I think “crook” is an unparliamentary word and the member should retract it.

The Deputy Speaker: We have had a lot of unparliamentary language in the last few days. I would ask the member to take that back and rephrase it.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw that particular word, although I would simply note that it does have a particular historical relevance that certainly was in reference to the actions of history that I am sure many who have studied political history from around the world—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for St. Catharines is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was asked to withdraw his comments. One cannot do indirectly what one cannot do directly, and he is doing that very thing. He is trying to continue to use that unparliamentary word. He is doubling down on it. He was asked to withdraw. He sort of said he withdrew but then continued on to defend himself.

The Deputy Speaker: I would love to drag this on longer than we have to. I would like the member to retract and then move on with his speech.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I did retract it, and I certainly apologize if I offended the sensitivities of any members in this House who are quick to defend the Prime Minister and the allegations regarding his possible criminality.

Here we are today, and as I mentioned before, many Canadians are very concerned about the actions of the government, so we have made a very simple offer. It is to let us allow debate on this concurrence motion. We would then be happy to allow debate on the Budget Implementation Act, which I believe is scheduled for tonight. That is reasonable.

The government talked often about how it was not engaged in a power grab. This is its chance to prove it. When it comes to the report we are discussing here today, we have incredibly important items and a host of recommendations, which were agreed to by a committee in the last Parliament and by the committee in this Parliament.

There are 23 recommendations that have to do with accountability. We have recommendations related to cabinet decisions, decisions made in the minister's office, ministerial accountability, record keeping when it comes to lobbyists, the outsourcing of projects, due diligence reports, contracting with shell companies, answers on the specifics related to what happened with the WE charity and some of the questions that are still outstanding on that, the fact that those who speak French in this country were unfairly not being given the same access to federal programs, more on lobbying, giving powers to the Commissioner of Lobbying to ensure that they have the teeth to get the job done in accountability and integrity within lobbying in Canada, volunteer programs, compliance with orders of the House of Commons, the powers of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, and the use of new technology and some of the challenges associated with that. I could go on, but I would note I am running out of time.

I am certainly curious as to why the Liberals seem to be so bent on not talking about what I would suggest are important issues. Certainly, we have the committee, which the Liberals say often are the masters of their own destiny. When it comes to what we have before us today, it is vitally important that we are allowed to have the debates in this place that matter to Canadians and integrity, ethics and accountability are at the core of that.

As I mentioned, this is the chance for the Liberals to demonstrate this or be shown to have been entirely misleading over the course of the Motion No. 11 debate. We can move forward with a discussion about how Her Majesty's loyal opposition, and I would note to the Prime Minister, because I think he gets confused about this, we are loyal to the Crown and the country, not loyal to the Prime Minister. Conservatives are working hard on behalf of Canadians and the place that we have within this institution. Therefore, this debate matters.

I move, seconded by the member for Calgary Shepard:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting the following:

"the third report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, presented on Thursday, March 31, 2022, be not now concurred in, but that it be recommitted to the committee for further consideration, provided that:

(a) the committee be instructed to

(i) make every effort possible to receive evidence from Ben Chin, Rick Theis and Amitpal Singh, the witnesses who did not comply with the House's order of Thursday, March 25, 2021, to appear before the committee;

(ii) consider further the concerns expressed in the report about the member for Waterloo's failure 'in her obligation to be accurate with a committee';

(iii) report back within 60 sitting days; and

(b) the committee be empowered to order the attendance of the member for Waterloo, from time to time, as it sees fit.

• (1030)

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order.

We will continue with questions and comments. The hon. member for Pickering—Uxbridge.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague spoke about reasonable timelines, so I want to ask him about some the Conservatives have had. When they ousted two of their leaders, it only took a few months. The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was ousted only three months after the election due to his own party's spending scandal and the member for Durham was ousted after only four months—

• (1035)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is rising on a point of order.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is not speaking to the amendment. She is just spewing verbal graffiti.

The Deputy Speaker: We are getting into debate. However, I would recommend that the member for Pickering—Uxbridge ask her question.

Routine Proceedings

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, I will get to my question. I am speaking to the member's comments about reasonable timelines.

The member for Durham was ousted as the leader after about four months, and the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle after about three months, yet it took the Conservatives over five months to bring us to a vote on Bill C-8, which helps teachers and farmers. Therefore, when the member said that the members of the Conservative Party are working hard, is it that they are just working hard to find themselves a leader who might win in this country?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, it is that sort of absurdity that Canadians are sick and tired of. When it comes to this thing called democracy, we have it within our caucus.

I would ask the member if she voted to eject the former minister of justice and attorney general of Canada Jody Wilson-Raybould. Did she vote to support her leader during his many ethics violations? That caucus is complicit in the corruption that the Prime Minister and his cabinet bring to the governance of this country each and every day, and I hear from Canadians each and every day about how they are sick of it.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Battle River—Crowfoot for his speech. I am hoping to hear his thoughts on the state of ethics in the House, so that I can have a better understanding of it.

At the same time, I do not have a crystal ball. I obviously expect that we will again get caught up in parliamentary procedures and will never actually finish this debate. I think that Quebeckers and Canadians want answers from this government.

Can my colleague talk about his understanding of the current ethics situation in the House of Commons?

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question asked by the member of the Bloc. Although I am an anglophone who comes from a constituency that I believe is 98% anglophone, there are serious questions in this report that reference how the government ignored concerns relating to the French language.

When it comes to ethics and why this debate matters, when the Conservatives endeavoured to encourage debate on this important issue within the House, a number of times the government has shut it down, along with its coalition partners in the NDP. It is okay if that happens once because the government deems something else to be important. However, what we have before us is a very reasonable offer that gives the government an opportunity to prove that its rhetoric on Motion No. 11 can be backed up with action by allowing the debate to happen, while also ensuring we can debate what the government calls its priorities. I believe that is reasonable and fair. Now the government has a chance to show that action.

Privilege

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for two months now we have seen the Conservatives blocking supports for teachers, supports for farmers and COVID supports for Canadians. Now they are blocking dental care and affordable housing. After two months, today they came up with a reason for this, even though every single day in routine proceedings they have presented committee reports, sometimes two or three at the same time.

If the Conservatives are sincere, and I certainly hope the member is, then he could rise today in this House and apologize for the character of the dismal decade of the Harper government, with the Senate scandals, the election scandals, the veterans affairs scandals, the scandal around Afghan detainees, the Trump-style attempt to take over the Supreme Court, the funding scandals around the G8 and the gazebo, the repeated contempt of Parliament charges and the misuse of government funds. Will the member stand in this place and apologize for all of the ethical violations of the Harper government?

The Deputy Speaker: Before I recognize the member, I want to remind folks that we had a really heavy day yesterday. There was a lot of heckling going on yesterday. I do not want to descend into that once again today.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

● (1040)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, what the member has suggested is patently untrue. We have said that Conservatives would be happy to agree with three hours of debate on this important issue and then move to six hours of debate on the government's priorities. That is very reasonable, and I suggest Canadians would agree. Perhaps the member has a flight to catch or other things to attend to.

At the heart of it, the member's question certainly does not sound like a question coming from the fourth opposition party, but rather a question from a coalition partner or a backbencher from within the government. Canadians can simply see that for what it is.

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PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED INTERFERENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE WORK OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today on a question of privilege concerning inappropriate government interference in the work of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

Yesterday afternoon, my office received an email from the hon. member for London West. He forwarded an email chain concerning the preparation of drafting instructions for a report on a study the committee has been conducting on differential outcomes.

According to the committee's website, it was scheduled to meet yesterday afternoon for the purpose of discussing those very drafting instructions.

The email chain originated from the chair's office. It circulates a proposal prepared by the office of the member for London West and involves, understandably, the Liberal members of the commit-

tee and their staff. What makes less sense to me is that the email chain, which originated from the chair's office, also includes ministerial staffers Vanessa Cranston, the manager of Parliamentary Affairs for the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; Emilie Simard, an issues management advisor for the same minister; and Arielle Mantes, who has an email address in the government House leader's office and is reported in *The Hill Times* as a member of that minister's staff, but who the online government employee directory says is an advisor in the non-partisan Privy Council Office, also known as the Prime Minister's department, which raises a lot more questions.

Not only were ministerial staff kept informed, but there was actual participation in providing direction. Ms. Cranston, the immigration minister's manager of parliamentary affairs, replied:

I'd like to suggest that we broaden the prepared wording. I find this reads more like a recommendation and our goal for meeting today is to point the analysts in a direction, without explicitly asking for our conclusions to be highlighted.

What did she mean by "our goal"? On whose behalf is she speaking, and what conclusions is she trying to obfuscate? It sounds like not only is the minister's staff trying to direct the conclusions of a parliamentary committee, but also to manipulate the work of non-partisan analysts supplied by the Library of Parliament in getting there.

This direction was in turn forwarded to my employee by the member for London West with the instruction, "Did you take note of this?" It sounds to me like the member is rather concerned that the minister's political enforcer's word is the law.

A new, aspiring government backbencher would naturally want to be on the PMO's good side. It is an open secret around here that the Prime Minister's Office, and ministers' offices, are pulling the strings on committee proceedings: something they deny at every turn, naturally. It is something else to see in cold, hard text, the direction and instruction coming from a senior staffer to the immigration minister.

It is shocking, scandalous and absolutely inappropriate for the government to be interfering like this in the deliberations of a committee and the hard work of our non-partisan analysts. In my respectful opinion, this goes beyond disrespect of Parliament and is actually a contempt of Parliament.

Page 81 of the House of Commons Procedure and Practice, third edition, explains that:

There are, however, other affronts against the dignity and authority of Parliament which may not fall within one of the specifically defined privileges. Thus, the House also claims the right to punish, as a contempt, any action which, though not a breach of a specific privilege: tends to obstruct or impede the House in the performance of its functions; obstructs or impedes any Member or officer of the House in the discharge of their duties; or is an offence against the authority or dignity of the House....

The House of Commons enjoys very wide latitude in maintaining its dignity and authority through the exercise of its contempt power. In other words, the House may consider any misconduct to be contempt and may deal with it accordingly....

This area of parliamentary law is therefore extremely fluid and most valuable for the Commons to be able to meet novel situations.

Throughout the Commonwealth most procedural authorities hold that contempts, as opposed to privileges, cannot be enumerated or categorized.

Page 83 continues:

Just as it is not possible to categorize or to delineate every incident which may fall under the definition of contempt, it is also difficult to categorize the severity of contempt.

Contempts may vary greatly in their gravity; matters ranging from minor breaches of decorum to grave attacks against the authority of Parliament may be considered as contempts.

● (1045)

The interference shown by the immigration minister's office in the work of the committee, which is actually supposed to be holding him and his department to account, not the other way, rises to this threshold of being found as a contempt of Parliament.

The House must stand up for its rights and its independence. These rights are ancient, hard fought for, and must never be taken for granted. Bosc and Gagnon explain, at page 62, the early part of the arc of development of parliamentary privilege. I quote:

These privileges were found to be necessary to protect the House and its Members, not from the people, but from the power and interference of the King and the House of Lords....

The House of Commons in Canada has not had to challenge the Crown, its executive or the Upper House in the same manner as the British House of Commons.... Nonetheless, the privileges enjoyed by the House and its Members are part of the Constitution and therefore are of the utmost importance; they are in fact vital to the proper functioning of Parliament. This is as true now as it was centuries ago when the English House of Commons first fought to secure these privileges and rights.

Let us not roll backwards to those days when the executive subordinated the legislator to its whims. Let us not find ourselves capable of only doing what business, or writing what reports, the Prime Minister and his cabinet give us permission to. The House must stand up against interference by the executive branch by the current Liberal government at every turn.

Should you find a *prima facie* case of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to move an appropriate motion to refer the matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs so that it may conduct an investigation into this behaviour and report back to the House with its findings.

Before resuming my seat, I would ask for unanimous consent to table the emails in question.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: I want to thank the member for his intervention. We will respond back as soon as practical on his point.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we will be consulting the Blues of course. I would like to reserve a possible intervention on this later today.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if what the member for Simcoe—Grey says is true, it is extremely concerning.

Routine Proceedings

The Bloc Québécois would also like to reserve the right to intervene later in a potential debate.

The Deputy Speaker: I hope to have a response from both parties fairly quickly.

[English]

I recognize the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, now we are on to the concurrence amendment that the government House leader has attempted to set for the agenda today. As I have indicated in the past, one of the things I have learned over the past seven years is that, from the very beginning, the Conservative Party has been more focused on character assassination, whether it is of the Prime Minister or of other ministers, than on the different types of substantial policies. Instead of talking about substantive measures, whether it was seven years ago, talking about tax breaks for middle-class Canadians, or during the pandemic, talking about its issues, or just weeks ago, talking about the new federal budget that is being very well received by Canadians, the Conservatives are more focused on one thing, and that is those personal attacks.

We are supposed to be debating the budget implementation bill today; therefore, while I am on my feet at this point in time, I would move, seconded by the hon. member for Milton:

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

● (1050)

The Deputy Speaker: If a member of a recognized party in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and please indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, we absolutely want a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1135)

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

(Division No. 78)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Battiste
Bendayan
Bibeau
Blais

Ali
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Beech
Bennett
Bittle
Blair

Routine Proceedings

Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Freeland
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
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
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	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Singh	Sorbara
Spengemann	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thompson
Trudeau	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen

van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Yip
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NAYS**Members**

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
Kmieć
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lantsman
Lawrence
Lemire
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
MacKenzie
Martel
Mazier
McLean
Michaud
Morantz
Motz
Normandin
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Scheer
Seebach
Shiple
Sinclair-Desgagné
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Stubbs
Therrien

Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Trudel
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Vignola
Villemure	Vis
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Warkentin	Waugh
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PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

For your benefit, I just want to advise that the official opposition offered three more hours of debate. The Liberals and the NDP rejected that.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022, NO. 1

The House resumed from May 4 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.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Kings—Hants has four minutes and 25 seconds left.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will carry on right where I left off, which is talking about how I think it is extremely important, as it relates to health care, that this budget makes clear that we will be working with provinces and territories on foreign credentialing. I know there have been a number of examples in my home province of Nova Scotia, where there are individuals who have come to our province, who want to be able to practise in their particular field of health and have not been able to do so. Yes, we have to work with provinces and territories and colleges to balance public trust in our system, but also to make sure that this process can be expedited, such that if there are people who want to help practise and help support our health care system, they are taken care of.

I also want to talk about tax credits. We had tax credits for CCUS, which is carbon capture, utilization and storage. What I would say to the House is that in 2050, there undoubtedly will still be an oil and gas sector in the global context, but estimates by the International Energy Agency suggest that the number of barrels per day will go from about 100 million down to around about 25 million, give or take.

I think we all, as parliamentarians and indeed as a country, have an important reflection to make when it comes to whether Canada is going to be a part of that market, the 25 million barrels of oil a day. I, for one, as a parliamentarian, feel that yes, we have a responsibility, but in a carbon-constrained world in which there is going to

Government Orders

be less demand on that side, we have to make sure that our GHG intensity per barrel is as low as possible.

We took some criticism in the House on our decision on Bay du Nord, but that project was approved because it has some of the lowest emission intensity per barrel of oil in the world. We have to make sure that if we are going to be working with industry to reduce emissions in order to be able to meet our emission reduction targets, we also have to be positioning the sector to be the lowest-emitting oil and gas sector in the world, such that our products can continue to be competitive in the days ahead. I tip my cap, then, to the government on the CCUS tax credit.

Critical minerals, if we are going to be able to get to our climate targets, are going to play an extremely important role, from batteries in EV vehicles to potash to a whole host of different minerals that play a role in that. Canada has so much potential, and the fact that we had \$3.8 billion toward the development of a critical mineral strategy is a really extremely important piece, as is the 30% tax credit for exploration in the country.

I think we have a tremendous opportunity on a global stage to be there and to make sure we have a role. I was in Saskatchewan, as I have mentioned. I sat down with the Saskatchewan Mining Association, along with our Minister of Natural Resources. They pointed to this as being extremely important.

The last thing I will say is on the importance in the budget of economic growth, which the Minister of Finance made very clear in the budget document. The budget implementation act talks about a number of the measures that are important in that domain. I fully support that from where I sit here in the House, particularly the Canada Growth Fund, the recognition that we need to continue to drive innovation; 15 billion dollars' worth of capitalization; the innovation and investment agency, which is focused on attracting foreign capital to the country to drive the future economy and our future prosperity; and, finally, more money for the superclusters. In our neck of the woods, in Atlantic Canada, the ocean superclusters do tremendous work. These are all really important initiatives.

• (1140)

[Translation]

I also want to emphasize the importance of reducing interprovincial trade barriers and harmonizing certification between provinces and territories to improve labour mobility. A recent Senate report noted that our economy's GDP could grow between 2% and 4% if we focused on this area.

World-class wine production is a growing sector in my riding of Kings—Hants. However, in many cases it is easier for these producers to export to Europe than to other provinces, so I was pleased that the budget mentioned working on this with the provinces and territories.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's comments about Canada's critical mineral potential were spot on. Quebec has a lot of potential there too.

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The budget includes a very nice map of the minerals located in Quebec, but it says absolutely nothing about ensuring that processing will happen here, which would be consistent with the Government of Quebec's strategy.

Can the member tell me if his government has already taken steps to make sure these minerals are processed in Quebec, or will minerals be extracted here and then sent off to Toronto for the value add?

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

The Government of Canada is working with the Government of Quebec on issues from housing and environmental initiatives to natural resource development and essential critical minerals.

I know our government will work with the Province of Quebec and every other Canadian province.

[English]

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Kings—Hants for his talk about the CCUS. I have the only working carbon capture and storage facility, on a coal-fired power plant that produces energy for Saskatchewan. I am so glad to hear he has been to Saskatchewan, and I would invite him and arrange for him to have a tour of the CCUS facility, so he actually understands what it truly means to capture that CO₂ and put it in the ground.

My question is a very simple one. Is it the industry we want to kill, or is it the emissions?

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I think I was very clear in my remarks that there will be a role for Canadian oil and gas in the days ahead. I have mentioned the fact that the global markets are changing and that countries around the world are focused on a transition to a lower-carbon economy. We need to be serious about reducing emissions associated with the production of fossil fuels. That is going to be driven by innovation, similar to what the member has suggested with some of the CCUS innovation that is happening in his province of Saskatchewan. I think the ERP actually represents an important opportunity for Canadian industry to recognize that we have to reduce emissions.

CEOs with energy companies in Canada understand that. We as parliamentarians need to understand this is part of an important transition to fight climate change, but also to be on a competitive footing in the days ahead in global markets.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a question around the Canada disability benefit.

We are approaching a year since the benefit was initially introduced in this House, and the disability community was expecting to see it in budget 2022.

Why is the Canada disability benefit not in budget 2022?

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I know this has been part of the discussion throughout the budget process that is under way here. I will say that I think this government has stepped up to try to provide important social supports across the board.

Members have to recognize that this is budget 2022, but we were elected in 2021 for a four-year mandate. Notwithstanding the fact that I know many members in this House, including this one, understand the importance of supporting individuals with disabilities, this was just the first budget of a four-year cycle, and I suspect we will be working as a government to address some of the challenges and opportunities that the member has highlighted.

• (1145)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Kings—Hants for his speech. He is a member that I have a great amount of respect for.

That being said, when the member mentioned a tip of the cap to carbon capture and storage, we need to be honest: If we want even a 50% chance of staying below 1.5°C and ensuring a livable planet, we need to do our fair share. That means, as scientists have told us, that we need to leave 86% of Canada's proven fossil fuel reserves unextracted. To do so means investing in workers.

I wonder if the member would be open to commenting on the importance of the implications of taking that same \$7.1 billion, in a new subsidy, and instead investing that in workers and a just transition for them.

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, let me just say that I have great respect for the member opposite as well. I take the view that we look at the transition in an energy context in a low-carbon economy. This is not easy. We are talking about Canada: As rich and as powerful a country as we are, we are still going to need that energy in the days ahead.

We may differ in terms of our approach, but I really believe that we need to be focused on emissions reduction. We need to be investing in the technologies that are going to help make Canadian industry competitive for the product that is still going to be needed in the days ahead, notwithstanding the significant transition that we will be taking.

As it relates to a just transition, I am not a big fan of the word, as our Minister of Labour has talked about. I really think that it is important to focus on giving the skills and tools to develop a workforce for the future. We have 900,000 jobs in this country, and there are workers, regardless of whether or not they are in the oil and gas sector, who have skills that will be used across it. I think it is all about skills development, because those folks are still going to be important for whatever type of energy future we have in the days ahead.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we continue, I want to remind everybody, as I do a couple of times throughout the day, to keep questions and answers as short as they possibly can to make sure that all members and all parties have an opportunity to ask a question and get a response as well. The more we do that, the more we get in.

Continuing debate, the hon. member for Surrey Centre.

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to be here today to speak on the topic of Bill C-19, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures.

Over the past two years, we have faced unprecedented challenges. There is no part of our lives that was not impacted in some way by the coronavirus pandemic. Challenges were both personal and collective in nature. “Budget 2022: A Plan to Grow Our Economy and Make Life More Affordable” contains significant investments in key areas that would help Canadians continue to recover from the detrimental impacts of the pandemic.

Despite the challenges we have faced, Canada has emerged stronger. Because of our government's response to the pandemic, we are able to maintain the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio relative to our G7 international peers, with one of the fastest recoveries. We have the strongest job recovery in the G7, having recuperated 112% and maybe even 115% of the jobs that were lost since the peak of the pandemic, and our unemployment rate is down to 5.5%. This nearly matches Canada's best unemployment rate in 50 years, which we saw in 2019 when the unemployment rate was 5.4%.

The targeted investments in budget 2022 are designed to support people, economic growth and a clean future for everyone as we continue to navigate pandemic recovery. Through these targeted measures, this budget would help make it easier for Canadians to buy a home and move forward on dental care, help Canadian businesses scale up and grow, ensure that wealthy corporations pay their fair share, invest in a clean future, and help Canada become a world leader in producing electric vehicles.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight just a few of the many important investments outlined in this budget that are particularly impactful for my riding of Surrey Centre. These include important investments in housing, immigration, health and dental care. Regarding housing, we know that access to safe and affordable housing remains an incredible challenge for far too many. This is an issue that constituents raise with me often. Access to safe and affordable housing is one of the biggest concerns faced by many residents in the lower mainland. This region has some of the highest housing prices in the country, and as our population continues to grow, we need more homes to meet the demand.

Surrey Centre has been a recipient of significant investments through the rapid housing initiative over the past few years, including \$16.4 million under the major city stream to support the creation of affordable housing units for the new Atira Women's Resource Society facility. I had the opportunity to tour the Atira site currently under construction with the Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister a couple of weeks ago. This modular housing apartment will provide approximately 44 new affordable units. Owned and operated by Atira Women's Resource Society, this supportive housing complex will serve women experiencing, and at risk of, homelessness, including indigenous women, trans and two-spirited women, and women who are struggling with substance abuse, mental health and spiritual wellness. The \$16.4 million funding also assisted Atira to create more units, including next door, where now dozens of units are there to help women in need.

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Our government has also invested in the Foxglove supportive housing complex in my riding, which I had the opportunity to visit with the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion recently. This complex includes a total of 130 units: 66 are supportive housing, 34 are for complex care and 30 are shelter beds.

Housing is a complex issue, and I am pleased to see that budget 2022 contains significant investments to address the many layers of challenges with housing that we face and would help expand access to housing in our communities.

This would include doubling the construction of new homes over the next 10 years. Budget 2022 provides \$4 billion over five years to CMHC to launch a new housing accelerator fund. This fund aims to remove barriers and help municipalities build housing more quickly. It would target the creation of 100,000 net new housing units in the next five years.

Budget 2022 also contains investments to help Canadians buy their first homes, including by introducing the tax-free first home savings account and doubling the first-time homebuyers' tax credit, and introducing a multi-generational home renovation tax credit that provides up to \$7,500 in support for constructing a secondary suite in a home for an additional loved one. This would help keep seniors at home longer, and give them better, safer, more comfortable places to say.

The tax-free first home savings account would help thousands of Canadians save, tax-free, up to \$40,000 to buy their first home. This is on top of their RRSP options, thereby giving Canadian families up to \$15,000 or \$20,000 in tax savings.

● (1150)

As members may know, immigration is an issue very near and dear to my heart. I have one of the busiest constituency offices in the country and receive hundreds of immigration files each month. Budget 2022 proposes investments to make our immigration system more efficient. Applicants currently face long waits and delays with processing times. Our government has already begun to address these issues and I am pleased to share with everyone that we are continuing to do more.

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Budget 2022 proposes \$187 million over five years, and \$37 million ongoing, for IRCC to improve its capacity to respond to a growing volume of inquiries and to invest in the technology and tools required to better support people using those services. The budget also proposes \$386 million over five years, and \$86 million ongoing, for IRCC, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and CBSA to facilitate the timely and efficient entry of a growing number of visitors, workers and students.

I also recently introduced a private member's motion, Motion No. 44, to expand pathways to permanent residency for temporary foreign workers. Budget 2022 contains a number of proposed investments relative to Motion No. 44 to improve the temporary foreign worker program.

Throughout the pandemic, employers have found it challenging to find workers. As demand grows for the TFW program, we need to make changes to meet the needs of the system and ensure that TFWs are protected and have health, safety and quality of life while they work and contribute to our communities. These proposed measures include millions of dollars in funding for increasing protections for workers, reducing administrative burdens for trusted repeat employers and ensuring employers can quickly bring in workers to fill short-term labour market gaps.

Health care, pharmacare and dental: Our health care system is vital to the functioning of this country. Our government made significant investments, more than \$69 billion, to lead a coordinated federal, provincial and territorial response to fight COVID-19 and protect the health and safety of Canadians, with more funding to be rolled out in the future. This additional funding includes a \$2-billion top-up, plus \$45 billion to the Canada health transfer to the provinces and territories.

Budget 2022 proposes initiatives to attract more health care workers to rural communities and to support access to mental health resources with \$140 million for the Wellness Together Canada portal, as well as \$100 million for the substance use and addiction program to address the opioid crisis.

Finally, I would like to highlight the \$5.3 billion over five years to provide dental care for Canadians with family incomes of less than \$90,000 annually. It starts in 2022, with those under 12 years old, and expands to cover people under age 18, seniors and persons living with a disability in 2023, with full implementation by 2025.

There are far too many other important issues that budget 2022 proposes investments in for me to cover in the 10 minutes I have today. On that note, I will end with the hope that we can work collaboratively to pass this bill and begin the important work of getting these programs to Canadians as soon as possible to make life more affordable from coast to coast to coast.

● (1155)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the concern I have is that every initiative across this level of government right now that is focused on increasing housing supply has no details on how increasing housing supply is actually going to lower prices or make housing affordable for Canadians. This line of thinking and these concerns have been raised by economists

and many other schools of thought over the past several weeks. I share that concern.

If taxpayers are paying to increase housing supply, what guarantee is there, based on the government's program, that the supply will become more affordable for Canadians?

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Calgary Nose Hill. I have worked with her for several years on various committees.

When it comes to housing, the biggest challenge we have in this country is supply. The second part is getting into the housing market the first time. I have seen our government build a national housing strategy and invest over \$70 billion into it. We are now seeing the fruits of those labours. Particularly in my riding, I have seen 330 new affordable rental housing units being built across from my office. I have seen three announcements for rapid housing initiatives. I have also now seen ways that young people can save tax-free after this bill passes so they can buy their first homes.

These are on top of the \$4-billion home accelerator fund that will help municipalities that are committed, because this is a multi-level approach. Those that are committed will get a carrot instead of a stick in order to build more houses and double the housing output this country needs to grow.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned a housing program that was in the budget. The budget does actually include a few interesting investments in housing.

The program that gives municipalities \$4 billion to accelerate the construction of 100,000 housing units is actually very frightening for Quebec. The last time we went through this, when the national housing strategy was launched in 2017, it took three years of negotiations before a single penny was actually spent on it. There is no way around it. If the federal government decides to negotiate with the municipalities, it will have to go through Quebec City, because the feds do not deal directly with the municipalities. Quebec City and Ottawa will have to reach an agreement. It took three years last time. During that period, money was flowing to Toronto and Vancouver, and no money was being spent in Quebec.

Instead of planning to do this with the municipalities, would it not have been simpler to send the money directly to Quebec City, so that those who know what the needs are can reach an agreement with the municipalities?

[English]

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Speaker, it is funny to hear that coming from the Bloc members, who usually want everything to go to the provinces, but when negotiating with the provinces, as they just said in their own question, it takes three years to implement those deals, as opposed to when it goes directly to the municipalities. If we ask any municipalities, they want funding directly to themselves. They do not want to be brokered through a province that has its own political motives.

This is a great initiative. Cities will make a plan and send it to the federal government, and the federal government will approve it. If they have results, they will get the money; if they do not perform, they will not get it.

• (1200)

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the questions I have around the implementation act is about the fact that, again and again, we hear the government promise to address the issue of clean drinking water on first nations reserves, and we continue to see that pushed further and further away. I see it is mentioned very briefly in this implementation act, but I have also heard the Minister of Indigenous Services talk about capacity, saying that once first nations have the capacity, we will get them their clean drinking water.

Does the member agree with the NDP that clean drinking water is an essential human right, that every person in Canada should have it and that the urgency of this issue needs to be addressed today, if not sooner, rather than five years away?

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Speaker, I think it is a fundamental human right to have clean drinking water, and this side of the House definitely agrees with that. I can assure the member that every drinking water advisory that was there in 2015 has been resolved, particularly in our province of British Columbia, but there are new drinking water advisories that are coming to the front, and for those we are working tirelessly day and night. I know that no one works harder than our Minister of Indigenous Services to make sure that everyone has clean drinking water immediately on those sites.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time today with the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

I want to focus my remarks today on the acceptability of the government's budget and the budget implementation bill in two key areas. Number one is affordability as the larger issue, but specifically housing affordability as well as energy affordability. Number two is addressing climate change.

In the first half, I want to talk about housing supply, which is a hard truth that I really do not think anyone in here wants to talk about. No government has been successful in addressing the supply-side issue in Canada. The number of houses that the government is purporting to be able to build and all the money that has been put into building houses by the government have actually seen housing prices increase by 30% in a very short period of time. It is sort of a perverse environment, where we are seeing housing prices increase and become more affordable. I am sitting here looking at some of the pages in the House of Commons and wondering how

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they are going to be able to buy a house. How are they going to be able to afford this?

What this budget does not address, and what nobody is addressing in the House, is that having “taxpayer-subsidized savings schemes to boost down payments”, and I am quoting from an article in *The Line* written by Jen Gerson, “will double first-time buyers' tax credits and create more buyers' incentives”. All this does is address the demand side of things. It does not actually address pricing. What this does is just say that we are okay with the existing prices and the unaffordability of housing in Canada, and that we are just expecting that first-time homebuyers in Canada will somehow try to take on that level of debt to buy a home in Canada.

That is just not on the table for a lot of people. Not only is it not on the table for first-time homebuyers, but it is also not on the table for somebody who has been in a 10-year marriage and has just divorced. How is either of those people going to get back into the housing market at this point in time?

The reality is that nobody in this place wants to see housing prices go down, so what we are left chasing here is policies that try to get people into the housing market at what is probably an over-valued housing bubble that has been fuelled by very questionable policies on interest rates and whatnot in the past.

What we have in this budget, and I am sure everybody is going to hate my saying this, is incentives to keep juicing demand, as opposed to actually looking at the supply side and the affordability issue. For that reason, I have serious questions, given the severity of the housing affordability crisis in Canada, about the government budget's ability to do that. It is a huge problem. What are we saying to young Canadians right now? We are telling them not to worry because we are trying to make it easier for them to save up, when they are already not being paid in the same way their parents were and they are facing huge levels of inflation and high levels of housing prices that have been unseen. That is crazy. Why is no one talking about this?

This is highly problematic. I would just encourage members of all political stripes here. I wish we could have an actual conversation about ways to address some of the underlying problems with Canada's housing market. We have an entire generation of people who are aging, whose retirement is dependent upon paper gains in their real estate. They do not want to see their housing prices go down. That is their retirement. How are we addressing their retirement? We have told them, as a society, that this is a good thing. We have told them to depend on this, and now we are saying that housing is a problem.

Without addressing that issue, we are never going to fix this. This budget does not do that. We are just going to keep skating by while housing prices increase or until we have some sort of catastrophic failure, either of which is not good for the Canadian economy or for anybody in Canada who is trying to find a place to live.

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• (1205)

The other issue I want to raise, which is near and dear to my heart as a member of Parliament in Calgary, particularly north central Calgary, is the inability of the government to match its so-called climate change solutions with incenting and providing low-cost, readily available low-carbon alternatives to high-carbon consumer products and practices. What I want to speak about specifically is the government's inability to both incent and provide alternatives, which it assumes are there with its policies, to the people I represent and how that impacts their lives and perversely makes achieving our climate change targets worse.

For example, in Calgary Centre North there are a large number of people who would love to take public transit to downtown Calgary, including me. I prefer to take public transit. It lets me work more. I get stressed easily and do not like to drive when I do not have to. I would love to do that, but the reality is that for me to take a 20-minute bus ride from where I live in north central Calgary to downtown, it is 20 minutes at the best of times by bus, but sometimes it could be an hour or even two hours on a snow day. There is no light rail transit that goes from downtown Calgary to my part of the city, which has one of the highest levels of under-served potential transit ridership in western Canada, based on the ridership numbers I have seen. What that means for somebody like me is that I still have to gas up my car to get to meetings downtown. I am paying \$100 or more for a tank of gas, but I am in a privileged position. What are people supposed to do if they are not making my income? They do not have the option of getting on a public transit line; they have to fill up their vehicle to go to work or get their kids to school.

Therefore, all the increase in carbon energy, which has been affected not just by the price on carbon but also by supply-side failures, means that people are paying more for carbon, not that they are using less of it. This is part of the problem with the inflationary pressure we are seeing in Canada.

The budget could have started to address some of these issues, for example in how the government is allocating transit funding, both from a capital development perspective and from an operating perspective. It is using a formula that is just not realistic, with respect to where the money is going. I believe it is 30% population-based and 70% based on existing transit ridership. What about parts of the country where there is no public transit? We would love to have public transit, but the government has not allocated transit funding there. That is the first problem, that we do not have the transit to use. It is not that we do not want to use it; it is that it is not there, so we are still filling up our tanks with gas.

The second problem is this. It is not just about funding allocation, but about how the federal government uses its convening role as a funding partner between the provincial governments and the municipalities to see transit projects built. The green line, the LRT project I was talking about earlier, has failed in Calgary. Although the funding was announced nearly 10 years ago now, virtually nothing has been built. The project has decreased in scope to a quarter and has ballooned in cost four or five times what was originally projected. That is a bad investment with respect to how this management works. The federal government should put boundaries around funding to make sure these developments actually get built.

People cannot afford to keep having taxes increase, prices increase and lack of supply of goods, housing and energy increase, while not addressing those core, fundamental issues. From that perspective, this budget is a huge missed opportunity.

I wish I had an hour and a half to get into all of the issues around the amount of money that is spent, which puts Canada into debt, but just on those two issues alone, this budget is not addressing them. It spends so much and it disadvantages Canadians. I hope the government can get it right. Until then, it does not have my support.

• (1210)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it was not that long ago, a few years back, when we could get a litre of gasoline at 88¢. At that time, the government was being criticized by the Conservative Party, which was saying that Alberta was collapsing and everything was going so bad because the price of gas was so low. Today, we are being criticized because the price of gas is so high. I wonder if the member can provide her thoughts with respect to the whole concept of the world pricing of oil and to what degree Canada really has an impact on the world price of oil.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, I think my colleague misunderstood. I was eviscerating the government on the fact that there are no substitute goods for carbon energy, to a large extent, across Canada to ensure that the price on carbon makes carbon pricing elastic. It is inelastic right now.

The second thing is what the government has done, and we have criticized the government for it. Canada still needs carbon energy. That is just the reality. We cannot argue with that; we need it right now. With the policies the government has, all that is happening is an offshoring of our jobs to Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, and it is raising the cost of energy because we do not have a stable domestic supply.

There is a lack of investments or a prevention of investments in energy infrastructure. I am not saying that we should not be looking at ways to provide alternatives, but that has not happened and the government fails to realize it. I think there is a record of policy failure over several years, and this budget does not rectify that.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to see my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill in the House again. It has been a while, and we miss hearing her during our debates.

One section of Bill C-19 has to do with the luxury tax. I agree on the principle: Those who benefited more during the pandemic can and should contribute to helping those who struggled a bit more.

However, this section includes a measure on private aircraft. When we talk about privately owned aircraft, we think of well-off people with means, but that is not always the case. Private pilots are often enthusiasts who spend a tremendous amount of money on their hobby because it is expensive. They often have to get together as a group to buy a small plane, and even then it will cost far more than \$100,000, which is the threshold for the luxury tax.

Does my colleague think that this luxury tax may have been designed without any consideration for the reality of people who enjoy recreational aviation?

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, I think there are a lot of people in my riding who would get really mad at me if I started talking about private aircraft right now, because they can barely afford their cars.

I would just say this. This aspect of the budget does not address the broader issue of income inequality, rising unaffordability in Canada and inflation. It is window dressing. The systemic issue of housing affordability that I addressed in my speech and the cost of energy are two very fundamental issues that the government has not addressed from a realistic perspective, and I think that is very unfortunate.

• (1215)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member talked about housing affordability. She said it was a huge problem and I agree with her. I think everyone would agree with her. However, I listened carefully and she offered absolutely no solutions. She just said we should talk about this.

I am wondering what her solution would be. Would she agree with the NDP that we need to get back into the affordable housing game through the federal government and build 500,000 units of affordable housing just to catch up to where previous governments have left us over the last 30 years?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, again, how do we do that? That is what needs to be asked. On what land do we do this and for how much? Who gets those units? There is a much greater supply issue than that. Will those units be allowed to be Airbnbs or sit vacant?

Those are the fundamental questions that no one wants to talk about, of any political stripe. If we do not get to the heart of those questions, we are never going to address the affordability crisis in housing in Canada.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, today we are debating Bill C-19, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022, and other measures. For my constituents, budget implementation acts are the mechanisms for Parliament to approve the spending outlined in the government's annual budget. In other words, it is when rhetoric meets reality.

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My constituents were hopeful that budget 2022 would provide much-needed relief and address the key challenges facing Canadians, such as the labour and housing supply shortages and, of course, the rising cost of living. Instead, budget 2022, while indeed making many promises, fails to meaningfully address critical issues facing Canadians. It has piled more debt onto the backs of taxpayers, and has raised taxes while failing to address tax evasion. Bill C-19 is very long, yet it somehow manages to leave out most of the things the Liberals promised to do. Imagine that. Why did the Minister of Finance table a budget that makes so many promises if she had no intention of implementing them at this critical time?

During my time, I am going to talk briefly about the labour market, Pacific economic development, housing and some local issues.

On the labour market, it never ceases to amaze me how many businesses in my riding need employees right now. I see “help wanted” signs on billboards across my riding, on window fronts, in newspapers and on company vehicles. There is a significant shortage of skilled workers throughout not only my riding and province, but our entire country.

We all know Canada's population is aging. In fact, we have known this for a long time. For years we have been warned of a coming “grey tsunami”. I would argue today that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this point. It means that more people right now are exiting the workforce through retirement, with fewer people entering to replace them.

Budget 2022 makes lots of promises about labour shortages and attracting new skilled workers, but when I looked at Bill C-19, I saw only two of the nine different commitments made in the budget.

The first one in Bill C-19 is the amendment to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act that commits to increase the number of permanent residents accepted each year. While this sounds great on the surface, what this budget does not do is address the other side of this problem. If we are increasing the number of skilled immigrants coming into this country who want to buy homes and use their capital, we are only making the housing supply shortage worse. The government never addressed this key fact. The permanent residency point only conflates the housing problem that we are facing.

The second point is that, while I support tax recognition of up to \$4,000 a year in travel and relocation expenses, as outlined in Bill C-19, this will not add new workers to Canada's labour force, nor will it provide the skills training for Canadians who seek a promotion or a new career.

Government Orders

One commitment that could have been included, which even the Liberals have talked about, is foreign credential recognition. Many skilled workers who enter Canada come here under the pretense that they will serve as doctors or nurses or work in skilled health care fields. The current government, which does not work with the provinces, does not address that issue. This is an easy way we could solve part of the doctor and nursing shortages that my province is so acutely facing at this moment.

Another important promise missing from Bill C-19 is the opportunities fund supporting people with disabilities. This is a segment of our workforce that does not get enough attention. It is a segment of our workforce that wants to find purpose in the work they do. The government made a promise to work with them, but it is obviously not a priority because it is not in Bill C-19. I would encourage the Liberal members of the House to push their government to include the promises on workers with disabilities. That is very important.

Third, the government made multiple promises regarding temporary foreign workers, but they are also excluded from Bill C-19. I raise this point because I come from an agriculturally rich area of the country. In fact, the riding of Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, the riding of Abbotsford and the neighbouring riding of Chilliwack—Hope have the highest farm gate sales in the entire country. The greenhouse growers, dairy farmers and fruit growers are all calling for more temporary foreign workers to help meet the food security challenges that we are facing. The government could have done that and it failed to.

• (1220)

Turning to Pacific economic development, last August the government launched the department of Pacific Economic Development Canada. This agency was touted as a long-term partner dedicated to supporting B.C.'s economic development on the ground and in our communities. Indeed, it came with a lot of fanfare and big announcements, but almost a year after it was launched, Pacific Economic Development Canada has not opened its new office in Surrey. It is still in the old western economic development office in downtown Vancouver, and it has not fulfilled any of its promises to serve rural Canada.

I mention this today because, as everyone in the House knows, the one thing I have spoken about most is disaster recovery and emergency management. Pacific Economic Development Canada and, by extension, Community Futures, which I believe is the most efficient government organization, could be doing a lot more, so I encourage the government to fund Community Futures to help address labour shortages and business capital shortages for the many people in rural British Columbia. It could have gotten this done.

Finally, on Pacific economic development, what irks me the most is that when I went through the estimates, I found out that Pacific-Can will receive just \$48.44 on a per capita basis for every citizen in the province of British Columbia. Members can compare that with Ontario, where the agency will receive \$55.14 for every citizen, and Quebec, where it will be \$67.85.

Why is British Columbia being underfunded again? Why now, especially when our province has faced unprecedented challenges, is the government not empowering an organization in the govern-

ment or Community Futures to do the work that we need to do right now to help people who are facing some critical situations? It is not fair to British Columbian taxpayers that we are underfunded. In fact, it kind of sets the stage for the argument that the Laurentian elite do not care about British Columbia.

I will turn to housing. Last year, as the opposition's shadow minister for housing, I highlighted the failure of budget 2021 to address the critical supply shortages, money laundering and foreign investment that have contributed to the high cost of homes. On this side of the House, we have said over and over that supply is the biggest factor in skyrocketing home prices. We are not alone in this. There is industry consensus, and CMHC has been saying the same things. We are not keeping up with demand.

The government claims it is finally addressing the issue of foreign investors flooding Canada's real estate market, doing so through its temporary ban on foreign non-residents purchasing residential properties. However, Bill C-19 is very vague on the details. It says that temporary residents are exempt from this ban. We are left to wonder what this government means by temporary residents. Could wealthy foreign families still buy real estate through their children who come to Canada as international students? The loopholes are just astounding.

In the months leading up to the budget, we heard a lot from the Liberals about how they heard Canadians and how they would address the housing crisis. The Liberals made grand promises in this budget, including a housing accelerator fund for 100,000 homes, a direct payment to those struggling to afford a home, doubling the first-time homebuyers' tax credit, a new savings account and increased funding to tackle homelessness. However, the previously mentioned ban on foreign buyers and a tax on house flipping were the only items included in Bill C-19. They are not even including their primary promises in this bill. Canadians just want an affordable place to call home, so when we talk about rhetoric and reality, all we are seeing from the government is rhetoric on housing. It is not even doing what it says it is going to do.

In conclusion, from this budget my constituents were hoping for a commitment to improve infrastructure, which was wholly ignored by the government; a partner to support much-needed economic development in B.C. after devastating floods and wildfires; a substantial increase in our housing supply; and a plan, which I did not have a chance to talk about, for the backlog at Passport Canada that is stopping people from travelling right now.

With that, I would like to wrap up my comments today by moving an amendment to the amendment to Bill C-19. I move, seconded by the member for Bay of Quinte:

That the amendment be amended by adding the following:
 “, and fails to combat tax evasion.”

• (1225)

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

Continuing with question and comments, we have the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of two things is happening, as this is the second or third time that Conservatives have moved amendments to amendments. Either somebody is not doing their homework in properly preparing their amendment before introducing it or Conservatives are intentionally adding more votes to our vote count in order to burn more time. I will let the public be the judge of that.

My question to the member respects his comments around housing, and that we are not doing anything about housing. All I heard him do, which was very similar to what I heard the previous speaker do, is complain, rather than offering some solutions.

I would like to hear what the member thinks we should be doing. I heard him be very critical about one program, and that he does not think it is going to be successful, but can he offer some ideas as to what we should be doing to deal with the housing crisis?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, what I actually said at the very beginning of my speech was that Bill C-19 “is when rhetoric meets reality.”

I pointed out very clearly that all of the promises made by the Liberals, even some where we might find consensus in the House, were excluded from Bill C-19, including all of their commitments to address the supply-side crisis we are facing in this country. In addition, Bill C-19 does not even include their signature program of a new savings account.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague's intervention in the House today was very interesting, and I listened with attention.

The member comes from British Columbia, and of course, I am a member from Alberta. They are arguably two of the provinces that have dealt the most with the climate crisis in recent years, with fires and flooding in my province and flooding in his region just recently.

One of the things I have always wanted to do in this place is to ensure that we have a robust climate strategy, and as an Albertan, the best way we can do that is ensure that there is support for Albertan workers to transition to a green, future economy. I wonder if the member feels that what we saw in this budget implementation act meets that desperate need to support workers as our economies transform.

• (1230)

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, the member for Edmonton Strathcona raises an important point.

Government Orders

In Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon and throughout British Columbia, when we are talking about climate change right now, we are talking about climate resilient infrastructure. I do acknowledge the \$5 billion allocated in the fall economic statement from the government, but as I have said in the House and before, in my home town of Abbotsford alone, which is part of my riding, just to upgrade the diking system could cost upwards of \$3 billion. This region of the province, and in our country, has the highest farm gate sales per capita. We have a critical sector of our economy that needs infrastructure investments to stop or manage future floods and other disasters such as those we experienced in 2021.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, oil subsidies figure prominently in this economic statement and in the budget. In this context, what concerns me is the energy transition. How can we promote the electrification of transportation?

Is my colleague satisfied with the measures that are in place? Would he like to comment further?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, what we need to do in British Columbia is support the construction of infrastructure such as a rail system for the public. We need a lot of public transportation to help our economy and families, who are paying too much for gas right now.

[English]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is great to see everyone. I wish all my colleagues a wonderful and productive day. The sun is shining outside, and warmer weather is close at hand. I think we are all happy about that.

I will be splitting my time with my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Milton.

It is a pleasure to rise to speak on Bill C-19 and the measures in the bill that would continue to drive the Canadian economy forward by leveraging the inherent strength and resiliency of all our citizens, create good-paying middle-class jobs, and ensure a bright and prosperous future for all Canadians, including the wonderful residents of Vaughan—Woodbridge, who I have the privilege of representing.

As many of my colleagues know, I am an MP who is focused squarely on the economy, competitiveness, job creative and fiscal prudence, backed by my entire educational and professional career in the field of economics and working in the global financial markets literally throughout the world. It is the economy for me.

Government Orders

At the same time, I am a socially progressive person who believes fundamentally that we as a society must always ensure that human rights, women's rights and the rights of minorities and the most vulnerable are always protected. As a father of three beautiful young girls, including a seven-month-old, I will state this in reference to what we are seeing transpire in the United States, where I lived and worked for several years and where I have many friends and family. A woman's right to choose is simply not up for debate. A woman's right to reproductive health services is not up for debate. We must always ensure that women across Canada, from coast to coast to coast, have full access to the health services they need. Protecting and promoting women's rights is something we must always stand for, full stop, non-negotiable.

The Canadian economy is strong, characterized by historically low unemployment and strong economic growth. The future is truly bright. I am the chair of the Liberal auto caucus and in the last two months we have secured, as a government working with industry and our partners, more than 13 billion dollars' worth of investment in Canada's auto sector, maintaining and creating more than 16,000 direct jobs.

The auto sector is something near and dear to my heart, since my time in New York City working for a rating agency. At the rating agency, I was actually in charge of the global auto parts coverage, and worked in tandem on the global OEM manufacturers, visiting Wolfsburg Volkswagen in Germany, Peugeot in Paris, Fiat in Turin, Hyundai in Korea, and Japanese manufacturers as well. It is an industry I am very well versed in, and something I have been watching for many years, including during the 2008-09 recession.

It is great to see our government working hand-in-hand with industry, leading the charge, so we can have a vibrant industry here in Canada. It is also good to see the ongoing transformation to electric vehicles, for which Canada is uniquely positioned, both on the human capital side and on the natural resource side.

Turning to Bill C-19, tradespeople and skilled trades build and maintain the critical infrastructure we utilize, and we are dependent upon them on a daily basis in the communities where we raise our families. In my youth, I worked at a pulp and paper mill in northern British Columbia. I spent a few summers there. It was a phenomenal experience, and I learned a lot from the hard-working Canadians who work in our resource sector.

Much like in other infrastructure, be it refineries, pipelines, chemical plants, major infrastructure projects, people who work in the trades travel. They travel quite a distance for what are called "turnarounds" or "shutdowns". I remember experiencing that. They also travel for permanent relocation.

With that, I am very happy to see, and I was very happy to advocate for, the labour mobility deduction of \$4,000 in Bill C-19. It would allow these skilled trades folks to offset some of the costs associated with this travel. It is a well-needed measure that I again advocated for, and it is great to see it in the BIA, Bill C-19.

My riding is home to the training centres and the headquarters of LIUNA 183 and the Carpenters Local 27, and the individuals from these two unions, day in and day out, toil, sacrifice and build without a lot of fanfare. They build our infrastructure and communities.

I salute them, and I am proud to be their representative in Ottawa. I will always have the backs of all of them and all the great skilled trades people across this country.

● (1235)

Budget 2022 focuses on three main goals: investing in creating economic growth and innovation, continuing to invest in Canadians, and investing in the ongoing green transition.

We all know quite well that we must act with all levels of government and all stakeholders to make housing more affordable for Canadians. With that, we know we cannot have a growing and strong economy and a diverse and talented workforce, particularly for newcomers coming to Canada, without more homes. We will act, and we are acting.

First, we will allow Canadians who intend to purchase their first home to help them save via a tax-free home savings account. Second, we will increase the supply of housing by launching a \$4-billion home accelerator fund to support and incentivize municipalities to build more homes faster. We must break down the red tape, and we must break down the barriers to getting more shovels in the ground and boots working. Third, we need to protect buyers and renters by introducing a homebuyers' bill of rights and bring forward a national plan to end blind bidding. We will also ban foreign buyers from owning non-recreational residential property for two years.

I am one of the representatives in the city of Vaughan, along with the members for King—Vaughan and Thornhill. The city of Vaughan and the York region are home, frankly, to the largest number of home builders in the province of Ontario and, really, in the country.

The joke goes that infrastructure projects in Ontario all seem to touch the city of Vaughan because of the many infrastructure participants there in one shape, form or another, such as names like Greenpark Group, Deco Homes, The Remington Group, Empire Communities, Sorbara Group, Gold Park Homes, TACC Construction, Cortel Group, CountryWide Homes, Canvas Developments, Fernbrook Homes, Royal Pine Homes, Arista Homes and Caliber Homes. Those are from just doing a quick search, and I probably missed about another 10 names.

These are all home builders who are based in the York region in the city of Vaughan. They are entrepreneurs. They came to this country as newcomers. They worked hard and toiled, and they build. They build the communities that we live in. They sacrificed. They employ, directly, tens of thousands of Canadians and, indirectly, many, many more.

Their goal is simple, which is to ensure that Canadians have a home, to create memories for them and their families. We need to build. That is what we will be doing, and that is what these individuals and these firms do. We will work with them and we will work with the municipalities to ensure that we increase the supply of new home construction across Canada and more than double housing construction over the next 10 years.

On my last topic, I am a strong believer in our free market economic system and in competition. Competition leads to innovation and, yes, disruption as well, but competition in our free market and our capitalist system has brought with it the highest standards of living and pulled literally billions of individuals across the globe out of poverty.

However, competition can be eroded. When anti-competitive practices take hold, and with that, I have long advocated for changes and the strengthening of Canada's Competition Act to ensure that business practices do not hold back innovation and competition, it can be detrimental to the interests of consumers and employees. We must hold back on that.

With that, I am pleased to see, in Bill C-19 significant amendments to the Competition Act, which I know are highly technical, but they are very important. They include a proposed criminal offence for so-called wage-fixing and no-poaching agreements between competitors; an explicit prohibition against drip pricing; private access to Canada's Competition Tribunal for abuse of dominance claims; an increase in administrative monetary penalties; an expansion of the scope of the competition bureau's evidence-gathering powers pertaining to section 7; an expansion of the list of factors that may be considered when assessing the prevention and lessening of competition for merger review and non-criminal competitor collaborations; and the amendment of the definition of anti-competitive act for abuse of dominance.

Competition is the essence of our free market and capitalist system. It is wonderful to see the Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister, along with the Minister of Innovation and their teams, collaborating and working in unison to ensure that anti-competitor practices are both disallowed and that the Competition Act be modernized, which we will need to continue to work on for the penalties to be updated.

There is nothing more important to someone like me than to see healthy competition that leads to innovation, job creation and a growing and strong middle class, and there is nothing that makes me angrier and makes me speak out more than when I see anti-competitive practices take hold in any markets.

• (1240)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's intervention today and his attendance at the occasional finance meeting, where we can discuss housing inflation, among other things.

He mentions, specifically, the so-called foreign buyers ban in Bill C-19. The minister has to, first of all, identify a particular property that falls outside the many loopholes and exemptions the government has given for all sorts of people, but if they legitimately

find it, the minister has to go through a provincial court process, which can take years, and the ultimate slap on the wrist is \$10,000.

Does the hon. member think that taking up court time and years of process to have someone who has violated the law of this country be fined \$10,000 is sufficient? Does he think it should be much higher than that?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague and friend from the riding of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, where they produce a lot of beautiful wine.

I will say this: We need to provide incentives to build and increase the supply of housing in Canada. We are going to be doing that, but we also need to restrain and lower the number of purchases being undertaken by foreigners. We need to have a plan for Canada's housing market to put Canadians first. That is what we are doing. We need to ensure middle-class Canadians and first-time homebuyers have the first opportunity to purchase homes here in the country where they live, work and pay taxes.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased that my colleague is interested in the housing issue, but it is the construction of homes that is the urgent issue. Supply and demand is a game. The problem is that the supply is inadequate, and this is causing prices to skyrocket. That is the case in major centres, but all too often we forget that this is also happening in the regions and rural areas.

Could my colleague take action to ensure that the funding does not all go to the Toronto region, as is often the case in the Canadian economy with government projects?

Could he take action to ensure that remote and rural regions get their share of the pie and ensure that supply increases in the regions?

We want to address the labour shortage, but the first problem is that people cannot find housing.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue for his question.

[English]

I will say this: Housing is an issue from coast to coast to coast. We will act in the interests of all Canadians, be it urban, rural or semi-urban. In whatever category and whatever city, we will work with all our municipal partners and all our provincial partners to ensure that housing gets built, to get shovels in the ground and to increase that supply, which we know we need to do. Supply has not kept up to the need for several years. We need to make those adjustments very quickly.

Government Orders

● (1245)

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, my question to the member is really on the idea of non-market housing. In my riding, I look across the large region of North Island—Powell River and I am hearing again and again from people who have nowhere to live. I am talking to people with professional jobs: good, decent-paying jobs who are living in RVs because they simply can find nothing else to live in.

Our market is hot. People are buying up houses so rental units are gone, and they are gone quickly because people are selling them at an outrageous profit. We need non-market housing. We need it for low-income families. We need it for moderate-income families and also for folks who are making good incomes but cannot afford anything else because the rent costs are going up startlingly, as well.

Can the member talk about when the government is going to get serious about non-market housing so we can actually see people be able to afford to live, and young people able to afford houses in the future?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, on the affordable housing front, our government has put forward, since 2015, a \$70-billion-plus national affordable housing program that deals with exactly what the member referenced and asked about, which includes housing for co-ops and housing for seniors, for lower-income Canadians and for vulnerable Canadians. We have done that.

In my riding, for example, we actually completed a rental housing unit with 240 units that was done in partnership with York Region and the City of Vaughan. We are making strides on that front, and the \$70-billion-plus national housing strategy for affordable housing is bearing fruit.

[Translation]

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a real privilege for me to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-19, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures, which is very important.

[English]

It is a privilege to speak in the House today to Bill C-19, the Budget Implementation Act. Budget 2022 plots a course forward for our country: our destination is a greener, cleaner, fairer, more equitable country with more well-paying jobs and more affordable housing for all Canadians.

I have heard before that in order to know where we are going, we must first know where we came from. Today, May 5, is Dutch Liberation Day, for my fellow Dutch Canadians. I know there is more than one Dutch diaspora individual in the House. My dad arrived here in Canada as an infant with his parents and siblings almost 70 years ago. He texted me today that the exact day that he remembers is October 15, 1953. My dad, Joe, is on his way to Ottawa today, so we can all go to the Dutch heritage event tonight.

His family settled in southwestern Ontario and, like many Dutch immigrants, took to farming and agriculture to support themselves

and to build a new life. Much like the contributions from Canada's proud Ukrainian diaspora, it is a fact that Canada is a strong farming and agriculture nation because of our roots that include so many of Dutch heritage.

On this Dutch Liberation Day, I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts and contributions from the Canadian Armed Forces in World War II, who led the liberation of Holland. On my run this morning, I saw some beautiful tulips poking their colours through the green stems, and I was reminded of the gift from Holland and Princess Juliana commemorating the significant role that Canadians played in the liberation of the Netherlands and in providing Princess Juliana a safe haven during the birth of her daughter. The Dutch still remember us today for those proud efforts, and every year the Dutch royal family and people of the Netherlands each send 10,000 bulbs to Ottawa. If people venture out in town, they will see them coming up now.

Like many of my colleagues, I have had the chance to discuss budget 2022 with many diverse groups and stakeholders in Milton, and I am incredibly grateful to represent such an engaged community. I could not do this work without the expertise and perspectives of my neighbours in Milton. I had the chance to consult with the Chamber of Commerce, Milton's Downtown Business Improvement Association, housing advocates, small and medium-sized businesses like Sargent Farm, Fix Automotive, DSV, Lumberville, La Rose Bakery and so many more, as well as with child care operators and parents who are thrilled that our government has signed deals with every province and territory across the country for universal countrywide early learning and child care.

Before I move on, I would like to thank my local stakeholders, in particular the Milton Community Resource Centre, Advancement of Women Halton, Community Living North Halton, the Muslim Advisory Council of Canada, the YM-YWCA and so many others for contributions to this program, because they engaged early. We worked together to ensure that local priorities were heard, and indeed they are reflected in our national universal \$10-a-day early learning and child care program that will help families get back to work and continue their careers. It will build new jobs in the sector and ensure that kids get the best possible start.

On the subject of early learning and child care, I also want to acknowledge the work being done across the country to ensure that our early learning and child care programs include physical literacy, in particular Active for Life. I am so proud of our government's support for Active for Life's building capacity and resilience through physical literacy and active play projects. It received over \$428,000 to continue ensuring that kids get the best possible start.

I will move on to something that is very, very close to home for me: that is co-op housing. Budget 2022 rapidly commits to building new affordable housing for Canadians. This includes additional affordable housing units that are urgently needed in our communities, particularly for those who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness. It ensures that more affordable housing can be built quickly. Budget 2022 proposes to provide \$1.5 billion over two years, starting this year, to extend the rapid housing initiative. This funding is expected to create at least 6,000 new affordable housing units with at least 25% of the funding going toward women-focused housing projects.

Finally, something new and very personal for me as I mentioned, budget 2022 also commits to a new generation of co-operative housing development in our country. For generations, co-ops have offered quality, affordable housing to Canadians while empowering their members through inclusion, personal development and security of tenure through their community-oriented model of housing. I do not mind saying I am a proud co-op kid. I am a product of a co-op: The Chautauqua Co-op in Oakville. My mom and dad moved there in the early eighties and when my parents divorced, my mom moved back into Chautauqua Co-op. I lived there until I was 26, and through university as well.

Co-op housing did not just put a roof over our heads. Co-op housing also put a guitar in my hand and made sure that I took guitar lessons. I went to summer camp. My mother could afford to send me to the canoe club. Co-op housing literally got me to the Olympics.

• (1250)

The community was far more than just a safe place to live: It was also a security blanket. My mom lost a job at one point, but we did not have to worry about losing our home. I am so proud that this government is committing to a new generation of co-operative housing in this country.

To be a bit more specific, budget 2022 proposes to reallocate \$500 million of funding, on a cash basis, from the national housing co-investment fund to launch a new co-operative housing development program aimed at expanding co-op housing in Canada. This program would be codesigned with the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada and the co-operative housing sector. Budget 2022 also proposes an additional \$1 billion in loans to be reallocated from the rental construction financing initiative to support co-op housing projects.

One of the proudest days of my co-op life was in 2017, when my co-op paid off our mortgage. Our co-op is mortgage-free, so that means that we have the ability to keep rental costs, which we call “housing charges” in the co-op housing sector, extremely low for families. When we take profit out of housing, we actually make it affordable. It is a remarkable concept.

Back in 1984, Canada was building lots of co-ops, but since then co-op construction has been in decline. Budget 2022 commits to a new generation of that. The Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada has said that this “federal budget [represents] a turning point, as it acknowledges the unique value of co-operative housing and commits to its expansion.” That is something I just could not be more proud of.

Government Orders

Finally, I will close by acknowledging the heartbreaking and ongoing tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in this country. Today is Red Dress Day. We are all wearing that on our lapels, but we are also wearing it on our hearts. The systemic racism and gender-based violence against indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQ2+ people is a horrific national tragedy, and it underscores the work that we as a nation still must do in order to accomplish the meaningful transformative change that is necessary to help end these despicable events.

While there is still a lot of work to do, it is important to highlight the work that we have done, and that we continue in, alongside Canada's indigenous peoples to address these historical injustices. In budget 2022, the government expanded on these commitments and laid out an additional \$11 billion over six years for continued support for indigenous children and families, and to ensure that indigenous communities have resources necessary to continue to grow and shape their own futures.

Included in these investments is \$275.3 million to address the shameful history of residential schools and western colonialism that were so utterly devastating to indigenous peoples and their cultures. This money would go to documenting, locating and memorializing burial sites, allowing for the appointment of a special interlocutor, supporting and encouraging community-led responses, supporting document digitization, and commemorating and memorializing former residential school sites.

Our government is also committed to eliminating barriers that prevent first nations children from being able to access the services and supports they need in order to thrive. Jordan's Principle, which helps ensure that those children have access to the cornerstones of health care, as well as the social and educational services they need, when and where they need them, is a key part of this work. That is why this budget proposes \$4 billion over six years, starting this year, to make sure that Jordan's Principle has the resources to provide these necessary supports to first nations youth.

It is important issues such as this that this government will continue to fully support as we acknowledge the ongoing national tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls with Red Dress Day. I know that our government will continue to work alongside indigenous peoples every day to address historical injustices, support nations and their communities in their rebuilding efforts, and accelerate self-determination and self-government.

Government Orders

• (1255)

[Translation]

I will now be pleased respond to any questions or comments my colleagues may have about this important bill.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to commend my colleague for his speech. We used to work together on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. I am glad he is not on the committee anymore because he made me do push-ups. He forced us to do physical activity. There is a reason he is now the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Sport. Seriously though, it was a pleasure to work with him.

Obviously, the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage discussed culture and the challenges facing the cultural industry during the pandemic. There is a tax measure in Bill C-19 that involves extending the period for incurring eligible expenses and other deadlines related under film production tax credits. That is great. I am completely in favour of that.

However, does my colleague agree that the scope of this measure could be expanded to include more than just film production? The pandemic was definitely hard on film production, but other sectors could also benefit from this kind of generosity from the government.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Drummond for his question and for the opportunity to practise my French with him today.

I hope to have another opportunity to practise my French with him as we talk about films over a beer or another drink, although we will try to do a little exercise before we grab that drink.

[English]

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his insightful thoughts around co-op housing and the experience he has had. That is a very important thing for us to hear in the House.

The question I would have is around the funding of all this. We know that the government has a burgeoning amount of deficit and debt that is accumulating for generations as we go forward. I look at my own personal situation, with three children and two grandchildren, and somebody is going to have to pay for this. I guess the question is this: Does the member opposite have a major concern with that? What is the plan going forward, and how does he think we are going to actually fund all of these wonderful examples that he has given today?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for his engagement on the health committee that we are on together.

On the topic, I will pick two expenses that the member highlighted, things that he highlighted as expenses rather than opportunities. When we build housing for Canadians that is truly affordable, we give them access to the economy. We give their children opportunities to play sports, to learn new things and to engage, and it actually ends the cycle of poverty. I cannot think of a better investment in Canada's future than ensuring that we end the cycle of poverty.

Oftentimes in this House we speak about poverty reduction. I am more of a fan of poverty elimination. I do not think that in 2022 there needs to be poverty in Canada. It is not an inevitability, and we need to provide transitional housing or housing at a low cost. We have a \$15 minimum wage in Canada, and that is not a wage that supports the ownership of a home, so there need to be solutions.

There are other programs, like early learning and child care, that actually pay for themselves in the sense that they get people back to work. When people go back to work, that is a revenue prospect for the federal government. As a young person, I have ultimate confidence in making sure that this country is viable going forward.

• (1300)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Milton for his performance in the soccer game last night against the interns. He kept us in the game, as did the Minister of Justice in goal.

I want to give the member an opportunity to talk more about co-op housing. It is something the NDP has been pressing for for years and years. It is nice to see the government finally coming back to this. What do we need to do in the future to have more of this?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, budget 2022 commits \$1.5 billion over the coming years, which will build 6,000 new co-op units. That is more co-op units than this country or any province has built in decades, and that is a turning point, as Tim Ross, executive director of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, has said.

This is a turning point for Canada. I appreciate that the member opposite and the NDP have been pushing for this for so long. I am glad they did, and I am glad we are here now with a solution for Canadians going forward. More people will be able to afford where they live and be able to engage in our economy.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, to the member across the way, I appreciate that.

I am pleased to rise today, not only as the member of Parliament for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, but also as the critic or shadow minister for indigenous services on behalf of the official opposition, to speak on the budget implementation act, Bill C-19, an act to implement certain provisions of the 2022 budget.

As I am sure many colleagues already know, I am a Conservative with libertarian leanings, and one of the predominant concepts of libertarian thought is the natural harmony of interests. It is predicated on the idea that individual interests are harmonious, in so far as acting in one's own interests furthers the interests of the community. In other words, it is the free market.

Another pillar of conservatism and libertarianism prompts groups to work out conflicts because of the benefit of joint prosperity. Farmers benefit from the prosperity of merchants. People benefit from competition between those merchants, and the resulting wealth creates jobs and opportunity.

In a system where everyone benefits, interests will naturally align. Only when government begins to hand out rewards based on political pressure do we find ourselves involved in an unresolvable conflict between groups that must contend for their piece of the budgetary pie.

That brings me to my first point of contention with Bill C-19. Rather than support indigenous people to achieve economic freedom from centuries of political oppression at its worst, and apathy at its best, the government has chosen to inflate the very bureaucratic system that purports reconciliation yet does everything it can to stymie it with the broken “Ottawa knows best” approach.

Recently, the first nations financial management board, a top-notch, indigenous-led financial organization that supports economic development for indigenous communities, wrote a letter to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs. In that letter, the executive chair, Mr. Harold Calla, summed up the situation, using the example of housing. He stated:

While the budget makes significant investments in new housing, it does nothing to change the failed systems for getting homes built nor [does it] change the pay-as-you-go systems that [purport to] support First Nations housing.

Before I continue to quote more from Mr. Calla, I want to let the House know that I am splitting my time with the hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain. I apologize for not kicking that off. I appreciate the help from the table in front of me for reminding me about that.

As I mentioned, rather than tackling those systematic inequalities that keep indigenous people in poverty, poor health and without adequate housing, the budget simply throws money out, hoping the problem goes away.

Mr. Calla continued:

Building homes on-reserve is possible when homeowners have access to employment income, and economic development that creates employment can be one of the sources of stable, long-term jobs. Securing private sector financing is the key to moving away from the status quo of proposal-based government funding. To our team at the Financial Management Board, this is what systemic change and a new nation-to-nation relationship can look like.

Rather than pitting groups against each other, the government could solve the housing crisis for indigenous communities by, number one, listening to indigenous communities; two, not haemorrhaging money into a broken system; and three, getting out of the way of the free market.

Bill C-19 is not a responsible budget. This is a budget that, as I have said, simply pumps money into a broken “Ottawa knows best” system. This budget does nothing to empower indigenous communities to make decisions for themselves. Rather, it simply grows bureaucracies in Ottawa.

Again, one of the first pillars of libertarianism that students of political science are introduced to, although they may not know it at the time, is summed up neatly in the famous quote from Lord Acton: “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Of course, at the time, the English parliamentarian, historian and writer was referring to the absolute power of popes and kings, but he might as well have been referring to the Indian Act and those government structures put in place to support it.

Government Orders

I will concede, thankfully, that in a parliamentary democracy, legislation is never absolute, and bad laws can be cast into the dustbin of political history, but that does not negate the fact that the Indian Act, like the absolutist powers of historical Europe, suppresses the individual liberty of indigenous people and hampers their sustained economic growth.

I will take a moment to respond in advance to the government's retorts to the House about not taking advice from Conservatives, to say that successive Canadian governments have had the opportunity to raise indigenous people up, but chose instead to keep them down through the paternalistic policies of broken systems.

• (1305)

As we all know, Canada is in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis and in desperate need of economic recovery. It has serious geopolitical issues abroad. Now is not the time for the Prime Minister to grant himself even more power and be less accountable to Canadians.

We all share in the shame of the discriminatory historical policies that enshrined a broken, paternalistic system that limited indigenous rights, freedoms and prosperity. However, it is the government that continues to inflate and support those very structures that sustain the broken system that the Liberals promise to fix every election.

My second point of contention is that the budget has unleashed an avalanche of uncontrolled spending while failing to present a fiscal anchor and failing to present a plan to control inflation. We cannot simply keep printing money and seizing the earnings of Canadians to pay for bigger prices and more government spending.

For the first time in over 31 years, prices are up 6.7% compared to a year ago. More and more people are barely making ends meet as the pinch of inflation is making everything in their daily lives more expensive. Families are spending more on groceries. Gas is costing workers more, and home heating is shrinking seniors' savings. There is an affordability crisis here in Canada, and after seven years of Liberal out-of-control spending, Canadians are facing record inflation. The budget does nothing to address this, and it also does nothing to tackle skyrocketing house prices.

It is hubris to think that this government can make houses cheaper by continuing to spend even more money on its so-called priorities, but in fact it may create a shortage of housing that will undoubtedly cause prices to rise even higher as demand outstrips supply. We can say that, whether it be a physical house itself or the materials to build it, governments will never be able to replicate the free market.

Government Orders

A more sustainable, long-term approach to affordable housing would include reducing government red tape and making it easier, faster and ultimately cheaper for homes to be built. There are a number of non-taxpayer-funded initiatives that could support affordable housing, and it starts through the creation of socially responsible investment instruments, mandating federal tax laws to favour investments in affordable housing, and working with the provincial and municipal governments to unshackle the barriers to land use.

Now, a growing number of working Canadians simply cannot afford more of the tax-and-spend agenda of this government. They want real action to fight the cost-of-living crisis and an outline of a clear commitment to control inflation.

My third and final critique of Bill C-19 is that while our financial liability to government debt increases, the government's obligation to the taxpayer decreases. In the last month, my constituency office has been inundated with calls for passports. People cannot get through to Service Canada on the phone and are waiting days with no answer. Some constituents have reported that they stood in line for hours, only to be turned away at the end of the day, even though some public servants had no one in their lines. With the pandemic coming to an end and the anniversary of the 10-year passport, the increase in demand for passport renewals should have been pretty easy for the government to predict. The government expects Canadians to pay their taxes. Well, news flash, Canadians also demand services for those taxes.

Now, small businesses pay their taxes, and their ask has been pretty clear: Prioritize red tape reduction and ensure that the cost of doing business does not increase by tackling inflation. The Liberals have failed to bring forth a budget that prioritizes either request.

Farmers, as we all know, pay taxes. They are struggling to keep up with inflation, and the increased cost of fertilizer due to the war in Ukraine is really causing hardship for these farmers. By 2030, the rising cost of the carbon tax will take over \$1.1 billion from farm families, which could be used to upgrade machinery and adopt more sustainable practices. To add insult to injury, the Liberals have chosen to spend \$30 million just to administer carbon tax rebates to businesses and farms.

Canadian manufacturers and exporters continue to face high inflation rates. Supply-chain disruptions resulted in losses of more than \$10.5 billion and critical labour shortages, with 81,000 vacancies. Budget 2022 fails to do enough to address those issues and many others.

These are just a few issues on which the budget fails to meet the needs of everyday Canadians, and they are why I cannot support this budget.

Milton Friedman once mused that if you put the federal government in charge of the Sahara Desert, in five years there would be a shortage of sand. We need less government liability, not more. We need more economic freedom, not less. Unfortunately, this budget delivers on neither.

• (1310)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam

Speaker, today, May 5, is Red Dress Day, and many of us will be wearing red dresses on our lapels. It is a time to reflect on its significance. It is the day we recognize hundreds of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls and the impact that has had on our society.

Within the budget there are many measures to deal with the issue of reconciliation, an area the member did not talk about. I wonder if he can express, from his point of view, the significance of May 5 being Red Dress Day, the importance of reconciliation and how this budget ultimately does take that into consideration.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Winnipeg North for that important recognition and comment. He is right that today is Red Dress Day. We had a debate yesterday in the House until midnight regarding murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, and a lot of emotions were being shared in this chamber. We also talked about other campaigns. In my speech yesterday I talked about Red Dress Day, the Moose Hide Campaign and many others, all of which raise awareness of these very important issues.

Obviously, with a budget, things are not always terrible. There is money to address some of these issues, and I thank the government for that. However, at the end of the day, when we are talking about economic and fiscal reconciliation, that is where the budget falls short.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, since my colleague is the critic for indigenous matters, I would like to point out that there was an excellent article this morning in *Le Devoir* about indigenous homelessness in urban areas. I am assuming he did not read it, but that is not what is important.

This is known to be a big issue in Montreal. Money was allocated to combat homelessness during the pandemic because it was becoming a growing problem in cities.

Unfortunately, there has been no solution to indigenous homelessness. Some money has been allocated but it is not fixing the problem. There have been deaths in Montreal in recent years, and I imagine the same is true in Toronto and Vancouver.

How does my colleague propose that we solve this crisis? Even if the money is there, it is a particular problem that Canada has not been able to resolve.

[English]

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, my friend from the Bloc is absolutely right. Housing is a major concern for indigenous people, first nations and those who are off reserve specifically, which I think his question referred to. There is a major problem with access to affordable housing.

There are some solutions we can talk about, such as incentivizing municipalities to speed up the process and costs associated with accessing building permits. In many cases, obtaining a building permit, whether it is for a private investor trying to build rental housing or for the government itself, and trying to access funds from provincial and federal governments to build housing on a municipal level can be quite time-consuming and costly. That all factors into the price, so when we are talking about affordable housing, we need to reduce the barriers and red tape.

• (1315)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, the budget contains \$300 million this year, \$600 million next year and \$1.2 billion the year after, for a total ongoing commitment of \$1.7 billion thereafter, to provide dental care to some 6.5 million Canadians: the children, seniors, people living with disabilities and low-income families with no dental insurance now.

My hon. colleague talked about being unable to afford things. I was in the House when the Conservatives wanted to increase military spending in this country to 2% of GDP, which would add about \$26 billion every year to our budget.

Does he think that spending \$1.7 billion to bring dental care to 6.5 million Canadians is less of a priority than spending \$26 billion a year? Can he explain to us why he thinks we can afford the military but cannot afford dental care given those numbers?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, of course dental care is an issue. In every community, people are trying to access it, and I think we need to do a better job of that. The feds need to work better with the provinces to figure out a solution to that. However, there are priorities every government must manage. First we need a strong economy in order to fund those programs, and at this point our economic anchors are being eroded away.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, I appreciate the opportunity to speak in today's debate on the budget implementation act and the impacts this legislation will have on the constituents of Souris—Moose Mountain and Canadians across the country.

It is disappointing, but not surprising, to see yet another budget that is full of exorbitant spending that will do almost nothing to benefit those who live in rural Canada. One need only look at the news these days to see how divided our country has become. It is thanks to policies like those contained in this omnibus budget that those divisions are continuing and widening under the Prime Minister. This is the same Prime Minister who promised he would never do an omnibus budget bill, although it is reflective of his understanding of and statements on financial issues: He believes the budget will balance itself and that monetary policy is not a priority.

When looking at the overall picture of the Liberal government's spending, the numbers are concerning to say the very least. In just over six years, government spending has increased by 53%, yet Canadians are worse off than they were when the Liberals first sought power in 2015. It is unconscionable to both me and my constituents that a government can spend billions of dollars, racking up our national debt in the process, and still have no meaningful impact on improving the lives of Canadians.

Government Orders

This reckless spending will need to be paid for at some point in time, and it will fall onto our children and grandchildren to foot the bill. My daughter will have a second child next month, our second grandchild, and unfortunately our future grandson will have this enormous debt to pay off over his lifespan. In fact, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation's national debt clock, as of yesterday, had debt per person at \$31,345.01. This is the escalating legacy that the Liberals are leaving behind, despite their false assurances that Canadians are happy and prospering under their leadership.

On top of an ever-climbing national debt, Canadians are also dealing with out-of-control inflation, which is driving up the cost of living across the board. Instead of using this budget as an opportunity to give Canadians a much-needed break, the Liberals chose to spend money launching new programs that stand to benefit a few rather than help the many who need it.

For example, on April 1, the Liberals had an opportunity to provide Canadians with some relief from the carbon tax, yet instead they chose to increase it, taking more money out of the taxpayer's pocket and putting it into government coffers. As I have said before in the House, it is "dyspocketnesia": taking from one pocket and putting it into the other, and then forgetting why it was done. This is not what my constituents want, need or deserve.

I would like to spend some time talking about the impact of this budget on the energy industry in my riding, especially as it pertains to emissions and the future of energy production in Canada.

A large number of my constituents work in the energy sector, and thanks to the government, many are experiencing deep concerns about their careers in the longer term. As many members are aware, the Liberal plan to phase out coal-fired power is well under way, and while the Liberals believe they are supporting this transition adequately, I can tell members first-hand that they have completely dropped the ball and workers and communities are being left behind.

Since I became a member of Parliament in 2015, one of the issues I have advocated for time and again is the use of carbon capture and storage technology, or CCUS, to reduce emissions while also extending the life of the power plants it is used on. It took seven years for the government to listen. Just imagine the amount of emissions that could have been captured in those seven years if we had acted earlier, not to mention the jobs that would have been created.

Government Orders

The 2022 budget does create a new tax credit for CCUS expenses, but the credit does not cover enhanced oil recovery, which to me is a huge oversight. For those who may not know, carbon capture serves to decarbonize the energy sector by permanently locking liquefied CO₂ into the rock formations of spent oil wells.

On a number of occasions, I have had the privilege to tour the Boundary Dam site in my riding, which captures CO₂ using amides. BD3 takes the captured CO₂ and either stores it two kilometres below the earth's surface or sells it, transporting it 50 miles away where it is stored and enhances the oil recovery at the Whitecap Weyburn injection site. This utilized enhanced oil recovery continues to impress me, as does the level of knowledge and innovation that has gone into developing this technology. This is on top of the reduced emissions, which border on making BD3 CCUS carbon-neutral.

● (1320)

The fact is that if the Liberals had included enhanced oil recovery in their tax credit, it would have brought much-needed jobs and investment into Canada, especially during a time of change and uncertainty in the energy industry. Unfortunately, those huge investment dollars are going south to the United States, where they have the 45Q investment tax credit. I have asked multiple cabinet ministers over the years if it is the industry they want to kill or the emissions, and of course the enthusiastic answer I get every time is that it is the emissions. The exclusion of enhanced oil recovery from this tax credit tells me this is not the case.

Canada still requires the use of fossil fuels and will for some time as we move into the future. Instead of allowing CCUS and EOR to function as tools that would help lower emissions, while simultaneously producing the energy that Canada needs at the lowest possible emissions intensity, the Liberals have chosen not to support the innovative work and projects that are happening right here in our own country.

Furthermore, a white paper produced by the International CCS Knowledge Centre states, “[enhanced oil recovery] results in a 37% reduction in CO₂ emissions per barrel of oil produced as compared to conventional oil production.” The numbers are there and the technology is there, but the Liberals have yet again chosen not to support the energy industry by picking and choosing which parts of CCUS fit their green agenda, regardless of how this might impact Canadians.

In the last month alone, I have seen multiple groups travel from my constituency to Ottawa and advocate on behalf of the people and communities that will be drastically impacted by the transition away from coal-fired power. According to the Coal Association of Canada, the transition will eliminate approximately 42,000 jobs from Canada's labour force and take many billions of dollars out of Canada's economy each year. While I understand that the Liberals will try to justify this by saying that they are providing funding for these communities through their just transition initiative, I am here to tell members that they have patently failed the hard-working Canadians who will be affected by this major industry shift.

One of the groups that came here shared a study that was conducted for the Town of Coronach, in my riding, regarding the negative impacts the transition will have on the community. The eco-

nomie consequences are alarming, indicating a \$400-million loss in GDP, a 67% loss in population and an 89% loss in household income.

While the Liberals will claim that the just transition initiative is going to create new, green jobs to replace those that are lost, the fact is that those new jobs would not be in rural areas. This means that the people of Coronach, and those in other rural communities who are in the same boat, will need to consider uprooting their lives to find work elsewhere. In what world does this show a just transition for those who have been contributing to Canada's economy for their entire careers?

On top of these startling figures, the federal Liberals have only dedicated approximately 3.5% of transition funding to economic development activities that would ensure affected communities remain viable post-2030. Instead, they have invested the funds into community infrastructure such as roads, waste water and parks, which are built by businesses from bigger, urban communities from outside the riding.

If the Town of Coronach stands to lose 67% of its population, what good are the parks? What good are roads if there is nobody left to drive on them because the Liberal government decimated the local workforce? There will be nobody to pay taxes for the upkeep of this infrastructure or to maintain it. It will just deteriorate.

Another sector that is essential for my riding is agriculture. Shamefully, the word “farmer” was only mentioned 11 times in the 280-page budget, and there were no new measures that would have provided support to our agricultural producers. Recognition of the need for food security does not exist with the government. Instead of giving farmers a break, the Liberals increased the carbon tax on April 1. The carbon tax alone takes almost \$1.1 billion from farm families that could have been used to upgrade equipment and adopt more sustainable practices. As a reminder to my colleagues across the floor, farmers are small business owners. They cannot afford an ever-increasing carbon tax on top of things like inflation and skyrocketing gas prices.

In conclusion, I know I speak for my constituents when I say that the people of Souris—Moose Mountain have had enough of a government that pretends to take care of them while doing nothing to make their lives easier. Our country has never been more divided thanks to a government that disregards anyone who does not agree with it. Canadians deserved a budget that would give them a break, but instead they are facing uncontrolled government spending, higher taxes and a rising national debt.

● (1325)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member's intervention today. At the beginning of his speech, he said that the response to spending and investing in Canadians was, in his words, “no meaningful impact”.

Government Orders

I guess we are just going to have to agree to disagree, because if we compare Canada with other countries, we have one of the best responses in terms of taking care of our citizens and in terms of looking at the death rate per capita, for example.

I am wondering this. Could the member explain to the House, and perhaps give a couple of examples of other OECD countries that fared much better than Canada did?

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Madam Speaker, as the member has indicated, around this country, we see where the economy is going.

I recognize the member is from the Kingston and the Islands area, but the unfortunate part, and the reality, is that a lot of Canadians do not understand rural Canada. They do not have a clue. Although the member might believe that rural Canada is where he is, a population of 50,000 is not rural Canada. I would invite the member to come to my riding. I would be happy to bring the member to my riding and show him what real rural Canada is about.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: The Islanders are not going to like that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the parliamentary secretary that he had his opportunity to ask a question. If he has anything to add, he needs to wait until it is time and I recognize him.

[Translation]

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Jonquière.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I was listening to my colleague's speech on carbon capture strategies in the oil and gas sector. I always thought the Conservatives liked to position themselves as defenders and custodians of the public purse.

Two of the big carbon capture projects under way in Alberta are costing more than \$2 billion, and 57% of that is coming out of the public purse. Low-carbon oil is therefore not cost-effective without government support.

I have a hard time understanding how a Conservative could advocate government support for an industry that does not need it. Could my colleague explain?

[English]

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Madam Speaker, once again, I would be more than happy to have the member come out to Souris—Moose Mountain. I would take him to CCS, so he could actually see what is going on.

There are many people at the CCS Knowledge Centre. I would be happy to introduce them, so the member could learn a little more. Ultimately what we are talking about is carbon capture. We have a power plant, BD3, that is capturing all the emissions. It captures 98% of the sulphur. It takes that sulphur and produces sulphur dioxide that it either utilizes or sells. It captures the CO₂ by using amines to capture it and inject it into the ground. The power plant injects it into the ground two kilometres below where we are. On top of that, it can then sell that emission to help reduce the emissions for oil-intense companies. They would utilize that to further reduce, by 37%, their emissions.

• (1330)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, as I mentioned before, I spent much of my youth in rural Saskatchewan, as well as Wynyard.

I just want to talk a little about aging. Aging in rural Canada is happening at a rate as fast as, if not faster than, the rest of Canada. Aging in place is very important. I just want to ask the member a question. There are some aging in place items in the budget, such as the multi-generational home renovation tax credit, the home accessibility tax credit and the homebuyers' tax credit, but each of these requires persons with disabilities to have disability tax credit eligibility.

I wanted to know if the member feels this is fair. Does he feel these will be adequate tax credits for people living in rural Canada?

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Madam Speaker, the member is right. She points out things that are very important as the population ages and as we see disabled people within this country having multiple challenges in order to move forward.

The member mentioned the issue of home renovation tax credits that were there. That is a huge issue, because the reality is that, with the way it is set up, the government has not even put in place people who can assess whether they need those renovations. A disabled person who knows they need to put in new windows cannot even touch that until such time as somebody has come, which is taking forever because those people are not available.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Kingston and the Islands.

Today, I am so proud to speak in the House to Bill C-19, the budget implementation act, to highlight some of the measures that would move Canada forward. This is a key piece of legislation that is important for Canada's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In my speech today, I want to focus on certain priority areas for my residents in Brampton South that I believe this budget responds well to. These are the issues I have heard through consultation, as well as at the doorsteps of my residents. I heard that we need to confront the challenges before us while continuing to build a stronger Canada. All Canadians want clean air, good jobs and a strong economy. Budget 2022 lays out our next steps to build a clean economy that will create good-paying jobs, middle-class jobs and concrete actions.

Government Orders

Last week, the Prime Minister was in Windsor to announce the recent \$3.6-billion investment by Stellantis to retool and modernize its two plants in Windsor and Brampton. This means good new jobs in an innovative sector. These historic investments will create thousands of new jobs, specifically with the return of a third shift at both plants, and transform the plants into flexible, multi-energy EV assembly facilities ready to produce electric vehicles for the future. This government will help more Canadians drive zero-emissions vehicles by continuing to provide rebates for Canadians, rebuilding charging infrastructure that drivers can rely on, and supporting critical mineral projects for Canadian-made EVs and batteries.

Budget 2022 reiterates the \$9.1-billion commitment presented in the emissions-reduction plan as we continue to deliver for Canadians and the economy. A key element of this plan is the electrification of public transit. Recently, the Canada Infrastructure Bank finalized an investment of \$400 million to the City of Brampton for up to 450 zero-emissions buses through 2027. Brampton Transit is a great partner in this work. It is another great example of how we are building a greener city and healthier communities.

Since the start of this pandemic, the federal government has introduced significant investments to support Canadians and communities. This government is continuing with these targeted measures that will help meet the needs of our workers, our businesses and the Canadian economy so that it can keep growing stronger for years to come. These investments have worked. Canada has recovered 115% of the jobs lost at the outset of the pandemic. Job creation is remarkably strong, and even our hardest-hit sectors are starting to get back up and running. That is real progress to set up the Canadian economy for success, deliver good jobs and keep our air clean.

Shifts in the global economy will require some workers in sectors across Canada to develop new skills and adjust the way they work. I have seen this first-hand in Brampton South, where we have a diverse and resilient workforce. This is why I want to talk about upskilling and re-skilling. At the Brampton Board of Trade Federal Issues Forum, I heard from community leaders that skills training is the key to Canada's future prospects. I am glad that we are targeting high-growth business sectors with new strategic investments that will have a significant and positive impact on the regional labour force and long-term job growth.

In recent years, the federal government has made significant investments to give Canadians the skills they need to succeed in an evolving economy and connect our workers to jobs. The measures in Bill C-19, the budget implementation act, would build on these past investments. These measures include working with provincial and territorial partners on improving how skills training is provided in key areas.

• (1335)

One of those key areas is trades. Improving labour mobility for workers in the construction trades can help to address the labour shortage and ensure that important projects such as housing can be completed across the country. That is why Bill C-19, the budget implementation act, is proposing to introduce a labour mobility deduction. This measure would provide tax recognition on up to \$4,000 per year in eligible travel and temporary relocation expenses to eli-

gible tradespersons. Providing quality settlement services for workers is another important part of the budget.

I was proud to welcome the President of the Treasury Board to Brampton South recently to visit the Achieve organization. Its settlement workers told us about how important this budget's measures are to providing additional skills training and support services. Workers need to have the skills to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. Bill C-19 would implement the plans proposed in budget 2022 after paying attention to the needs of Canadians as we set them up for success.

Budget 2022 lays out \$2.6 billion for skills development, job training and related needs. It also supports cybersecurity technology for small to medium-sized businesses to help boost cyber-resilience. This is something I have been working hard on with Rogers Cybersecure Catalyst in my riding. Skills training will support Canadians in learning new skills to put to use in their careers and grow our workforce by addressing these barriers. We are building an inclusive economy for the 21st century.

When we talk about an inclusive economy, we have to talk about child care. This is why we are helping all parents, especially women, to have the ability to build both families and careers, because we know that child care is not a luxury. It is a necessity. This is something I heard at many doors when talking to residents. Too many parents across Brampton and across the country are struggling to find affordable, high-quality child care. That is why we have now signed agreements with all provinces and territories, including Ontario, which signed on in Brampton South last month. We are making \$10-a-day child care a reality for families across the country, with a historic \$30-billion investment. Businesses, economists and women are in agreement that we need more child care options and we need them to be flexible, affordable and inclusive. This agreement gets this work done.

We have heard of the challenges many Canadians have faced during COVID-19. Every Canadian should have access to quality health care. This government is taking action to work with the provinces and territories to invest in health care for everyone. We know that COVID-19 resulted in a backlog of surgeries, and some patients are facing longer wait times for surgical treatment. The government has announced the intention to provide provinces and territories with an additional \$2 billion through our top-up to the Canada health transfers to address these backlogs. This would build on the \$4 billion in support provided in 2021. Over the past two years, many non-urgent elective surgeries had to be postponed, and these investments will make a real difference in the lives of all Canadians when it comes to accessing high-quality health care services.

When we talk about this pandemic, we need to acknowledge that many women were hit hard. It is important to understand the implications of the pandemic, especially in the area of gender-based violence, which we have been studying in the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Budget 2022 proposes to provide more than \$5 million to Women and Gender Equality Canada to enable provinces and territories to improve services and supports to prevent gender-based violence, and to support survivors. We need to ensure that all women are safe and have access to economic opportunities. That is exactly what we are doing.

In conclusion, by taking action with Bill C-19, we are building more homes and creating good-paying jobs for Canadians. Passing this bill would enable our government to continue this important work. That is why I urge all members of Parliament to support the passage of this bill.

• (1340)

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke about how people are reporting longer wait times for surgical treatment. That is true.

She said that her government has transferred money to help address these backlogs. I was stunned when I heard my colleague make that statement, because that is exactly what the premiers of all of the provinces and Quebec keep telling the federal government. There are wait-lists and problems with our health care systems, and transfers need to be increased so that there is more money to address the problems in our health care system. This is a jurisdiction that belongs to the provinces and to Quebec.

Does my colleague agree with her constituents and with the premiers of the provinces and Quebec that it would be better for the government to increase health transfers and send that money to the provinces and Quebec, as everyone has been calling for?

[English]

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Madam Speaker, since the start of this pandemic, our government has invested more than \$69 billion to fight COVID-19 and to protect the health and safety of Canadians. We have all heard about the key impacts of our federal transfer and the safe restart agreement, which have helped provinces and territories restart their economies safely while we continue to respond to COVID-19. We will keep working with the provinces and territories to improve health outcomes for all Canadians.

Government Orders

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member spoke about the investment in electric vehicle manufacturing in her area, and that is great news. That is great to hear. It is great that there is going to be investment in workers in that area. However, as an Alberta member of Parliament, I worry that the investment in workers in Alberta is not as robust and that, once again, the government is forgetting investment in Alberta workers.

Can the member discuss or share how the government will ensure that the massive subsidies going toward the oil and gas sector will actually help workers instead of just going into the pockets of CEOs and big corporations?

• (1345)

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Madam Speaker, our government is committed to making sure Canada has a thriving auto manufacturing sector. Canadians can be assured that our government will continue to ensure that the auto sector and its workers are an integral part of our country. By working together, we are creating thousands of new jobs, making a difference in the lives of people now and making sure that future generations have a clean environment.

To stay competitive, we need to continue investing in our workforce, with hundreds of thousands of jobs in this sector. As I said in my speech, we are investing in upskilling and re-skilling our workers. That will help—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have time for a brief question.

The hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments with respect to transit. I would encourage her to advocate for more. There is very little on ground transportation in this budget.

My question is with respect to reducing poverty, knowing that 40% of those living in poverty across the country are Canadians with disabilities. As she may know, over 100 members in this place have already called out the need for the government to reintroduce substantial legislation for the Canada disability benefit.

Could she comment on the importance of moving forward with this guaranteed income for Canadians with disabilities?

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Madam Speaker, this is a priority for our government. As I said, a key part of our disability inclusion action plan is to reform and modernize the eligibility process for disability benefits, including the disability tax credit. This government is working hard on that. I know it is a very important matter for this government.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to this bill.

Government Orders

I will start by saying that, in addition to today being Red Dress Day, as I was reminded by the member for Milton, today is also Liberation Day in Holland, which is important to me, being half Dutch. I sat and thought, while the member was making those comments, about how my grandfather, during the Second World War, spent a lot of time trying to avoid interaction with the occupying forces in Holland at the time. When Holland was finally liberated, seeing Canadian soldiers walking through the streets liberating Holland, it was at that point that my grandfather said, “That’s where we’re moving. We’re moving to the place where these people are from.”

I think this is a reflection of not just the incredible set of values that we have in Canada, but indeed the way our troops represent us through the world. They represent us not just in a purely militaristic sense, but also from a place of being ambassadors of Canada, and that is quite literally how I am here today. Had my father’s father not made that decision to move to Canada after the Second World War, my father would never have met my mother, and I would never have been here to have this discussion, despite the fact that, at times, I am sure that my Conservative friends from across the way might wonder what that world would have been like.

When we talk about this budget, one of the key pillars for me is our commitment to move toward clean air and a stronger economy. We know for a fact that in the economy of tomorrow, where hedge funds and investors are looking to put money right now is into anything green, anything sustainable, anything that will have an impact for generations to come. When we talk about renewable energy, for example, this is where people want to put their money.

I have heard a lot of discussion, from Conservatives in particular, about the size of Canada’s debt, the debt we took on in order to get through the pandemic, which most of the Conservatives here voted in favour of. I think they raise some serious concerns. We have a lot of debt. How are we going to get through that debt? How are we going to deal with that debt?

There is the default reaction, which is to say, “Well, it’s going to be our kids and grandkids. That’s the only solution. They are the only ones who will be able to deal with it.” However, I offer a different perspective, and it goes to two things that I have already brought up today. The first—

• (1350)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. There seems to be a lot of chatting going on, and I think it is a little noisy in here. I would ask members who want to have side conversations to take them outside while the House is in session.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I think of both things that I brought up today: my grandparents immigrating to Canada and my desire for a clean, renewable economy that is built here in Canada. That is how we are going to get through this pandemic, the effects of the pandemic and the debt that has been taken on during the pandemic. We are going to do it by growing our economy in the right places, the places that have longevity to them, the places where we know that when we invest in technology, if we can be on the forefront of it, we will become an exporter of that technology around the world and reap the benefits from that.

That, in my opinion, should be an end goal here, and that is what I see in the budget, but also as it relates to our willingness to be an open country, to be a country that is willing to accept people from around the world and celebrate the differences they bring here, provided they want to be constructive participants in a strong economic force.

I think back to when my grandparents immigrated in the 1950s, which I referenced earlier, both sets of grandparents, from Holland and from Italy. They came here looking for a new life and prosperous opportunities so that their children could succeed. Indeed, on my mother’s side, my three uncles ended up starting a house-building company, building custom homes, and they were quite successful during their careers.

Providing opportunities to people from around the world to come to Canada is what we have been doing. Over a million new people live in Canada now, compared to 2015. By doing these sorts of things, by being an open and welcoming country, investing in our economy and making sure that we have the right investments, we are going to grow our economy. That is how we are going to deal with the hardships of the pandemic and what was required in terms of spending during the pandemic.

I heard the member for Souris—Moose Mountain speak about carbon capture. I do not want to single him out, because a number of Conservatives have spoken about it. Carbon capture is certainly something that we can consider in the short term. It can be effective in the short term, but I cannot understand, for the life of me, why we would want to suggest that it is a long-term solution.

I am not sure if members have seen the movie *Don’t Look Up*. It is a recent movie out on Netflix. The whole premise is that there is an asteroid coming toward earth. The default reaction is how to deal with this asteroid, but before long it turns into a conversation, in particular by those on the right, about letting the asteroid hit earth and capitalizing on it by mining the various minerals and riches the asteroid is bringing with it.

That, in my opinion, is exactly like talking about carbon capture. We know there is a problem. Why is the solution to the problem to take the problem and bury it two kilometres underground? It does not make sense to me. Of course, the Conservatives’ default reaction to dealing with fossil fuels and the problems that come from fossil fuels is how to capitalize on them. I do not think this is the solution. I think the solution is investing in making sure that we build the battery technologies of tomorrow. Let us be an exporter of those battery technologies, looking at different ways to invest in zero-emission vehicles.

Zero-emission vehicles are here. We passed the tipping point. By 2035 in Canada, all vehicles sold for regular use will have to be net-zero-emitting. The vast majority will be electric. Why are we not investing in the technologies that will be required? The electric vehicle right now is where the Model T Ford was in terms of the runway for vehicles. We are just at the beginning. If we give it 10 or 15 years, we will see that the battery technology is going to very quickly adapt so that we will be able to drive 1,000 kilometres on a charge and charge almost instantaneously. That is the future.

We should be investing in this technology, so that we can be on the forefront of it, so that as a country we have the companies right here in our country because the government believes in this technology, and so that we can be exporters of that technology throughout the world.

• (1355)

Therefore, I am very glad to see the \$1.7 billion going toward zero-emission vehicles in this budget because I think that is going to get us there.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I enjoy listening to the speeches by my colleague across the way. He talked about electric vehicles, and I am very interested in that. We usually have a clever back and forth, but I have a serious question.

How much money is being put in place to increase the infrastructure of the electrical grids across Canada to be able to charge all of the electric cars that will be here? I hear that in Toronto it is at 90% or 95% capacity. I hope the answer will not include the Canada Infrastructure Bank.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the member is assuming the technology will remain stagnant and that it will not change, but it will become easier and faster to charge those vehicles. In 10 or 15 years from now, we will not need charging stations other than in people's homes and along the highways at various stops.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, we will not see them to the degree we see them now throughout city streets because the technology will advance so quickly that one single charge at home will allow people to do their daily tasks.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will ask the clerks to pause the time. There is a lot of noise, not just in the chamber, but also on the outskirts. I am hoping the Sergeant-at-Arms, or someone else, could speak to those in the lobby and ask them to take their conversations away from the House of Commons because it is very hard to hear what is going on.

We will now continue with questions and comments. The hon. member for Jonquière.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, how ironic to hear the member for Kingston and the Islands brag about his government's investment in transportation electrification.

Canada lags behind in clean energy funding by a 14:1 ratio, meaning that for every \$14 billion that goes to fossil fuels, just under \$1 billion goes to clean energy.

The member for Kingston and the Islands is awfully proud of his government's action on transportation electrification. If I were him, I would be embarrassed.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, because of the noise I did not hear the entire question, but I think the member was getting at oil subsidies versus renewable subsidies. The problem with talking about oil subsidies, which is unfortunately what the members of

the NDP do quite a bit, is that they build into the subsidies the money that is to go toward dealing with orphaned wells.

There are a lot of orphaned wells out there, which the federal government has chosen to take a part in solving the long-term implications of, and I believe it is very important for it to do that. However, if we are going to lump that in as part of a subsidy, then I would suggest it is more about making sure we deliver on our commitment to the environment.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

CANADA-KAZAKHSTAN RELATIONS

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Canada and the Republic of Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan's 19 million people live in a country the size of Quebec and Ontario combined. It has strong multi-ethnic and multi-denominational roots.

Kazakhstan's plains, mountains and climate are like those of Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, and it is also blessed with similar resources. It is Canada's largest commercial partner in central Asia. Kazakhstan is an important regional player, and it is a strong partner for Canada in many multilateral forums and international organizations. Canada is a strong supporter of Kazakhstan's continuing democratic, judicial and administrative reforms, such as those announced earlier this year by President Tokayev.

I hope Canada and Kazakhstan continue to enjoy strong and deepening bilateral relations over the coming decades.

* * *

MOTHER'S DAY

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, this weekend families across Canada will be celebrating the glue that holds the pieces together. Mother's Day is the one day of the year when loving, hard-working and dedicated moms finally get the attention, love and gifts they deserve. They are there to get us up for practice on time, and keep us fed and watered, and they know just what to say to help us overcome the latest world-ending issue. Where would any of us be today without the love and encouragement of our moms?

They say no love can match a mother's love for her children. I am so fortunate to see these words acted out every day in my own house. My wife, Larissa, is the most amazing mother to our sons, Nixon and Jamieson, and to our daughter, Claire. Sometimes I just sit back in awe of her and how well she does in the organized chaos that is our life.

Statements by Members

Of all the special joys in life,
The big ones and the small,
A mother's love and tenderness
Is the greatest of them all.

I would like to wish all mothers across Canada a happy Mother's Day, and I wish my wife, Larissa, a happy Mother's Day.

* * *

LOWERING THE VOTING AGE

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, yesterday we began the debate about lowering the voting age in this place. In honour of that moment, I would like to hand the mike over to members of my youth council. Jessica says, “Adolescents at the age of 16 are at the point in their lives where they are most engaged in their communities, as they are starting to get jobs, driver's licences and generally are getting involved in society. Getting adolescents involved with voting can lead to more long-lasting participation in democratic activities throughout their life”.

Safik was less sure, saying, “Maybe we can incorporate a debate on how to educate youth before making this leap, so they can educate themselves to take it seriously”. Jona says, “Giving youth a vote will offer an additional perspective and will make voting results more well-rounded. Youth have very different eyes when looking at the world, so giving the older youth the vote will make our system a better democracy.”

I thank my youth council. I will always be there to amplify their voices.

* * *

[Translation]

VARENNES

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, in 1672, Jean Talon, the intendant of New France, granted the seigneurie of Varennes to René Gaultier, an officer in the Carignan-Salières regiment and governor of Trois-Rivières. Many people do not realize that Varennes also included four more seigneuries: Cap de la Trinité, Cap Saint-Michel, La Guillaudière and Île Sainte-Thérèse.

New France was the birthplace of none other than St. Marguerite d'Youville, the founder of the Grey Nuns. The municipality is blessed with a view of the St. Lawrence River and a religious heritage that includes magnificent chapels and the majestic Basilica of Sainte-Anne.

Varennes remained an agricultural village until the end of the 20th century, when an industrial boom coincided with an exodus to the suburbs and an explosion in its population. This prosperity enabled the people of Varennes to develop such high-quality infrastructure and services that it was named the happiest city in 2019.

Indeed, I wish the people of Varennes much happiness for their city's 350th anniversary.

Enjoy the celebration.

[English]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE MIDWIFE

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, May 5 is recognized around the world as the International Day of the Midwife. It is a day to recognize the contribution midwives make to ensure safe, quality reproductive and newborn care to families, mothers and babies everywhere. I thank the Sudbury Community Midwives and the Canadian Association of Midwives for providing leadership and advocacy for midwifery. I thank the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives, which exists to promote excellence in reproductive health care for Inuit, first nations and Métis communities.

[Translation]

Canada has some 2,200 midwives who provide primary care. We also have 120 indigenous midwives who are ready, willing and able to address the specific challenges facing rural communities. Today being International Day of the Midwife, I invite everyone to celebrate midwifery and to thank midwives for the services they provide to Canadians.

Meegwetch.

* * *

● (1405)

[English]

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to acknowledge all graduates for their achievements in receiving their much-coveted diplomas. This graduation season brings an air of happiness, relief and celebration as students attain their first big achievement as young adults: graduating high school.

I want to take this opportunity to remind all graduates that we are incredibly proud of them and their achievements. I want all graduates to know that we look forward to all of their future endeavours, regardless of the paths they choose to take.

I want all graduates to build a life where they can look back and marvel at both their triumphs and their perseverance, but most importantly, I want them all to pursue true happiness, however they may define it. I want students to dream limitlessly and not listen to others telling them what they can or cannot do, because it is their life. It is up to them to establish their own goals and have the world benefit from their legacies.

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SIKYONG OF THE CENTRAL TIBETAN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome Mr. Penpa Tsering, the Sikyong, or president, of the Central Tibetan Administration. *Tashi delek.*

He is here to spread awareness about the lack of linguistic, religious and cultural freedoms for Tibetans. He is here to advocate for the middle way, an approach crafted by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, which simply seeks genuine autonomy for Tibet within the framework of the People's Republic of China.

The Sikyong is here calling for a resumption for the Sino-Tibetan dialogue, and he is here to raise awareness about the whereabouts of the Panchen Lama. At the time of his abduction by the CCP in 1995, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was six years old, making him the youngest political prisoner in the entire world. He has not been seen in public for 27 years.

Today in Parliament, the Sikyong is accompanied by the venerable Tenzin Rabgyal, the abbot of the Panchen Lama Monastery. I ask all members of the House to take up the cause of Tibetans' struggle for basic human rights and to join me in welcoming these two Tibetan leaders. To them I say *thu-chi che*.

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ATLANTIC CANADA CRAFT AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many were recognized at the 2022 Atlantic Canada Craft Awards for Excellence, and I would like to give a big shout-out to the entrepreneurs from Newfoundland and Labrador who won several prestigious awards.

The Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador was awarded for excellence as an industry leader. The award recognizes superior leadership in the development of craft and contributions to the industry in Atlantic Canada. Through the efforts of staff and volunteers, the organization has found new and exciting ways to promote craft makers, creating new opportunities and new markets. I recognize the exceptional work of Ms. Rowena House, Ms. Shannon Reid and Mr. Bruno Vinhas and their team.

I also acknowledge the Newfoundland Salt Company, which was named recipient of the award for Outstanding Exporter. Peter Burt and Robin Crane have taken pride in their products. The company sends their finer salts to 18 restaurants throughout the province and to over 40 restaurants across the rest of Canada.

Closer to home, the incredible craft boutique of Slippers 'n Things in Happy Valley-Goose Bay received the Outstanding Retailer award. I congratulate Mike Voisey and his daughter Natasha, who continue to showcase the Labrador culture through crafting and design with their handmade slippers. They use traditional patterns that have been passed down through generations of the Voisey family. Their products are unique and a sense of pride for all the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to remind everyone that Statements by Members are 60 seconds in length.

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DUTCH HERITAGE IN CANADA

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): May 5th is Dutch Heritage Day in Canada and May is Dutch Heritage Month in Ontario.

Statements by Members

For all Canadians, it is a time to commemorate Canada's special relationship with the Netherlands. Dutch Heritage Day recognizes the sacrifices made by Canadians in the liberation of the Netherlands, as well as the contributions made by Canadians of Dutch heritage. This day is celebrated, as well, in the Netherlands, as it is the anniversary of their liberation from Nazi Germany in 1945, in which Canadian soldiers played an integral role.

On May 5, the gift of freedom is celebrated. Like so many Canadians of Dutch descent, stories from our *ouders* and *grootouders* shaped not only our concept of Canada, but also the lasting bond between our nations. For Canadian veterans and their families, it is a reminder of Canada's contribution in the fight against tyranny.

I give thanks to our veterans and to the thousands upon thousands of Canadians of Dutch descent who made this country what it is today. *Fijne Bevrijdingsdag*. I wish all members a happy Dutch Heritage Day.

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• (1410)

COME HOME 2022

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 2022 has been designated Come Home year in my province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I am inviting everyone to come visit or return to our beautiful province and discover all the unique and wonderful things Newfoundland and Labrador has to offer.

There are endless things to see and do in our province and in my riding of Bonavista—Burin—Trinity. Along our stunning coastlines, people can go whale watching, puffin watching and iceberg hunting, and see breathtaking cliffs and vistas. They can visit our UNESCO global geopark on the Bonavista Peninsula to look into the geological past, or maybe see the northern lights or hike one of the many breathtaking trails. They can visit our picturesque rural outposts and perhaps catch their own codfish for supper. They may even get to dance a jig or get screeched in.

Whether born in Newfoundland and Labrador or not, we hope everyone comes and experiences the culture, beauty and hospitality of Newfoundland and Labrador. Long may our big jib draw.

* * *

BILL C-5

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' soft-on-crime Bill C-5 would end mandatory jail time for serious crimes such as robbery with a firearm, extortion with a firearm and weapons trafficking. The Liberals are also using this bill to allow criminals who benefit financially from human trafficking or people charged with sexual assault to serve their sentence from home. These are violent crimes, but the Liberals do not consider them to be serious offences.

Statements by Members

Of course, victims and those who support them know that is simply not the case. Just last week, the executive director of the London Abused Women's Centre told the justice committee that putting an offender back in the community puts women at higher risk.

This bill flies in the face of those who call on the government every day asking for safer streets and safer communities, and it is an absolute affront to victims. The government must stop trying to tip the scales of justice in order to benefit violent criminals over their victims and survivors.

* * *

LIBERATION DAY

Mr. Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, as has been noted, is Dutch Liberation Day. As a Canadian of Dutch heritage, this day has special meaning to me, my family and many of my constituents. Personal accounts truly underscore the emotion of the day.

In 2015, my mother Sara returned to the Dutch village where she was born for celebrations of the 70th anniversary. In Ouderkerk aan den IJssel, there was a parade and music on the evening of May 4, but on May 5, she travelled to the town where the Nazis' surrender of Holland was signed. My mom's enduring memory is of the thousands and thousands of young people lining the streets and continuously clapping and cheering the Canadian veterans as they paraded by.

Let us imagine that: 70 years later, Dutch youth born decades after the war are showing eternal gratitude to Canada. If that is not a testament to the love of liberty that Canadian and Dutch people share in common, I do not know what is.

* * *

[Translation]

RED DRESS DAY

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to mark Red Dress Day, a national day of awareness for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls brought this tragedy to light and emphasized how important it is that we all broaden our understanding of the issue and take action.

This is a horrific tragedy for indigenous women, girls and people in the LGBTQ community, and we must ensure that the commission's recommendations are implemented.

We continue to honour the people who are affected, and we remember that, as parliamentarians, we have a duty not only to raise awareness among the Canadian public, but also to take action to end this tragedy.

• (1415)

[English]

RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I rise to amplify the inherent rights of indigenous peoples in Canada. "Reclaiming Power and Place", the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, found, "Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people are holders of inherent Indigenous rights, constitutional rights, and international and domestic human rights."

The report calls for the full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Call for justice 1.2 states, "We call upon all governments, with the full participation of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people, to immediately implement and fully comply with all relevant rights instruments, including but not limited to...UNDRIP".

* * *

[Translation]

FATHER ANTOINE LABELLE

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a commemorative plaque will be unveiled tomorrow at the old train station in Saint-Jérôme to honour the memory of Curé Antoine Labelle, who is now recognized as a figure of national historic significance.

He was the parish priest in Saint-Jérôme from 1868 until his death in 1891, while also serving as deputy minister of the department of agriculture and colonization from 1888 to 1890. He was also known as "King of the North" because he helped found roughly 20 parishes and settled nearly 5,000 inhabitants. He even travelled to Europe on two separate occasions to try to boost francophone immigration to Quebec and western Canada.

He also helped establish many industries. Most notably, he convinced Jean-Baptiste Rolland to set up his renowned paper company in Quebec in May 1882.

Father Labelle, "King of the North", your memory inspires us and will inspire us for many years to come.

* * *

[English]

LIBERATION DAY

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 77 years ago, on May 5, 1945, the Canadian Army finally liberated the Dutch people from Nazi occupation. It was a welcome end to a fierce year-long campaign, starting in Normandy, continuing through a winter that was bitter cold and finally ending with the liberation of Arnhem and surrounding cities.

The victory came at a high cost: 7,000 Canadian lives. However, it was also the start of the long and celebrated friendship between the people of Canada and the very grateful people of the Netherlands. This friendship gave birth to a huge influx of Dutch immigrants shortly after the war, my parents included. It is still celebrated on both sides of the ocean today.

Once again, I thank Canada for standing up for freedom, justice and democracy, and to the many fellow Canadian citizens of Dutch origin I say let us keep working to keep Canada strong and free.

* * *

ACTIVISM IN RUSSIA

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Vladimir Kara-Murza is possibly the bravest man in Russia today. Having been poisoned twice by Putin's operatives, he chose to return to Moscow from a comfortable and safe life in Washington knowing full well that it could lead to imprisonment or even death. Shortly after arriving, he gave an interview to CNN denouncing the Putin government as "a regime of murderers". True to form, the Putin thugs arrested him, jailed him and will certainly sentence him to a lengthy imprisonment.

It is not inconceivable to say that Canada and other western nations would not have Magnitsky sanctions without the incredibly brave efforts of Sergei Magnitsky, Bill Browder and Vladimir Kara-Murza. Putin hates these sanctions because they are so effective at targeting his closest allies, the oligarchs, and shining a light on the poisoned money of Russian corruption.

Vladimir Kara-Murza is a very brave man and he deserves our support. Shortly, I will call upon the House to pass a unanimous consent motion demanding the release of Vladimir Kara-Murza.

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● (1420)

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: Before we go to question period today, I would like to return to the points of order raised yesterday, May 4, 2022, concerning remarks made during Oral Questions.

First, the House leader of the official opposition alleged that the Prime Minister had used unparliamentary language. The Chair listened again to the proceedings during question period and must admit that, with all the noise in the House, I was unable to determine what may have been said. Under the circumstances, I can only ask members to observe the normal rules of debate and decorum in the House and avoid disrespectful remarks. As I also mentioned yesterday, I heard unparliamentary language from both sides of the House. I further reiterate that none of these remarks should be made in this place.

Further, for his part, the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola argued that a question put to the Prime Minister by the member for Pontiac had nothing to do with the administrative nature of government.

[Translation]

I want to remind all members that question period is an opportunity for members to obtain information from the government and to hold it to account. However, our rules require that questions be within the government's administrative responsibility.

After listening to the question again, the Chair admits that it had no direct link to the government's overall responsibilities or the

Oral Questions

specific responsibilities of one of its ministers. Instead, it asked the Prime Minister to comment on the words and gestures of another political party. In future, such a question will be deemed out of order.

I invite members to take these guidelines into consideration when next they speak.

We will be starting question period in a few moments. I hope that it will be less tumultuous than it was yesterday. I urge members to remember that moderation is always in good taste.

[English]

Before we start, for those of you whose blood pressure is a little high, it is a beautiful day outside. Go for a walk.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday during question period I raised a major problem Canadians are facing: the endless delays in getting service from the federal government. Passports, employment insurance, the Canada Revenue Agency, immigration, absolutely everything is in shambles.

As usual, the Prime Minister avoided answering the question, turning his back on thousands of Canadians who are waiting and waiting. There is a solution, namely, bringing federal employees back to work at their offices, as most Canadian businesses have done.

When will the Prime Minister make Service Canada worthy of its name again?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Our government understands very well how important it is to serve Canadians, especially now that our economy is in full recovery.

However, I have to say that I do not totally agree with the member opposite when he says that everything is going poorly in Canada. The reality is that, according to the International Monetary Fund, we will have the fastest growing economy in the G7 this year and next.

We have hard-working Canadians to thank for that.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is very disturbing to see that the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has no interest in the services her government is providing to Canadians.

Oral Questions

Public servants themselves are telling Canadians to call their MP's office to gain access to services. We knew that the first 10-year passports were set to expire this year.

Before the pandemic, Service Canada was processing three million passports a year. We are just getting back to normal. Federal employees have been caught off guard because this government has done no planning. Misplaced documents, overwhelmed telephone systems, the list of excuses goes on and on.

Can the Prime Minister give some hope that someone is taking care of this and tell us when federal employees will be back in their offices serving people?

• (1425)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking government workers for serving the public. They are helping Canadians here and across the country.

Yesterday, I thanked Department of Finance employees in person for their excellent work. I know that public servants across the country work very hard. I think everyone in the House should be grateful for their efforts.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what federal employees want is to feel as though their government supports them. They want to serve Canadians. They want to be proud of their work at the end of the day because they have the tools they need to provide the services that Canadians expect.

This government is improvising and making it so that the federal employees we are so proud of are unable to do their jobs.

Once again, my question is simple. Will the Prime Minister finally authorize federal employees to go back to their offices so that they can serve Canadians?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to once more emphasize how truly proud we, on this side of the House, are of our public service and of all the federal government employees who are doing an amazing job. They did great work throughout the pandemic.

I want to assure public servants that we are there to help them do what they want to do, and that is to help Canadians.

* * *

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Line 5 is being threatened yet again with another shut-down through an application filed in U.S. federal court. This would cut off gasoline, diesel, propane and jet fuel supplies to Ontario and Quebec.

Has the Prime Minister picked up the phone and talked to President Biden to get this matter resolved, or will he have to invoke the 1977 treaty just to talk to the White House about this matter, as he had to do last year when Governor Whitmer of Michigan threatened to shut down the same pipeline?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for the question, because it gives me the opportunity to assure Canadians that our government absolutely understands the importance of Line 5. We understand, today more than ever, how important energy security is.

I want to assure Canadians that our government is always ready to stand up for Canada's rights, including our treaty rights, in our relationship with the United States. We have a constant conversation about energy security with the U.S. I spoke to Secretary Yellen just two weeks ago on this issue.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government says Line 5 is important to the government. It supplies almost half of Ontario and Quebec's energy needs. If it is so important, why is the government not opposing the application made in the U.S. federal court to shut down this pipeline?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians can have no doubt whatsoever about our government's preparedness and our government's ability to stand up for the Canadian economy and for Canada's treaty rights, including in our relationship with the United States. We absolutely understand the importance of Line 5. We understand the importance of energy security. I spoke with Secretary Yellen just two weeks ago. We talked about energy security and I pointed out to her how important our relationship is to them.

* * *

• (1430)

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is clear to me that there is an immigration crisis. However, when the Bloc asked the Prime Minister whether it would be a good idea for Quebec to have more control, the Prime Minister did not once talk about a solution, not once. He said, "immigration will, by and large, always be under federal control.... I realize our Bloc friend is not happy about this, but Quebec is not yet its own country".

Is it out of sheer stubbornness that the Prime Minister refuses to collaborate more effectively with Quebec's immigration department? Is that the reality?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that immigration is essential to Canada's economy and to Quebec's economy.

As the member opposite well knows, Quebec sets its own immigration targets. We will always work closely with the Government of Quebec to ensure that the immigration system continues to work for Quebecers and for all Canadians.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I believe that we do not understand one another. When Quebec asks for authority to resolve the immigration crisis, the Prime Minister slams the door in its face, saying that Quebec is not a country and that this is Canada's job.

If that is so, then Canada should do its job and get to work on the 29,000 files that have been sitting in Ottawa for years. The immigrants who submitted them were selected by Quebec, are already living in Quebec and want to settle in Quebec.

Unfortunately, the machine is broken. If the government refuses to fix it and refuses to let Quebec take care of it, what then?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government works closely and effectively with the Government of Quebec.

Last year, Quebec welcomed more than 50,000 new permanent residents. This year, Quebec has significantly increased its immigration targets, which will help reduce wait times.

* * *

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls inquiry cited housing and homelessness over 200 times in its final report. Indigenous women are not inherently vulnerable. This is a result of colonization. Access to safe, secure and affordable housing can play a key role in stopping this genocide, yet the Liberals have consistently failed to ensure there is a dedicated housing strategy for indigenous women, girls and two-spirited people.

Will the Prime Minister take immediate action to correct this gross oversight, or will he allow this ongoing genocide to continue?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be able to start by recognizing that today is Red Dress Day, and on this day we mourn and honour missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ2+ people.

I also want to say to the member opposite that our government absolutely agrees with her that housing is an essential part of the problem and needs to be an essential part of the solution. That is why housing was a core focus of the budget we tabled last month, including, absolutely, investing in indigenous housing.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is not one community in northern Manitoba that has not been devastated by the brutal murder or disappearance of an indigenous woman, girl or two-spirited person. Here at home, people are calling for action to end this genocide, immediate action on the 231 calls for justice, and action to end poverty, the housing crisis and discrimination.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

The Liberals say this is important, but it is nowhere to be seen in the budget. Enough with the rhetoric. The government must act to ensure that no indigenous woman, girl or two-spirited individual ever goes missing again.

Let us end this genocide now.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her very important speech.

Today is Red Dress day, and on this day we mourn and honour missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ2 people.

● (1435)

[English]

We know that one day of recognition is not enough, that we must work every day to end violence against indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ2+ people. That is why the budget includes significant investments in this ongoing work, as did previous budgets.

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HOUSING

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when first I said that the Liberals' ban on foreign buyers was so full of loopholes that it was like Swiss cheese, I had no idea that the government would give itself the biggest loophole of all in its budget law. Get this: After royal assent, the government gets to decide if it ever is allowed to come into force. That is right: NDP and Liberal members will vote for the ban that really is not a ban, and the government can simply ignore a law that really is not a law.

They promised millennials they would take action on housing affordability. Why do Liberals make promises they have no intention of keeping?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our plan will double the housing supply in 10 years, making sure we support first-time homebuyers with a tax-free savings account, doubling the first-time homebuyers' tax credit to \$10,000, making sure we extend the first-time homebuyer incentive to 2025 and, in addition to that, cracking down on speculation and unfair business practices while increasing the money for investments in affordable housing.

Our plan to ban foreign buyers for two years is a credible plan; the Conservatives' was full of misinformation.

*Oral Questions***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we welcome U.S. trade representative Katherine Tai to Canada today. We expect discussions with her on subjects like softwood lumber, electric vehicles and buy America will produce positive results. In a letter to Ms. Tai, Congressman Higgins urged her to raise the government's 1% tax on vacant, foreign-owned real estate with Canadian officials, as the tax violates the non-discrimination principles of CUSMA.

Can the Minister of International Trade please advise whether her lawyers agree with Congressman Higgins that this NDP-Liberal tax violates CUSMA?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very important that we are talking about Canada-U.S. relations, as U.S. trade representative Katherine Tai is presently here in Ottawa, meeting with the Minister of International Trade. This underscores how important this relationship is and the work that is ongoing.

With respect to the member's specific question with regard to trade irritants that relate to CUSMA, he knows the extensive work that was done by the now deputy prime minister in terms of engaging in a strong agreement that protects Canadian interests. That is the first point.

The second point is that when CUSMA violations are triggered, we have been assertive and will always be assertive in defending Canadian interests and the interests of Canadian businesses to defend their economic success in this country.

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is experiencing the sharpest rise in inflation it has seen in the past three decades. Unfortunately, wages are not keeping up, and households are struggling to keep their heads above water.

Nearly three-quarters of Quebecers think inflation is a serious problem. What does this government say? It says it is a global problem.

What does the Prime Minister have to say to families who are faced with agonizing choices like whether to buy groceries or pay the rent?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives continue to bash the Canadian economy with their false rhetoric, but the truth is that Canada is well positioned to weather the economic storm caused by Putin and COVID-19.

According to the IMF, we will have the fastest growing economy in the G7 this year and next. Of course, S&P reaffirmed Canada's AAA credit rating last week.

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister is saying that constituents who come see us in our constituency offices are liars.

The reality is that house prices have gone up by 21% in the Quebec City area. Owning a house now costs 21% more. Gas now costs nearly 2% more.

What do the Liberals have to say to Canadians, to Quebecers and to our constituents who come to our constituency offices and are fed up? That is the reality.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one would think the Conservatives are criticizing a fictitious economic policy, not the budget we tabled.

Maybe they should take note of what Stephen Harper's former director of communications said, and that is that the budget is prudent and reasonable. This is a budget for a booming economy that will achieve a near zero deficit in five years.

• (1440)

[English]

CHILD CARE

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have an email. Rachel and her partner have been renting their apartment, but are now expecting a baby. Like most Canadians, they want a home that has a bit more space. The problem is they cannot afford a home and have been outbid on every attempt. In the latest budget it says, "Don't worry, here's \$500". Five hundred dollars barely covers two weeks' rent in most places.

The minister is completely out of touch, so should Canadians simply give up on home ownership while he is minister?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member opposite's constituents on expecting their baby because there is good news: In Alberta, child care costs have gone down 50%. In fact, I was just in Edmonton and Calgary a couple of weeks ago talking to parents who had benefited from reduced child care fees. They have said it is actually the equivalent of a mortgage payment. We are working every single day to help families with affordability, and we are going to keep doing that.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's budget rewards failure. The failing Infrastructure Bank gets more money and an expanded mandate. The Liberals are using the same broken model for the \$15-billion new innovation slush fund. The underwhelming supercluster program gets a sweet renewal and, of course, the government has ignored inflation warnings and increased the carbon tax, punishing farmers and Canadians.

The unpopular housing incentive programs are not being changed. Why is breaking up so hard to do?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to finally get a question from the members opposite on infrastructure, which is something that is so crucial in this country and creates good jobs right across the country. The Canada Infrastructure Bank has invested in 33 projects: nine in public transit, seven in clean power and five in green infrastructure.

The member opposite should maybe be careful, because his next future leader has said about the Canada Infrastructure Bank that it is a game changer, and municipalities would not have been able to make those investments without it. He might want to speak to Patrick Brown before he goes too far in this line of questioning.

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[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is an immigration crisis, but when Quebec asks for more control to address the issue itself, the Prime Minister says that Canada will continue to be in charge because Quebec is not a country. It is as simple as that.

Imagine hearing that when you are one of the 29,000 immigrants living in Quebec whose application is stuck in Ottawa's broken machinery. They will not help because Quebec is not a country. Is that really their answer? How pathetic.

Has the Prime Minister forgotten that we are talking about real people with real problems?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is right: Quebec selects the majority of its immigrants. Every year, Quebec issues more Quebec selection certificates than the immigration thresholds set out in Quebec's immigration plan.

The federal government cannot process more files than Quebec asks it to. We cannot exceed Quebec's thresholds. We will respect Quebec's jurisdiction in immigration. We will process applications in accordance with Quebec's plan.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, to address the labour shortage in the regions, Quebec is appealing to foreign workers, but after being accepted by Quebec, they are rejected by Ottawa.

Imagine that. Our businesses invest up to \$20,000 per candidate, and Quebec issues its approval swiftly, only for the federal government to reject these temporary workers, claiming that they might end up wanting to stay here.

Our SMEs need workers now. When will the government fix its broken machinery? It is getting in the way of Quebec's efforts to address its labour needs.

Oral Questions

• (1445)

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that immigration is an integral part of addressing the labour shortage. IRCC is prioritizing work permit processing for in-demand occupations in industries such as health, agriculture, food and seafood production.

I would like to point out that in the first quarter of 2022, we processed more than 100,000 work permit applications, nearly double the number of work permits processed over the same period last year.

We will continue to ensure that Canadian employers have access to workers.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, every spring, Quebec farmers need temporary foreign workers. Every year, Ottawa hems and haws. This affects the agricultural sector, as well as many more of Quebec's economic sectors, and it affects our regions most of all.

Our regions need foreign workers, but the federal government is taking its sweet time and even rejecting some applications.

It seems pretty simple to me. Quebec says yes to a worker, Ottawa rubber-stamps the application, and it is on to the next one.

Why are things always so complicated when Ottawa is involved?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate the opposition's questions, and I am always grateful to my colleagues for their support for immigration and the work our government is doing for temporary foreign workers, because we know they play an important role and are vital to food security.

I would also like to emphasize that these people are entitled to safety. We have taken several measures over the past few months, and we will continue to accept applicants.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in every federal prison across Canada, the Government of Canada is upholding the right of inmates to choose whether they receive a COVID-19 vaccination. However, the same is not given to correctional officers and public servants tasked with running our institutions, and some of them are even losing their jobs over this.

Why is the Government of Canada applying one set of standards for correctional officers and public servants, and another set of rights for federal inmates?

Oral Questions

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the beginning of the pandemic, we have committed to Canadians that we will protect their health and safety. We have put in place measures to protect workers and our communities. As circumstances change, we adjust these measures and we have always followed advice from public health experts. We committed to review this policy every six months, and that review is under way.

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal government has said it will discuss changing the vaccination requirements for federal workers, but we still have not heard of any discussions or changes. Many of those who cannot work because they are not fully vaccinated have no benefits and no income.

Why is the NDP-Liberal government continuing to break the backs of working Canadians with these vindictive federal mandates?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said before, having a fully vaccinated workforce makes our workforce and our communities safer. We asked employees to step up, and 99% of public servants have been fully vaccinated or attested to having been fully vaccinated. We committed to review this policy every six months. This review is under way, and any decisions will be based on science and the advice of public health officials.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently I received a very concerning email from the general manager of the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority. He warned that the continued use of the ArriveCAN app would result in much longer processing times and lengthy border wait times as we approach the summer tourism season. Further, these border delays will discourage cross-border travel, and will continue to adversely impact the hard-hit tourism sector in Niagara.

When will the federal government help the tourism sector in Niagara and in Canada by ending the use of the ArriveCAN app?

● (1450)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course ArriveCAN has been an important tool to protect the country from the spread of the virus. We continue to listen to the advice of our public health care experts, and are working very closely with the CBSA to ensure the ArriveCAN app is efficient and smooth with respect to trade and travel, which happily is happening again.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has acknowledged there has been a genocide against indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people, but its inaction speaks louder than its words. It has had the calls for justice from the national inquiry for three years, but the government has failed to implement them. It is also sitting on money that was allocated in 2021 in response to the calls for justice.

While it drags its feet, indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people are dying. When will the minister implement the calls for justice, get the money out the door and save indigenous lives?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for her passion and the words she shared with us, yesterday and today, with respect to murdered and missing indigenous women. It is a tragedy that sadly is ongoing in this country and has only been exacerbated by the pandemic.

The monies we have announced in the last and present budgetary cycles are directly targeted to a systemic approach to reducing the violence and insecurity that is constantly felt by women, and the tragedy that is ongoing. Unfortunately, the results are trailing, but as a country, a government and a society we need to continue to raise this issue and these matters to make sure everyone can feel safe in this country.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, indigenous women are dying while the minister makes excuses.

Today, the media is reporting that indigenous women make up half the population of incarcerated persons in federal prisons. The over-incarceration of indigenous women has actually been getting worse under the current government. There is a call for justice to put in place a deputy commissioner to oversee indigenous programs and to work with indigenous communities, but surprisingly the Liberals have not gotten it done.

When will the government start addressing systemic racism and implement all the calls for justice?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on today of all days, we must acknowledge the continued legacy of colonialism in our justice system. The vast overrepresentation of indigenous peoples, including women, is unacceptable. That is why we are committed to taking action by implementing culturally sensitive training, increasing representation of indigenous peoples in our justice system, repealing mandatory minimum penalties with the legislation being put forward by the Minister of Justice and, of course, a whole suite of other reforms. My colleagues and I on this side of the House are committed to working with the NDP and my hon. colleague to ensure that we walk the path of reconciliation.

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is Red Dress Day: a day for all to remember missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ+ people. It is a national day for Canadians to reflect and recognize that we must all take action. Indigenous peoples know what their priorities are. They have been voicing their needs, and culturally appropriate approaches will best help those who need support so they can work toward healing and closure.

Can the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations tell us what the Government of Canada is doing to develop accessible and culturally relevant healing programs and support for children, families and survivors of this national tragedy?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the pain and loss felt by families and survivors of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, and the lack of safety felt today, are tragedies that are ongoing and have only been exacerbated by the pandemic. Indigenous women and girls have the right to be and feel safe anywhere in this country. Tragically, this is not the case today. This can only be achieved by continued investments in shelters, safe spaces, cultural spaces and housing, coupled with culturally appropriate mental health services. We have made significant and indeed historic investments in these areas, but recognize that much more work needs to be done. We will continue to do this alongside indigenous partners.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our country is in a mental health crisis. The first hurdle to getting help is to seek it out, but the people who have the courage to ask for help are being denied that help. People are literally dying waiting for help.

The Liberals promised \$4.5 billion via the Canada mental health transfer during the election campaign, which was promised to start in 2022, yet in the recent budget there is nothing, zero, for the Canada mental health transfer. Why?

• (1455)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the recognition that this is Mental Health Week, as we increase awareness coast to coast to coast.

As members know, in 2017 we dedicated \$5 billion to this over the next 10 years. We have added \$45 million to develop the national standards that would become the strategy. That would then become the transfer. We have to build this bottom up with those who have lived and living experiences.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard G  n  reux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivi  re-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the pandemic has affected all of us, and all Canadians, in one way or another. The stress and uncertainty have had a devastating impact on Canadians' mental health. In the spirit of Mental Health Week, the time is long overdue to take action to address the impact the pandemic has had on all Canadians and ensure adequate mental health care for everyone. However, there is absolutely nothing in the budget for this. It

is not a small zero or a medium zero, but a big, fat zero. Why is that?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. Mental health is an integral part of overall health, and it is a priority for our government. Since 2015, we have made historic investments to support the mental health of Canadians, including \$5 billion for the provinces and territories to increase access to mental health services, \$598 million for a distinctions-based mental health strategy for indigenous peoples, and \$270 million for the Wellness Together portal.

We must do better.

[English]

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just months ago during the election, the Liberal platform made a firm commitment of \$4.5 billion over five years for a Canada mental health transfer, very specifically including \$250 million in 2021-22 and \$625 million in 2022-23. This promise was clearly broken in the budget.

What happened between the election and the budget? It was, of course, the NDP-Liberal agreement to cling to power. As part of that agreement, did the NDP demand that the Liberals break their commitment on mental health in order to fund other NDP priorities?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his ongoing advocacy, but I think he has it a bit wrong. The effect of the NDP coalition—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: We were doing really well there. Let us have a respectful answer.

The hon. Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, the word was “collaboration”.

I want to say that on mental health, we think there is collaboration across the whole of the House, as we go forward with investing the \$5 billion that was in the 2017 budget and move forward to the federal transfer eventually, once we have a strategy.

Oral Questions

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we are talking about the 2022 budget, and several things are very clear. During the election, many parties made substantial commitments on mental health. The cornerstone of the Liberal commitment was the Canada mental health transfer, beginning with \$250 million for 2021-22. The Liberals made an agreement with the NDP, and many elements of that agreement remain highly secret. Subsequently, the Canada mental health transfer has been shelved.

Canadians deserve to know this: What other Liberal platform commitments have been negotiated away in the deal with the NDP?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I usually respect the questions from the member, but I find this quite annoying. Everything in mental health and addiction is being built up; there is nothing being traded away. This is a high priority in our government, and I really think that was a despicable question.

* * *

● (1500)

[Translation]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are very concerned by what The Globe and Mail has revealed about the Canada Revenue Agency. Half the employees of a division responsible for making multinational companies pay their fair share of taxes stated they were victims of bullying last year. The employees felt they were under inappropriate pressure to approve what they saw as a multi-million dollar sweetheart deal for one company.

Bullying in the workplace is always unacceptable. That said, does the minister not see anything wrong with her own employees being bullied to recover less money, rather than more?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, having been a social worker who worked with victims of violence and bullying, I can say that I strongly condemn any form of bullying. I want to reassure my colleague that all matters have been verified by an independent third party and everything is in order. The Minister of National Revenue cannot interfere in the administration of the CRA.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we know that the minister never gives an answer.

I do not want to call the third-party review into question today, but the agreement was at the very least somewhat contentious. Half the employees said they were victims of bullying. The Canada Revenue Agency is supposed to be the taxpayers' watchdog, but in this case, the dog has turned on the family and is trying to bite.

Is it standard practice at the Canada Revenue Agency to bully companies into approving such controversial requests?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there should be no problems as I am a good watchdog.

What I can say is that the Bloc Québécois will never serve as the opposition. It should at least try to be well informed, because that is its only job.

* * *

[English]

SERVICE CANADA

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's failure to plan has prevented Canadians from being able to access basic government services. People cannot get through by phone or in person to Service Canada. In fact, the delays in passport processing have effectively ground Service Canada locations all across the country to a halt. It has become so dire that some people are charging upwards of \$15 an hour to stand in line for people desperate to get an in-person appointment.

The Harper government introduced a 10-year passport. Has the Liberal government decided to introduce a 10-year wait-list?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said before in the House, there is unprecedented demand when it comes to accessing passports. We have put a number of initiatives in place to help deal with this. We have a simplified process to replace expired passports. We have opened more client counters in passport offices. We have operated extended hours and used overtime in passport offices and processing and call centres. We have created three additional application processing centres, expanded passport intake in 303 Service Canada centres, hired 500 additional staff, continue to hire and train more and opened 12 offices over the weekend in the busiest centres around the country. We will continue to work really hard to ensure we are serving Canadians.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite all that, the horrors of the out-of-service Service Canada office in Saskatoon continue.

Margaret is 86 years old and the nicest lady you can find. She was struggling to get through on the phone, so she went to the Saskatoon office in person. The staff refused to meet with her for not having booked an online appointment. Our seniors, and indeed all Canadians, deserve better than this.

Does the minister even have an ounce of compassion for Margaret and all the people being mistreated in Saskatoon because of the minister's lack of planning?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course I have compassion for everyone across the country, because there is an unprecedented demand in accessing these services. I was in Saskatoon on Friday, in fact, and visited the Service Canada centre there. I spoke with the employees, who are working around the clock to address this unprecedented demand. They are working evenings, they are working weekends and they are doing everything they can to serve Canadians, but right now there are more Canadians than at any time ever before looking to renew their passports because they want to travel. We are going to do everything we can to serve them as best as possible.

• (1505)

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a constituent of mine from Kelowna—Lake Country did the right thing. She applied for a passport renewal in person at a passport office and was told by Service Canada staff that doing so two months before travelling was plenty of time. The passports never arrived and she will likely have to cancel her family trip at great cost and disappointment.

Service Canada told MPs that it expects lengthy passport delays. This is another mess from the government.

When will the minister provide clarity to my constituent and Canadians on passport processing?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that this is a frustrating process for many Canadians, but over the past two years many passports have expired, and with the lifting of restrictions many Canadians want to travel at the same time.

We are doing everything we can, and Service Canada employees are helping them. If there is an urgent request, they should make that known when they arrive at a Service Canada centre. They are ensuring that transfers happen. If there is an issue, they can call the call centre. Of course, MPs have access to a special regional inquiries unit that they can call, and Service Canada will assist as best as possible.

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, early 2022 was fraught with uncertainty for many farmers and they have faced many challenges in planning their operations.

Some of those challenges include increased drought and flooding, as well as outbreaks of livestock diseases, such as the avian flu.

Can the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food tell the House what is being done to help farmers manage these major risks?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her support for the agricultural industry.

This spring was especially difficult for our farmers. In order to help them deal with the avian flu, in particular, we recently extended the AgriStability enrolment deadline from April 30 to June 30,

which will enable more farmers to enrol in this important risk management program and ensure that they receive a minimum income in these uncertain times.

[English]

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with global supply chains struggling and a war in Ukraine, Canadian agriculture is more important than ever. Farmers in my riding are concerned that the Liberals want to meddle with the Pest Control Products Act, adding more red tape for them to deal with and favouring activism over science-based decisions. Our farmers have always been tremendous stewards of the environment.

What makes the NDP-Liberal government, or coalition, think that it has any expertise or right to tell our farmers how to feed the world?

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure my colleague that we certainly do recognize that our farmers are firmly committed to taking care of our environment. Their land is their most precious possession.

We committed to reviewing the overall framework within which the Pest Management Regulatory Agency operates to make sure that it meets consumers' expectations, while recognizing that our farmers also need tools to ensure a good yield.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, business owners from such sectors as manufacturing, agriculture or tourism are struggling to address the labour shortage. It is even worse for francophone business owners. On top of all of the red tape, they are having to wait up to 30 months, which is two and a half years.

Does the Minister of Immigration realize how much irremediable damage this is doing to our economy? What will he do right now to address this issue and show respect for our francophone entrepreneurs?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Oral Questions

This is a very important question, because immigration is key to addressing the labour shortage. Once again, I would like to inform my colleague and the House that during the first quarter of 2022 we processed more than 100,000 work permits, which is nearly double the number of applications processed during that same period in 2021.

We will continue to ensure that employers in Quebec and Canada have access to the workers they need to participate in Canada's economic recovery.

* * *

• (1510)

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just last year, the NDP voted with the Conservatives, not just once but four times, for the production of the Winnipeg microbiology lab documents, which the Liberals have still failed to provide. Just last week in the foreign affairs committee, the NDP flip-flopped and voted with the Liberals to shut down the committee's inquiry, blocking production of those very same documents. What did the minister promise the NDP, to make it complicit in yet another Liberal cover-up?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, those documents were made available through NSICOP. The Conservatives said they did not want to see them, so then we created a new process, through an MOU, to have an independent panel of jurists who would determine what could be made public and what could not, to protect national security. Did the Conservatives decide to participate? No, they did not, so I am confused. Do they want to see the documents or do they not? We have had two processes and two offers for them to see them. They continue to say no. It leads one to believe that they just want to play a partisan game and that it is all a big joke.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my riding of Guelph continues to see significant growth in green technology and agriculture, sectors that we know are vital to Canada's economic prosperity, through organizations like Innovation Guelph and Bioenterprise. Can the Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario inform the House about the measures our government is taking to support the economic growth in these sectors while enhancing the lives of those living in Guelph and Wellington County?

Hon. Helena Jaczek (Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from the riding of Guelph for his commitment to supporting job creation and economic growth in his riding.

I was pleased to visit Guelph last Friday to announce \$10 million for green technology development through six regional innovation centres, as well as over \$2.6 million in support for community revitalization and tourism projects for the people of Guelph and

Wellington County. Our government will continue to make investments like these that grow our economy and improve the lives of Canadians.

The Deputy Speaker: I am hearing a lot of chatter here. I do not know what has been going on between questions. There is some friendly banter going on here, so maybe call it off.

The hon. member for Nunavut.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, one of the 231 calls for justice calls for the full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The government committed to doing so in passing Bill C-15, but in courts this week, federal lawyers now say UNDRIP is only an important interpretative aid in the process for discussions. Which is it? Will the Minister of Justice stand to confirm that the rights of indigenous people in Canada are indeed substantive, as stated in UNDRIP?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, UNDRIP is a foundational document that we feel will be transformative in restarting the reconciliation process and fulfilling the real promise of Canada, moving forward. I also point out that my predecessor minister of justice implemented a directive on litigation. We are doing our best every day to implement that directive. These are two measures that we feel will help build trust and help build the process of reconciliation as we move forward with implementing UNDRIP.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, we waited for over a year for the government to honour its commitment and promise to the arts community to hold a national arts summit. We have seen the visceral economic and societal damage that this delay has wreaked upon workers. I called for it in February, and then I called for it again in March. Finally, the government got around to it.

Can the Minister of Canadian Heritage share with us what came out of the summit? What concrete action can we expect to see, and what can I tell my constituents who have lost their jobs and their livelihoods? Will we see real action, or was the year-long delay just for lip service?

• (1515)

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his sudden interest in Canadian heritage. He talks about February, but perhaps he does not remember that the pandemic was raging on.

We have been there for our artists since the beginning, and we will continue to be. The pandemic has been tough, but the worst is behind us. It is time to rebuild and look to the future. We were happy to welcome the entire cultural community to Ottawa this week for the cultural summit. Together, we will find a long-term solution to strengthen our culture. Jobs depend on it.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I hope you will find consent for the following motion:

That, given that:

(i) grassroots actions are taking place today at local, regional, national and international levels in recognition of the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls,

(ii) Indigenous women and girls still face unacceptable and rising rates of violence, with 56% of Indigenous women having experienced physical assault and 46% having experienced sexual assault, 64% of First Nations and 65% of Métis women having experienced violent victimization, 42% of Indigenous women having experienced physical or sexual abuse during childhood, and Indigenous women being at least 4.5 times more likely to be murdered than non-Indigenous women,

(iii) we have witnessed decades of insufficient action from all levels of government to address this crisis with the urgency it deserves,

the House call on the government to:

(a) immediately implement Call for Justice 3.2 of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls;

(b) provide adequate, stable, equitable, and ongoing funding for Indigenous-centred and community-based health and wellness services that are accessible and culturally appropriate; and

(c) meet the health and wellness needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

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[Translation]

RUSSIA

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the members for Don Valley West, Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, Montarville, Saint-Jean and Edmonton Strathcona, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

[English]

Whereas Vladimir Kara-Murza, a trusted leader in the Russian human rights and democracy movement, was unjustly arrested by the Putin regime for having the temerity of telling the truth;

Whereas Vladimir Kara-Murza has been poisoned twice, and has been arrested and jailed and could soon face up to a decade or more in prison if found guilty of telling the truth;

Therefore, the House calls for the immediate release of Vladimir Kara-Murza, and all other Russian prisoners of conscience; the immediate release of Alexei Navalny; the immediate cessation of hostilities in Ukraine, and the unilateral withdrawal of Russian troops.

Business of the House

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

● (1520)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to get up on the Thursday question today. There are just a couple of points I want to make.

This morning, in case the government House leader was not aware, I did offer to extend hours for this evening so that we could have three extra hours of debate on government business if we had a concurrence motion. I made that offer to the deputy House leader. Unfortunately, they did not allow that to occur.

However, there are two particular questions in addition to the House schedule. First, what is the schedule order for the House? Second, on the committee of the whole, could the government House leader indicate whether both ministers we requested will be here in person in the House?

Lastly, there is no indication on the calendar that I have received, so perhaps the government House leader, for the sake of the employees around this place, so that they can be prepared, can indicate when late-night sittings are going to happen.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand my hon. colleague has a birthday coming up next week, so I wish him a very happy birthday between now and the next Thursday question.

On the question with respect to the ministers the member is requesting be present in the committee of the whole, I will be happy to get back to him on that.

With respect to extending sitting hours, I request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment of the sitting on Wednesday, May 11, be 12 o'clock midnight, pursuant to an order made Monday, May 2. I am learning that this is the member's birthday, so he gets an opportunity to celebrate in this august place.

This afternoon, we will resume second reading debate on Bill C-11 on broadcasting. Tomorrow and Monday, we will be continuing second reading debate of Bill C-19, the budget implementation act. Next Tuesday and Thursday will be opposition days, and we will return to the second reading of Bill C-11 on Wednesday.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Monday, May 2, the minister's request to extend the said sitting is deemed adopted.

The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni is rising on a point of order.

Government Orders

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, for clarification, just before question period, it was my understanding that the member for Kingston and the Islands was still answering questions from his speech and that we were going to return to that.

I do not know if there is still time left.

The Deputy Speaker: We are going to go to a new bill, so we are changing completely. The hon. member for Repentigny.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

ONLINE STREAMING ACT

The House resumed from March 29 consideration of the motion that Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it will come as no surprise if I begin my speech by saying that standing up for Quebec culture is at the heart of the Bloc Québécois's mission. It is the focus of every MP sitting with me who belongs to our party. Our culture, our history and the French language, the only official language of Quebec, make us stand out in the broader North American communications landscape.

It was therefore natural that the Bloc Québécois should work to improve Bill C-10 in the previous Parliament. We were very disappointed that it fell by the wayside when the election was called, but I am pleased that it was re-introduced in its new iteration as Bill C-11. These provisions are important to us. Several recommendations that our party made in committee were favourably received by the government before the bill was re-introduced. We salute this spirit of co-operation.

Broadcasting legislation has not been touched since 1991, so updating this legislation now is not repressive, nor will it jeopardize any freedoms. Legislation is undoubtedly the most effective way to ensure that there is more equity when it comes to accessing and broadcasting Quebec and Canadian productions. Essentially, this is a way to spotlight Quebec, Canadian, indigenous, regional and other identities.

Quebec's and Canada's cultural communities have been waiting for decades for the government to update this legislation. The clock is ticking. The first thing the cultural sector called for was for Parliament to adopt the bill as quickly as possible. I was set to give my speech in February. The Yale report was released two years ago. Things are certainly not moving quickly.

The Bloc Québécois has what I would consider an objective view of the 21st century. I often talk about environmental issues. Our positions are based on following the science, taking bold action, implementing strong legislation and so on. Our position on cultural matters is similar, in the sense that we will listen to what sector stakeholders tell us. We need to keep up with the times. The new 21st-century platforms have changed how we interact with the cultural sector as a whole. We therefore need to take bold action and implement strong legislation.

Whichever way we look at our culture and its distinctive colour, which is sometimes loud, sometimes muted, this aspect of our existence in society needs to be viewed through the prism of its fragility. Fragility, not weakness.

Given the startling evolution of information and communication technologies, only someone who is wilfully blind could deny the influences of our neighbours to the south. I said influences, but I sometimes feel like calling them imperialist effects. The questions that came up during the study of this bill would never be asked in the United States. The big U.S. conglomerates and other broadcasting platforms with global reach and territory are not so concerned about fragile cultures like ours, which we would like to be protected.

Cultural sovereignty is not an abstract concept. It should never be trivialized. Let us remember part of a speech by my fellow member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert on the importance of this bill:

Such is the risk of a people becoming nothing more than one demographic among many. A culture, especially a minority culture like ours, is a precious and delicate garden that could be swept away and destroyed by the fierce winds of technological globalization. If that happens, the world would lose our unique and irreplaceable colour from its spectrum. That would be a tragedy for the entire world, because when a culture dies, it is a loss for all of humanity.

That would be infinitely sad.

Imagine taking a trip, hoping to explore new horizons, learn new things and get better acquainted with a culture, only to wind up hearing the same music everywhere, seeing the same values and the same social mores. That would be really horrible. That is precisely why this law is needed, so that we can continue to produce our stories, convey our realities in music or on screen, and, above all, promote them around the world. If this possibility disappears, an entire culture will suffer the consequences.

● (1525)

Culture is the heart of a nation. When culture is eroded, the nation is affected. Quebec is a nation, Canada is a nation, and our first nations, Métis and Inuit communities are nations.

Does anyone here really want to see all that disappear?

Content producers want to see this bill passed. The growing cultural sector in Quebec enthusiastically supports the Bloc's requests, which seek to enhance the bill.

The Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc supported Bill C-10 and made an effort to improve it during the session, but the Conservatives were against the bill from the start.

The Conservative Party wants the government to intervene as little as possible, and it sees privacy issues everywhere. That is why there has been a major smear campaign. They tried to find all sorts of flaws in the bill, but they were often grasping at straws. The Conservatives used a whole lot of parliamentary manoeuvres to slow down the process. The same thing happened in committee, in both the House and the Senate, despite the fact that the Department of Justice did a legal analysis that stated that there was no impact on freedom of expression. I hope that people believe in the department.

The Conservatives, short on arguments, went even lower.

The hon. member for Lethbridge talked about Quebec culture as being outdated. That hurt us, heart and soul. We do not necessarily want to listen to American hip hop or Nashville's top 10 country pop hits.

Of course, Bill C-11 is garnering considerable interest because all Canadian cultural sectors will benefit from this legislative review. The objective of the new bill is substantially the same. Indeed, Bill C-11 has the same objective as Bill C-10, namely to subject web giants to the Broadcasting Act by forcing them to contribute financially to the creation and discoverability of Canadian cultural content.

Why would we stand idly by and do nothing about what is happening right now?

The major broadcasters and their web giant partners will have to respond to the Canadian government's legislative expectations. I am thinking about Netflix, Apple TV+, Disney+, Amazon Prime Video and music streaming services like Spotify, YouTube Music and Apple Music.

Our American neighbours sometimes have a chuckle about Canadian culture. They joke about the RCMP's uniforms, the way we say "eh?" and even poutine and Tim Hortons. They find it all a bit ridiculous. I will bet that the elected members that are fighting the bill tooth and nail do not really see a difference between Canadian and American artistic content. We do see a difference. If we asked these same elected members about Canadian content from emerging artists, they would be surprised to hear that these same artists are in favour of such a law. Once we have clarified the question of the freedom of web users, every Quebec and Canadian cultural sector will benefit.

Under the new version of the bill, creators, users and influencers are exempt from the law. Perhaps this was not clear in Bill C-10, but it is in Bill C-11. Canadian and Quebec artistic talent has merit. Just because the dominant language in the rest of Canada is English does not mean that we should bend over backwards and make concessions that go against our cultural identity.

To conclude, I will say that being mindful of the identity of peoples and their ways of expressing their culture and sense of belonging is in no way trivial or irrelevant.

This is what the Bloc Québécois wants to know: Are we going to govern our digital economy according to our own democratically established laws and regulations, or are we going to keep allowing

foreign giants like Google and Facebook impose their rules, mores and standards on us?

I would like to believe that it is still possible for all the elected members of the House to listen to reason so that the bill can be unanimously referred to committee for study.

The Bloc Québécois is proud to stand strong and defend our culture.

• (1530)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I truly appreciate many of the comments that my friend opposite has put on the record recognizing how critically important our culture is, whether it is the arts, performing arts or others, to Canadians, no matter what part of Canada they live in.

This legislation is, in fact, very important. Ultimately, we want to see it pass, but unfortunately the Conservatives seem to be intent on not seeing the legislation pass. If we listen to some of the speakers, they will say we have much more to debate on the issue.

Does the member see value in allocating more evening time for debate to try to satisfy the Conservative Party so that hopefully we can get this legislation through before summer?

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, that is quite the question. We very much want this to be unanimous. It seems there are still items where the text is not yet definitive. We know that words have meaning and that they can sometimes lead to something other than what was intended.

If the text of certain sections is problematic, let us debate it and make it clear in committee. That is all we ask. I think that the official opposition party should agree, without unreasonably prolonging debate.

The Bloc Québécois was never very happy with the idea of time allocation, even though we found it was necessary in the case of former Bill C-10. However, since certain sections of the former bill were corrected in this version, I would really like the official opposition to provide positive and constructive comments so that we can send Bill C-11 to committee and study it properly.

• (1535)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Repentigny for her speech and for her passion for Quebec culture in particular and cultural diversity in general.

I think we are at a point where the web giants have to participate in the cultural funding and production ecosystem, especially the francophone one. For years now, these digital broadcasters have been left alone, and it is as if we gifted them billions of dollars.

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We agree that Bill C-11 is an improved version of Bill C-10. However, does my colleague not see a problem with the discoverability of content? You can have the best Quebec, French, Italian or Spanish films, but if only American productions are streamed and people cannot find Quebec songs, there is a problem.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, indeed, we also see problems with discoverability. In this respect, however, an amendment proposed by the Bloc Québécois to the former Bill C-10 was incorporated into Bill C-11, and it addressed more than just discoverability.

That is why I commend the collaborative work we did with the government in this regard. Everything proposed by the Bloc, including discoverability, was added to the bill. That is why we are eager to support it.

[English]

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Madam Speaker, it was good to hear what my colleague, who, like me, is a member of the environment committee, had to say about rulings of the CRTC. As someone who also believes so much in culture, I am interested to hear from the member about how French culture would be improved by this bill. What sorts of things does the member think would happen because of it, compared with the things we had prior?

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague, with whom I sit on the standing committee on environment. His question is similar to the one posed by the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie. That is exactly what we want to improve.

I will give you a few figures. On digital platforms, French-language works represent 2.7% of the 10,000 most popular songs. If the giants of this world—all foreign, by the way—participate financially, it will help promote francophone culture.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to discuss Bill C-11 on online streaming. This is a modest beginning that will address certain aspects of what I call “living with the digital giants”.

I would like to give a shout-out to the artisans in Abitibi—Témiscamingue, in particular Rosalie Chartier-Lacombe’s team at the Petit Théâtre du Vieux Noranda, who is currently hosting the *Avantage Numérique* forum with a view to positioning the *croissant boréal*, a broad area of francophone identity and culture, as a centre of excellence for creative energy, expertise and talent.

Today’s new bill acknowledges that the growth of streaming services has radically transformed our way of watching television series and films and listening to music. It also acknowledges that certain foreign companies stream in Canada with no regulations or obligation to contribute to Canadian and Quebec stories and music. They distribute them with impunity without paying royalties.

Like many Bloc Québécois members who have spoken about this bill, the Bloc Québécois is in favour of Bill C-11. We have been discussing the reform of the Broadcasting Act in Ottawa for more than 30 years.

I want to mention the Yale report, which was produced by the Broadcasting and Telecommunications Legislative Review Panel. Bill C-11 is a first response to this report. The Yale report was very well received by Quebec’s cultural community, which wanted measures to be adopted quickly.

If someone says that the fox has gotten into the henhouse, it is obvious that the warning should be taken seriously. For more than 20 years, the web giants have been slowly choking the life out of Canadian and Quebec productions, as well as our written and visual media. We will agree that it is high time we did something and responded in such a way as to give Quebec and Canadian companies some elbow room.

The airwaves are a public good that must serve the people. In the coming decades, we will have to be able to recognize ourselves on these airwaves.

We know that the issues go far beyond financial considerations. The funding will have to be increased to ensure that Quebecers and francophones in other provinces are better served in terms of less tangible aspects that are just as important, such as the protection of the French language and, of course, Quebec culture. Indigenous peoples are also facing similar challenges to their culture and language.

In Quebec, this raises quite a few questions, which is why we need to be vigilant and thorough in order to protect and better serve the Quebec nation. Bill C-11 addresses the question of Canadian ownership in a very different way than did the Yale report in its recommendations 52 and 53.

For more than 90 years, successive governments have always been in favour of Canadian control over communications, and the Yale report supports that position.

The space we are officially giving to foreign companies right now must also be regulated so that they do not have an advantage over our own companies, which have served us well over the years. This is a risk, and I want to stress that it must be controlled, monitored and handled very thoroughly.

To date, there have been numerous reports in the media, and several groups expressed they would like to see this bill pass.

Bill C-11 improves funding for new Quebec productions, and the industry desperately needs such funding. No one is questioning the benefits for producers in Quebec’s cultural sector, and I, too, am very pleased. That was the main component of the Bloc Québécois’s platform for the arts and culture sector.

In this context, Bill C-11 is the first in a series of three bills that will pave the way for the long-awaited reform, with rules that will regulate the business models of online streaming companies.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage recently tabled a second bill, Bill C-18. This bill will enshrine principles that will guarantee the newspaper industry sources of revenue based on the reuse of the news items they produce and ensure compliance with the principles of Quebec's cultural sovereignty in the dissemination of information. I hope that Bill C-18 will be passed quickly and that there will be a place for regional media.

It will be hard work to analyze all the repercussions of the changes proposed by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, for the simple reason that we will have to know the government's broader intentions, which we do not. Right now, the government has decided to separate the elements of this reform into several bills. There is therefore no overall vision, and we are taking small steps forward. This creates expectations in the industries affected by changes that are not all being introduced at the same time. We do not know what is in the other bills.

Are we pitting Quebec and Canadian companies against each other at the expense of the development of essentially American companies? The devil is often in the details.

• (1540)

At the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, we have been hearing testimony for several years about how we have to give businesses the tools they need to have free rein within the same ecosystem. The Yale report recognized that vertically integrated Canadian businesses have very specific needs and that those needs will have to be carefully studied so that we can understand them and give Quebec and Canadian broadcasters a leg up.

One thing that keeps coming up when we talk to Quebec and Canadian broadcasters is the regulatory burden and the costs that broadcasters have to bear.

It is important to understand that Canadian broadcasters are not opposed to the broadcast policy per se; they have been clear on that. What they pay goes into the public coffers and does not necessarily support broadcasters.

For example, it was recommended that we review the licensing fees imposed on Canadian broadcasters under Part II of the act. Imagine if Canadian businesses had access to that \$110 million paid annually to the federal government to produce first-run content. Let us therefore hold foreign broadcasters to account.

There have been a multitude of mistakes made over the past 30 years, and the successive governments let their guard down with respect to the fundamental issue of cultural sovereignty, which essentially makes us who we are.

Like many players in this sector of the economy, we should have no doubt or hesitation when it comes to setting a higher bar for foreign corporations. It is high time to have another look at the weight of the regulatory burden borne by Quebec and Canadian corporations.

I would like to quote Alain Saulnier, journalist and former director of French information programming at Radio-Canada. He said, "I am not convinced that everyone has grasped the significance of this domination, the extent to which we have allowed the invasion and destruction of part of our way of life, our democracy, our econ-

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omy, our culture and our language in the case of Quebec. My plea is to resist." I had the opportunity to serve with him on the board of Juripop, and I would like to take this opportunity to send him my regards.

I will now talk about the transparency of the CRTC and about representation. That is another problem.

The CRTC has come under fire for the lack of transparency in its decision-making process. The guidelines that the government will issue to the CRTC for monitoring new foreign broadcasters must be made available to the public. Any challenges they launch must be made public. We must also take advantage of this reflection process to ensure that Quebecers who are familiar with Quebec culture and the traditional Quebec news industry are involved.

The same would hold true for indigenous culture. If it can be done for the Supreme Court, I do not see why it cannot be done in this context. This is about having a safety net for Canada's and Quebec's cultural sovereignty.

To conclude, I would like to say that protecting Quebec culture is at the very core of my commitment as a member of the Bloc Québécois.

Broadcasting is undoubtedly the most effective tool for dissemination and helps define our national identity. Technology is evolving, and the rapid adoption of online content by a greater number of consumers means we need to reflect on rules that allow players in the production industry to operate freely and ensure that creating Quebec content in French remains viable.

We cannot afford to not overhaul the rules governing this digital space. As with other bills that affect Quebec culture, our study of the Broadcasting Act reform needs to be done with Quebec in mind.

• (1545)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I suspect that the member opposite, like all members of this chamber, would recognize that through time and technology there have been great advancements. The Internet is one of them. The amount of streaming we have today in comparison with even just a few years ago has dramatically increased. There are so many opportunities for the amazing talent in Canada, and this bill, at least in part, will help facilitate the expansion and support of a very important industry.

I am wondering if the member can emphasize the importance of ensuring that the House of Commons passes this legislation before we break toward the end of June.

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[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, this bill should have been passed last year. We will do everything in our power to get it passed quickly this year. Talking about the Broadcasting Act makes me think about how the act has not really changed in the time it has taken the Winnipeg Jets to go away and come back again.

This is about fighting foreign productions. If we want to keep money here in our own homegrown productions, we have to change our laws so that it is not just our people who get taxed and penalized for investing in our culture. That, to me, is basic.

I urge my colleague to give this some thought on his side so we can make this reform happen quickly.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, making sure that the tech giants properly pay their share is a fundamental issue, because the tech giants are not just letting people make their own choices as they claim. They are actually the deciders: They are the arbiters of what we see. That means they play an editorial role. They promote certain content and demote other content. We have a right in our country to make sure that the content that is created here is remunerated, by these massive profits that they make, to create and build.

I would like to say to my colleague that this is not about protecting a regional culture or a local culture. This is about our international potential, because the artists from Quebec and Canada have an international ability. What we need is a system that pays into the artists and the creators so that we can build that system and create a vital, international arts community.

• (1550)

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I essentially agree with my colleague from Timmins—James Bay.

To quote a friend, using the current legislation is like trying to fit a square peg in a round hole. That has to stop. Funding for our Canadian and Quebec productions is vital to the survival of our culture. At the moment, the philosophy of moving forward in baby steps is preventing us from having a comprehensive vision of an industry that has been regulated for over 30 years, in other words, since before the advent of the Internet. As we know, however, culture is being consumed more and more online.

Is there a way to encourage Quebec and Canadian broadcasting platforms rather than platforms like Netflix, Apple and Disney?

It is a valid question, and it is our duty to provide answers.

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have spent some time perusing Netflix.

I have access to a wide range of American, British and Korean TV shows and films, but it is impossible to find films from Quebec, Canada or France.

In my colleague's humble opinion, what will this legislation do to change that?

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, that will send a clear message to our artists, producers and creators that our governments believe in the film industry, in the production industry in Quebec and Canada.

That will be essential to creating jobs in these areas of expertise. We agree that these areas were hard hit by the pandemic and that they need a breath of fresh air and a pat on the back. This will also benefit our viewers, people like me who mainly want to watch Quebec content, reflecting our culture.

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of my colleagues from the Liberal Party earlier talked about how times have changed in Canada and that we have all of these new technologies that, when we originally thought about looking at broadcasting in Canada or content creation in Canada, no one ever really could have thought about. He is right. The problem is that what Bill C-11 does is kind of like trying to play an MP4 on a VHS machine: It is just not going to work.

For someone who is trying to understand what the bill does and has heard a bunch of different sides on the Internet and whatever, I found one really good, succinct explanation of what this does. The real motive of the online streaming act is simple. Streaming platforms, and creators on them, are bringing in more and more revenue, and legacy media wants a piece of the pie. Legacy broadcasting media companies, such as Bell Media, Rogers and Corus Entertainment, have built a comfortable and oligopolistic domestic market in Canada during the broadcast era and dominated the media landscape for many decades. However, the old narrow system is not working any more. Television broadcasts have been on the decline since 2014. People do not use cable TV or listen to radio to the same extent.

Rather than building competing online services on terms that attract people, those legacy media giants want a cut of the profit from streaming services that are increasingly popular in the 21st-century media market. That is really what we have here. Let me be clear: The lobbyists for legacy media are all over this, as are the lobbyists for streaming services. They each want Parliament to do what is in their best interests. It is our job to come up with what is in the best interests of the Canadian public, and the bill does not get it done.

I fully support diverse voices and new emerging artists creating content in Canada and frankly, on many platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Instagram, we have content influencers who do not need to get a grant from the government to have a platform. They do not need to break in through the door of Bell Media to get content produced. They can have a massive voice and a massive platform without going through a gatekeeper, and I think that is fantastic. However, what we have in the bill is success by the mainstream media lobbyists in ensuring that a new, emerging, disruptive source of content provision is brought into their old paradigm of operating so that they do not have to compete. At best, if the bill passes, all it does is really kind of sustain their profits in an old operating model for a few more years.

We are going to be back here in a few years anyway with new requests from them, because the pace of change is so fast. Whenever a government has to regulate to keep an oligopoly sustained, it eventually collapses. It eventually fails, or eventually the public says enough, particularly when it starts to detrimentally impact us. There is a considerable risk of detrimental impact on individual Canadians.

The government will say that individual content creators are protected from this, but they are not. My understanding is that any sort of background information, for lack of a better term, that an individual content creator puts on a platform that may be subject to these new rules, under the bill, would then be subject to either regulation or some sort of monetary penalty under the provisions of these bills. Who knows? That just is not acceptable. What we are doing is actually stifling new emerging talents who speak from new emerging voices: It is a new emerging generation, and we are basically saying that we should be propping up the old models of the gatekeepers of the past several decades through restrictive regulation that does not even come close to the universe that we are all operating in.

I am going to date myself by saying this. I grew up with *The Raccoons* and *Fraggle Rock*. That is my generation. When they were producing *Fraggle Rock*, I do not even think that *Star Trek* could have thought about TikTok.

• (1555)

Why are we trying to come up with a regulatory model from my childhood? I would like to think I am young, hip and cool, but that remains a subject for debate that could come up in questions and comments.

In all seriousness, this bill could have been approached in a much better way. How I would have approached it, if I was the minister in charge, is to have understood the bias of the lobbyists who were coming forward to my bureaucrats from both sides of this issue: from streaming platforms and from legacy media. I would have looked beyond the near-term political ramifications of content creators who benefit from the existing system, and asked how we could ensure that those who are on all of those existing platforms are not negatively impacted, but at the same time, ensure that we are not stifling the potential of these disruptive new technologies.

Another recent analogy of this, if we want to see into the future of what this bill really looks like, is Uber. About 10 years ago, everyone was trying to get municipalities and different levels of gov-

ernment to pass regulations to prevent Uber from operating. That did not go so well. We have Uber, and I am glad for it. I use Uber all the time.

The reality is that when we have a disruptive technology that is popular and transforms culture, trying to stifle it with the government propping up an old way of doing things really does not work. I wish the government had gone to the traditional media and said if they felt that they were not able to compete in this environment and that there was a public benefit to us intervening, they should explain that. That is not the debate that we are having here.

The debate this bill puts forward on behalf of the government, the assumption, is that the old way is the only way and that we should be doing everything possible to prop up the old way of doing things without really forcing the old way to innovate. If Canada is supposed to be an innovative nation, the last thing we want to do to new, disruptive technology and innovation is send a signal that this is a hostile environment for new innovations to take root.

I know a lot has been said on this bill. I want to reiterate that I am concerned about the overreach of the CRTC, the main regulator here, in terms of the ability to regulate individual content. The regulator has sort of implied in committee testimony that it already has the ability to do this. It just maybe does not want to right now. That really frightens me.

That said, I also think there is a whole corollary discussion around social media platforms: how those have changed debate in this place and how they have calcified beliefs in this country. At the end of the day, we still have to ensure that Canadians have freedom of speech. How we usually square that circle is through education.

I think this bill is a giant mess. The concept behind it, of how we promote Canadian content and artists, is something that is worthy of study. That is something I am interested in and I am supporting, but on this bill itself, every person in here has said that it needs to go back to the drawing board.

With that, I move, seconded by the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word “that” and substituting the following: “Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be not now read a second time, but that the order be discharged, the bill withdrawn and the subject matter thereof referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.”

Let us go back to the drawing board. Let us take the concept, let us study it, let us work across party lines and come up with something we can all support, rather than ramming something down people's throats. Frankly, this is trying to play an MP4 on a Betamax.

• (1600)

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

Continuing with questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage has the floor.

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Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in her speech, the hon. member mentioned that traditional media does not want to compete with digital players. However, they have been forced, through the years, to compete.

Traditional media has obligations under the Broadcasting Act to Canadian culture and to the production of Canadian culture. Why should traditional media, traditional Canadian companies, have to contribute to Canadian culture when massive foreign companies, such as the American company Google or a massive Chinese company like TikTok, not have any obligations to compete in Canadian culture?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, the reality is that if Bell Media, Rogers or whatever had the libraries that Disney+ and others have, we would not even be having this debate.

If they had that library of content, they would be like, “Yes.” That is the reality. The reason the government has to put this bill forward is that Bell, Rogers, etcetera are not competitive with the streaming services because they do not have the content that Canadians want to watch. There are many Canadian influencers who are producing content on Google, Alphabet companies, of which I believe YouTube is one.

I just kind of disagree with that notion. We should just call a spade a spade, and say whether this bill is in our best interests. I am sure there were some great steak dinners bought by Bell Media for a lot of people. God bless Bell Media, but we also have to make sure this is for Canadians. If somebody did not get a steak dinner, maybe they should just support my motion.

• (1605)

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. There is a lot of talk about this bill and she is asking that it be reworked. Is she prepared to work with us?

She quickly touched on the issue of local news, something that is important to me. Back home, local media outlets got in touch with me about this bill. The Bloc Québécois really wants to ensure that the bill is in line with our proposals on everything to do with local, community or independent media. The bill has to be able to help them. We know that local media are under threat and that they often pay the price for web giants like GAFAM. My colleague mentioned how quickly technology evolves. We have to make this legislation as flexible as possible. That is the type of constructive improvement we can make. Does she want to work with us on this type of improvement?

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, I could not agree more with regard to local media coverage, particularly as a western Canadian. I know it is very important for Quebec to have coverage from a Quebec perspective and Quebec news. It is the same thing in western Canada. We actually do not have our voices covered in the same way either. Local media is important to me, but this bill does not do anything to support that. In fact, some of the

government's policy, like picking winners and losers in print media, has actually stifled regional papers from being able to compete.

If there is a spirit of collaboration here, we should all just take a pause, support this motion, send this back to committee, send a nice, robust report back to the minister, reintroduce the legislation and come up with something that makes sense in 2022.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague. I felt like I was stepping back in time, because when I first came here I was a digital idealist. I believed that we should not be picking winners and losers. I believed that we had all this innovation out there, and what we got were Facebook and YouTube, who have an economic power that is so powerful it is unprecedented. In fact, economists are calling it the kill zone of innovation, saying that they are so powerful they are actually stifling the development of other forces that could compete against them.

We have to deal with issues like antitrust. We have to deal with actually making them pay taxes in areas where they have not paid any taxes at all. We have to deal with the algorithms that have distorted content and conversation. They are culpable because they are serving our media services, and they are telling us what we are seeing.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague about holding the big companies, like Facebook and YouTube, accountable for the power that they are yielding—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have to allow the hon. member to answer. The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill has time for a brief answer, please.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, I actually agree. I think that we do have to have a conversation in Parliament about the broader principle of algorithmic transparency.

The mainstream media would love to get their hands on Netflix's algorithm, because that is a competitive advantage, but I think what my colleague is talking about is the sort of content that is being presented to an individual end-user on certain social media platforms so as to calcify their beliefs and actually divide Canadians.

Let us send this back to committee. I am happy to work with him on that issue. I think it is very important, but this bill does not address that in its current form.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, considering my previous career, it is a great pleasure and an honour for me to participate in this essential debate on a bill that is very important but that we believe, as my colleague from Alberta did a great job of explaining, has some serious flaws and could really do with another look.

Before I get into the substance of the bill, I would like to revisit some of the facts. I am sure my colleagues, particularly those in government, will waste no time insisting that, unfortunately, the Conservatives are once again delaying the parliamentary process. That is patently false. We have a job to do and we have to do it properly. It is important to note that this bill is almost, in a way, a carbon copy of the old bill we debated in the previous Parliament. When I say “old”, I mean that it could very well have been exactly the same bill that went through the proper process, but the Liberal government decided to call an election right in the middle of the pandemic and right in the middle of the summer. The election that nobody wanted cost Canadians a fortune, over \$600 million, and ended with a cabinet shuffle and numerous bills, including this one, going back to square one.

I therefore want to advise any Canadians who may be watching that, if any cabinet members opposite happen to mention that our motion calls for more in-depth study in committee, it is only because those folks over there delayed the process that was already under way. By calling the election, they delayed the whole approach that was established for us to study the bill, and all the stakeholders had to be called back.

As I said in my introduction, as a former journalist, I am obviously very interested in this subject. I had the privilege and pleasure of practising that wonderful profession for 20 years and sharing information with the public. Of course my 20-year career had its ups and downs, as well as its great joys. When I began in radio in 1987, in Beauce, where I cut my teeth, technology did not exist as it does today, which is quite logical. In 1987, when I started at Radio-Beauce, in Saint-Georges de Beauce, I was very proud to see that we had manual sliders on the board rather than round knobs. It was very technologically advanced at the time, and we were very proud of it. Nowadays, you have to go to a museum to see that kind of thing, so yes, technology has evolved.

When I started my journalism career in television, a production facility cost about four times the price of a house, whereas today, people can use an iPhone to record a video and broadcast it live from anywhere. That costs far less than four times the price of a house. Although everything in life is too expensive, in this particular case, let us just say that there are substantial cost savings compared to when I started as a journalist.

I went on that very long tangent to say that we need to adapt to changes in technology when it comes to the news. First and foremost, we must protect the public interest.

Is the public well served by the bill we are currently studying? In our opinion, there are flaws.

Are producers, artists and creators well served by this bill? We feel there are weaknesses in this area as well.

Are the large companies that produce video, audio or journalistic content well protected? Here again, we believe that there are valid questions that need to be analyzed in parliamentary committee.

We always have to find that balance and, as we see it, that is where this bill fails. I do want to point out that things have changed even though no amendments have been made. That might apply more to print media, but anyway. Let me give an example.

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I have often been called upon by the press for my thoughts on various issues as a journalist. After giving the same answer a number of times, I was harshly criticized by people who had not bothered to read the article in question carefully. I said that I could not remember the last time I had sat down to watch the news or bought myself a newspaper. Taken out of context, that could be seen as an incendiary remark about journalists, but it is not at all.

• (1610)

Nowadays, because of modern technology, we can access all the stories we hoped to see during the nightly ritual of the *Téléjournal*. Like everyone in my generation, I grew up religiously tuning in to Bernard Derome's *Téléjournal* at 10:00 or 10:30, which was without a doubt the most highly regarded intellectual beacon and the go-to source for news.

Today, all the news reports are just a click away on the Internet, whether it is the *Téléjournal*, TVA, Noovo or other newscasts. We no longer need to sit at home in the living room at a specific time to watch TV, participate in the nightly ritual with Bernard Derome, as I did for years and decades. I was very happy to do it, by the way, thanks to the quality of news offered by Mr. Derome, his team and his reporters.

The same thing goes for newspapers. Why would people pay for the news on paper when all the articles are on the Internet? That is why I said that I could not remember the last time I sat down to watch a newscast on TV or bought a newspaper. People misunderstood me and said that was horrible, an attack on the news. On the contrary, it is the reality of the situation.

I wanted to say that because things have changed. Take, for example, *Le Soleil*, a daily newspaper in Quebec's capital that is more than 100 years old. When someone starts reading an article on this newspaper's website, a message will appear on the screen after a certain point, telling them that they must pay to read the rest of the article.

The media has adapted. I spoke about *Le Soleil*, but the same thing is being done by the *Toronto Star*, if I am not mistaken, and *The Globe and Mail*. Other media outlets have this paywall, which means that they have self-regulated to meet the requirements of the current act to gain access to this source of funding. That is why we must also find the right financial balance.

Let us now talk about the big players, such as GAFAM, YouTube or Netflix, companies that can present, produce and provide online content.

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As citizens, we buy their products, but our money does not necessarily end up in producers' pockets. That is why we must come up with the right legislation that will enable producers not just to get the money they need, but to invest it in creating even more content. In the end, the reader or the online streamer consuming the documentary or show will have to pay their fair share as well.

From our perspective, this bill does not provide adequate answers to these very pertinent questions. That is why we are asking the government, through the motion moved by my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill, to go back to the drawing board by referring the bill to a parliamentary committee.

We have to pay our fair share. We have to find the balance between traditional media and new media. Creators must be allowed to develop in this world as it currently exists. Many Quebecers will remember how an extraordinary artist emerged at the height of the pandemic when we were all in lockdown. Damien Robitaille is a one-man band who still puts on incredibly unique shows.

This is why it is important not to look upon new media and new online platforms with disdain. On the contrary, we must seize the opportunity, because every new development brings opportunities. It is up to us, as citizens, to seize them. It is up to us, as legislators, to regulate them properly by protecting freedom of expression and ensuring that resources are equitably shared. We also need to allow artists and news professionals to continue to entertain and inform us.

• (1615)

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent for his speech. I have a lot of respect for him.

The Bloc Québécois will be happy to support this bill. The amendments we put forward for Bill C-10 are included in Bill C-11, which has to do with the Broadcasting Act.

My colleague has experience as a journalist, and an excellent one, I would add, so I would like to hear what is holding him back from supporting Bill C-11.

• (1620)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles for his kind words. It was very nice of him.

I want to take this opportunity to point out that the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles is the son of Antoine Desilets, one of the greatest, if not the greatest, photographers and photojournalists in Quebec. Antoine Desilets showed thousands of Quebecers, Canadians and people around the world, since his books have been sold across the Francophonie, that it is possible to create beauty without words. He showed that it is possible to capture the moment in time with a camera. One of his photographs was seen around the world. If I am not mistaken, it was taken for UNICEF. My colleague can correct me if I am wrong.

In response to my colleague's question, I will say that we need to take a big-picture look at this. As a former journalist, I think there needs to be some balance, allowing for healthy and productive competition among different media outlets but also ensuring that the people who truly need access to information can access it. I

think this can be done in a way that allows for competition but does not hold any media outlets back.

Earlier, I stated that *Le Soleil*, *Le Devoir* and other newspapers now use a paywall, which is appropriate. Obviously, people who are a little more careful with their money may say that they used to have access free of charge. That is true, but I would remind them that nothing in life is free.

[English]

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member talks about striking the right balance, and that is what this bill does. It is about balancing interests. There are companies like TVA or Quebecor that have obligations under the Broadcasting Act to produce content for Quebec culture, and broader companies for Canadian culture. Why does the member not expect that an American company like Google or a major Chinese company like TikTok would have those same obligations? It is patently unfair.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, that is a very important question. We have a different perspective on that. For sure, we all agree in this House, whatever party we represent, that we need to have a share of representation. If we want to have access to something, nothing falls from the sky, so we have to pay for that and the money should get back to where it belongs. If we want to have new products and good wages for that, we need to have a fair tariff.

My colleague talked about Quebecor and TVA, and yes, they have an obligation to produce here. What we are asking is just to be sure that those who produce great-quality documentaries or something else have access to the same platforms that TVA and some others have. We have some concerns with how the bill is written right now, so this is why we are referring it back to the parliamentary committee.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague to speak about fiscal balance and fairness.

For years, broadcasters and cable companies invested in the production of Quebec and Canadian content. The new players, that is to say digital broadcasters, were given a gift, a free pass, for many years.

My question is simple. Why does he think that Videotron should pay, but Google and YouTube should not?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, that is a very good question.

In our opinion, this bill does not properly assess the balance we must strike and the fair payment that must be made to all producers and broadcasters, without affecting content quality and creators' initiative, whether on YouTube or elsewhere. Damien, the musician I spoke about earlier, made us understand that.

• (1625)

[English]

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to speak in the House, but particularly on an issue as important as Bill C-10, or rather, Bill C-11. I apologize. I am in the last Parliament.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Are you literally reading a speech from the last Parliament?

Mr. Philip Lawrence: No—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is no going back and forth. The hon. parliamentary secretary should know that.

The hon. member can continue.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, the broadcasting and communications industry has changed dramatically, and COVID-19 has shown us that it is incredibly important in today's day and age to have access to unfettered news and unfettered communication. Many of us were locked down in our houses for months at a time, and in many cases our sole form of communication was through the Internet. That is the way we communicated with the outside world.

The great news is that Canada is no longer restricted to a few channels. I can remember when I was younger that we had three, four or five channels, and that was it. That was the maximum number of channels. I lived out in rural Canada, so we used to have to move the antenna to get CBC, and that was our one communication around there. Now, we have Twitter, Facebook, TikTok and Reddit, among many other platforms.

I will actually discuss one great communicator. He is from my riding and lives about five minutes from my house. His name is Mr. Wyatt Sharpe. Wyatt is a young man of about 13 years of age, who is one of the leading voices in Canadian politics today. He is leading the discourse on many important issues at 13 years of age.

How did he do it? He started working at the Orono Weekly Times, writing for the paper. Then he moved on to social media. If it had not been for the great access to social media, Wyatt's voice would have been limited to the wonderful but relatively small community of Orono. As it is now, he goes from coast to coast to coast, and if members have not been on the Wyatt Sharpe Show or listened to his podcast, I highly recommend it.

When we look at social media, this bill casts it as another CBC, NBC or broadcasting network. I do not think that is accurate, with respect. I believe the Internet is closer to the public square, where we go out as Canadians and share our views and visions. We might be miles apart, but it is so critical that we have those discourses. It is so critical that we go out on the battlefield of ideas and discuss them. Some of those ideas will fall by the wayside in favour of better ones, yet other ones will be improved and get better. Having that unfettered access to that public square that we call the Internet is so incredibly important.

Canadians have always had the ability to communicate completely unfettered and to share their ideas and visions, and what alarms me about this legislation is the fact that we are moving away from freedom of speech and starting to restrict it. I dare say I am perhaps

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going a bit too far, but we really do not have to look too far in history or even around the world to look at examples of what happens when the government goes too far in restricting freedom of speech.

We can go back in time and look at the Soviet Union as it pushed out its propaganda and told lies to its people. This held people behind for years and years, sitting in bread lines. Meanwhile, they were being fed that they were actually ahead of the western world, which we all knew was false. We see the modern-day incarnation of that in Vladimir Putin restricting freedom of speech and restricting the Internet as Russians are unable to hear about or listen to the atrocities that are happening in Ukraine.

Freedom of speech is a pillar of western democracy. It really supports many of the other freedoms and rights we all share. It is based on that. It is foundational to our country and many around the world, so when we mess with that foundation, we must do so with the greatest of care. We must use a scalpel, not a sledgehammer.

There are some out there who agree that this is going on, and that content is being curated right now by large multinational multi-billion dollar corporations, so why is the government not in a better position?

The challenge is that there is no one watching the government. When we look at companies that have stepped offside, the government has a rightful obligation to ask for greater accountability and transparency when it comes to sorting, curating and ensuring there are appropriate algorithms. We must do that carefully, and as legislators it is our role to provide that oversight. However, when we have the government watching the government, we have the fox watching the henhouse, and that should be troublesome for all Canadians.

• (1630)

The reality is that when we look at the Internet right now, there are certainly challenges, as I said. Greater transparency with respect to algorithms and otherwise is critically important, but there has been a tremendous growth in Canadian content. The Canadian Media Producers Association suggested that the industry has grown by a record amount and that there have been record investments in film and television, almost doubling in the last decade.

I am inspired by what is going on in my own riding of Northumberland—Peterborough South with Albert Botha, Heather Haldane and the South Eastern Ontario Production Accelerator Fund. This initiative is making southeastern Ontario the next hot spot for a bustling film and TV industry, and I am very proud of what they are accomplishing. On that note, certified Canadian content has grown in recent years. The highest growth for certified Canadian content television has occurred over the past three years.

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My fear is that when we change this very foundation, this freedom of speech and freedom of expression, we could do more harm than good, not only by restricting people's ability to express themselves, but in terms of the production of Canadian content itself. While there is no doubt that traditional broadcasters may benefit from the restriction of this content and bringing others into this content, it will almost certainly inhibit the amount of content that is produced when we start to regulate user-controlled content.

The other hallmark, sometimes, of poor legislation is a lack of clarity. Quite frankly, this legislation is replete with a lack of clarity. The hon. minister claims that the legislation features guardrails against overly broad regulation, to keep the nature of the Internet as it is, but there is no specific eligibility. In fact, many of the decisions are pushed onto the bureaucracy, and as much as I respect it and our public service often does a great job out there, it is not ultimately accountable to the people, like parliamentarians are. When we push our decisions onto the bureaucracy, we lose accountability as a government.

Bill C-11 includes many terms that it simply does not define. "User-generated content" is not defined, and "social media" is not defined, yet these words are used repeatedly. One of the troubling sections is the user-generated content. It was excluded and then brought back in, and that is troublesome. We have user-generated content that people are creating from all around Canada and, instead of treating these folks as I think they should be properly viewed, as the public square, as the sharing of discourse, as the battlefield of ideas, allowing all entrants onto the field, it restricts them and starts to treat individuals as it would the CBC and other major broadcasters, making them pay fees and making them subject to content restrictions and algorithm restrictions.

I believe that Canada is best when we let Canadians decide and, unfortunately, this legislation puts the government in the driver's seat, allowing it to make decisions that Canadians should be allowed to make.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, first off, I want to say that the member is incredibly lucky to have Wyatt Sharpe in his riding. What an incredible young individual. By no means should anybody judge his ability to interview people based on his age, because I know from appearing on his show not that long ago that he is a hard-hitting individual who knows his stuff well in advance.

My real concern over the member's speech is his comments with respect to how this bill would somehow limit user content. I cannot help but think that something that made us chuckle at the beginning of his speech when he talked about Bill C-10 might actually be true. What this bill has in it that perhaps Bill C-10 was not as explicit about is a number of sections that reference making sure that user-generated content is protected: proposed subsections 2(2.1), 2(2.2), 2(2.3), 4.1(1), 4.1(2) and 4.2(3).

I am wondering if the member has actually read this version of the bill or if indeed his comments about user-generated content were based on Bill C-10.

• (1635)

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, as always, I admire the passion, although not necessarily the substance, of the member's question.

Proposed subsection 4.1(2) creates an exception to an exception for user-generated content when the user makes some type of profit or dollars from it. That is absolutely brought in and is clear. That is the right answer.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

He spoke about how important this is in our society, and everyone knows that Quebec's and Canada's cultural sectors have been waiting for decades for updates to this legislation.

Just a few days after Bill C-11 was introduced, the cultural sector made a very simple request, that we adopt this bill as quickly as possible. I think those in that sector have waited long enough.

What does my colleague think is needed to pass Bill C-11?

Why do you not want to pass it as is?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am not saying I do not want to adopt it, so I will call on the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

[*English*]

Unfortunately, this legislation is a failure. Of course, I share the member's passion for Canadian and Quebec culture and would like nothing more than to see it promoted. However, this bill is replete with challenges and difficulties, including a lack of definition and clarity on what Canadian content is and on the regulation of user-generated content, which is very challenging.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, we can see one of the issues we are faced with if we take the Conservative line that the government is more controlling on this issue. The reality is that we are elected by the citizens of our country to make decisions and set regulations. Some of the things the member raised can be fixed in the bill, and we are looking for amendments to them. However, if we do not do this, then we will leave it to U.S. web giants to have complete control over Canadian artists and their fate.

What suggestion should we go forward with? If we do not get this bill to committee and fix some of the issues, we turn over all of this Canadian content and the artists to the control of web giants in the United States and other parts of the world.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that work needs to be done. The Broadcasting Act needs to be amended and changed. I certainly do not use my Sony Walkman anymore, so we need to update it.

The problem is that this bill is so bad that we need to go back to the drawing board, unfortunately. It has all the hallmarks of bad legislation. It has a lack of clarity. It is overly burdensome to the industry. It also puts too much onus on the bureaucracy and not enough on parliamentarians.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Kitchener Centre, Climate Change; the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Health; the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, Labour.

[English]

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-11, an almost carbon copy of Bill C-10, which the Minister of Canadian Heritage himself, to his credit, admitted was deeply flawed.

Let me start by first acknowledging the creators, artists, musicians and all those who work so hard to bring Canada's arts and culture to the world. They undoubtedly deserve to be highlighted and given the opportunity to share our history and stories on the many platforms available in today's world. Many of my colleagues and I have experienced their work first-hand and have met with many talented individuals across our country. The Conservative Party knows the importance of ensuring that Canadian artists are heard, appreciated and given the ability to share their art not just with Canadians but the world. Creators need rules that do not hold back their ability to be Canadian and global successes.

There is absolutely no doubt that after 30 years, the Broadcasting Act should be updated. Technology has evolved, and the ways in which Canadians create and consume stories have changed. Thirty years ago, the Internet was not what it is today, and people relied on radio, cable television and newspapers to consume content. That is what the Broadcasting Act was designed to regulate. Today, most Canadians consume content on the Internet, from streaming services to social media platforms. We live in a world where digital information is accessible to everyone in this country at any time.

I will first take the opportunity to highlight what Bill C-11 is proposing.

The bill proposes to expand the Broadcasting Act beyond the current platforms to include large foreign and domestic streaming services such as Netflix, Prime and Disney+. It also includes user-generated content created on social media sites such as YouTube and TikTok. This means that newer forms of media previously subjected to little or no government oversight will be brought under the authority of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, the CRTC.

Many Canadians and I know that Bill C-10 contained similar content and raised concerns regarding free speech, not only from opposition members but from many organizations. The inclusion of

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user-generated content in Bill C-10 meant that anything Canadians chose to upload or post on social media or on any creative content-sharing platform would fall under the authority of the Broadcasting Act and be regulated by the CRTC. Why was that an issue? There was very little accountability, and it was unclear what authority was being given to the CRTC. There was no indication of what any of the regulations would be, and there would be little to no parliamentary oversight, meaning that a government agency would be controlling what content Canadians see.

Coming back to the bill we are debating today, in Bill C-11 the government has included an exclusion on user-generated content on social media. However, upon reading the bill, there seems to be an exclusion to this exclusion. What does that mean? It means that once again, the government, through the CRTC, could regulate user-generated content.

As Matt Hatfield from OpenMedia stated:

Trying to exclude user generated content from CRTC regulation is a good step, and an acknowledgement by the government that last year's Bill C-10 was a mistake.

The problem is that it isn't clear if they've actually excluded user generated content. They're working from a foundation of a clean separation of professional and amateur content on the Internet that simply doesn't exist. Major Canadian Internet productions like podcasts could find themselves in the worst of all worlds—subject to CRTC regulation, while not able to seek CanCon funding.

While we can acknowledge an attempt by the government to fix its admitted error within Bill C-10, there is still too much uncertainty about the impact Bill C-11 could have on digital first creators.

According to a summary of the 2019 report from researchers at Ryerson University, "there are an estimated 160,000 Canadian content creators on YouTube, including 40,000 who have enough of an audience to monetize their channels. These 40,000 creators have in turn sparked the development of nearly 28,000 full-time jobs". These are positive economic impacts that should be encouraged and praised rather than hindered and targeted. While the intent of the bill may be to support Canada's broadcasting industries, it marginalizes Canadian digital content creators who are successfully sharing Canadian stories across the globe.

We on this side of the House believe that large foreign streaming services and social media platforms should not be given unfair advantages over the regulated Canadian broadcasting sector. They should be expected to contribute to and create Canadian content and have Canadians tell Canadian stories. Foreign streamers should pay their fair share.

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We all agree that large streaming providers should feature more Canadian content, but what is Canadian content?

• (1640)

Recently, I watched the Disney film *Turning Red* with my kids. It is set in Toronto and tells the story of what it is like growing up as a Chinese Canadian teenager. The film stars Canadian actors, yet under the current rules, this movie is not considered Canadian content.

A series based entirely on the Toronto Maple Leafs being streamed on Amazon is not considered Canadian content. *The Handmaid's Tale*, based on a novel written by a Canadian author and filmed in Canadian cities, is not considered Canadian content. The movie *Deadpool*, based on a Canadian comic book character, starring a Canadian actor, co-written by a Canadian and filmed in Vancouver, is not considered Canadian content.

This bill would require streaming services to invest in and create more Canadian content. However, these films, biographies and TV show adaptations that most of us would consider Canadian content simply are not. This definition must be broadened so that these large streaming services want to invest in our great Canadian talent and tell Canadian stories.

I want to turn more broadly to the CRTC because I think a large part of the criticism of this bill is about a lack of clarity and the amount of control and regulatory power that would be given to the CRTC.

It will be up to the CRTC to administer this act, and I think there is reason to be concerned. The CRTC is already spread thin and lacks the capacity to carry out the current mandate effectively. How exactly can Canadians have faith in the CRTC's ability to regulate the Internet and redefine what is Canadian content when it is already struggling to cope with the 4,000 or 5,000 entities in the broadcasting sector? What tools will have to be provided to the CRTC and how much money will this cost taxpayers? My colleague, the member for Saskatoon-Grasswood, asked the CRTC chairman how the CRTC was ever going to pay for this. His response was that it would go directly through the Treasury Board, meaning that Canadians would be on the hook for more regulations and rules, with no oversight or accountability.

The government has proposed Bill C-11 with a "just trust us" approach and has failed to provide clear policy direction on how the CRTC's regulatory powers would be interpreted. It is unclear whether the CRTC even has the capacity or, to be frank, the competency to actually successfully execute what the government is proposing through Bill C-11.

• (1645)

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I agreed with the hon. member when he started his speech. He talked about how Canadian artists deserve to be shared on many platforms and need to be heard. That is what the bill does, excluding user-generated content.

He also talked about digital-first creators and how great they are. I hear this from the Conservatives, I have heard it at committee and I am hearing it in the House. We agree that they are doing great things, but in question period, the hon. member for Perth—Welling-

ton mocked them as influencers and was shocked that the government spent money on advertisement through digital-first creators.

Do the Conservatives respect digital-first creators or are they just a rhetorical pawn to try to stall Bill C-11?

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to be in the chamber with my friend and colleague on the other side. I would point him back to what we are hearing from a lot of those within the creative sector. Darcy Michael, comedian and digital content creator, who came to committee just a few weeks ago, said, "Bill C-11 will directly affect my ability to earn an income. That aside, I'm also an ACTRA member, so I do want to say that I'm on both sides: the traditional and the digital media."

I started my speech by reaching out and sharing my opinions and those of members on this side. We have respect for the creators in our country, and we just ask that at the end of the day, the government treats them fairly.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, as to the issue of creators, we had a debate around Bill C-10 on this: When is a product Canadian, even if it is called Canadian something or other? I happen to have family in the film business. They are actors. A lot of what the U.S. productions that are filmed in Canada do is pay scale to Canadian actors. We all love Ryan Reynolds, and who does not? However, he lives in the States and gets the big bucks. He deserves them, but consider our actors in *Deadpool* and other films that are filmed in Canada. If they are not getting paid at the same rates and are not getting their careers boosted, we are undermining Canadian content by having a kind of Canadian gloss over U.S. productions, even *The Handmaid's Tale*.

I put that to him for comment.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Madam Speaker, I offer full disclosure: my dad was a film producer. I grew up in Edmonton, Alberta, which did not have a thriving film industry at the time. My dad struggled to make a go of it by doing side jobs working with the government and doing local commercials. At the end of the day, I have seen the struggles that local creators go through, whether actors, producers or filmmakers. For Canadians it has always been a challenge going against our neighbours to the south.

When it comes to movies like *Deadpool*, it is a great opportunity for us to highlight that disparity that we sometimes see when it comes to our Canadian creators.

• (1650)

[Translation]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-11 is essential. The report is quite clear. We must require web giants to invest in our news coverage and our fiction and entertainment programming. It is not a question of money, it is a question of culture. I would like to know why the member is disputing these fundamental principles.

[English]

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Madam Speaker, there was an interesting article written by Andrew Coyne in *The Globe and Mail*. He said this bill would assign wide latitude to regulate the Internet: not only the big audio and visual services such as Spotify and Netflix, but any member of other services, from podcasts to audio books to news channels, and not only those based in Canada, but anywhere in the world. For sure, this should be a great concern for all of us across the country.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am proud to be speaking on behalf of the constituents of Saskatoon West. We are a diverse group of citizens from many backgrounds and with a variety of different views. They have called me and emailed me over the past year, asking about stopping online censorship. They wanted to be free from government overreach back then, and they feel the same way now.

The people of Saskatoon West also want an end to the unscientific, job-killing NDP-Liberal federal mandates. Many have voiced their concerns on social media platforms. They are concerned that the government is going to block their voices.

Speaking of censorship, the current government has quite a history of shutting down opposing voices, even when it comes to members of its own caucus. We remember, of course, Jody Wilson-Raybould and Jane Philpott.

In the last Parliament, the government introduced its first attempt at regulating the Internet with its Bill C-10 and Bill C-36. These bills generated incredible feedback for me via telephone, written letters, emails and social media. It is safe to say that the overall response was extremely negative and many in the media, many consultants and many ordinary folks were very concerned by this legislation. I had hoped that, after seeing all of the opposition to those bills the last time around, the government would smarten up and re-think this flawed legislation. Unfortunately, smartening up is not in the wheelhouse of the current government, and instead it doubled down and reintroduced essentially the same thing.

Let us dive into Bill C-11. The minister stated that the goal of this bill was to target only big online streamers and exclude day-to-day users. It is supposedly about making Canadian content more accessible. The only problem with this argument is that Canadian content has always been accessible. Canadian producers have been able to jump onto various platforms, such as TikTok, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, and showcase their content without a problem. Why is there the urge to regulate the Internet now?

The current government members think that the content available for users is not Canadian enough for their liking. This is where things start moving toward online censorship. Essentially, any con-

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tent deemed unworthy by the NDP-Liberals would be bumped out of people's recommended feeds in exchange for government-approved content. Content that is not Canadian enough for the CRTC regulators would be sent to the back of the Internet, which leads to a question: Who reaps the benefits of this? It is the legacy media.

In this new age, where we get most of our information online, broadcasting companies such as the government's beloved taxpayer-funded CBC have been left in the dust. At the end of the day, they want their content promoted over everyone else's. They are the ones scrambling for advertising revenues. This will throw the remaining content, Canadian or not, to the side. Many experts have raised concerns about this bill being very similar to the NDP-Liberal government's original Internet censorship bill, Bill C-10, in the sense that it would still have the power to block Canadian freedom of expression online.

The former vice-chair of the CRTC, Peter Menzies, stated, "The biggest difference is that it is called Bill C-11 instead of Bill C-10." He added, "It is unfortunate because they are giving the CRTC enormous powers, enormous powers, and it is not in the DNA of any regulatory body to not continue to expand its turf."

The major criticism of Bill C-10 surrounded the issue of user-generated content: those pictures, audio files and videos that many of us share daily on social media. There was a clause in Bill C-10 that exempted this from regulation, but it was removed at committee, which created a firestorm of concern. At the very least, I had expected the government to address this issue. Instead, it added an exception to allow the CRTC to regulate user content. Michael Geist, the Canada research chair in Internet and e-commerce Law, stated:

...for all the talk that user-generated content is out, the truth is that everything from podcasts to TikTok videos fits neatly into the new exception that gives the CRTC the power to regulate such content as a 'program'.

In other words, user-generated content is not subject to regulation unless the CRTC decides it is subject to regulation, in which case it is subject to regulation. Are members confused yet? The truth is that the vague language in this bill opens the door for the government to abuse its power and regulate user-generated content. The Internet is our main go-to for information, and many Canadians are earning a good living by making entertaining or educational content on various platforms. The way this bill is currently written, it would limit this creativity and possibly censor a wide range of the content produced online.

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Twitter issued these scathing words: “People around the world have been blocked from accessing Twitter [and other services] in a similar manner as [the one] proposed by Canada by multiple authoritarian governments (e.g. China, North Korea and Iran) under the false guise of ‘online safety’, impeding people’s rights to access...information online.” It goes on to say that Bill C-11 “sacrifices freedom of expression to the creation of a government-run system of surveillance of anyone who uses Twitter.”

● (1655)

Members should think about that. Twitter was comparing this government to North Korea, and that was before Elon Musk bought it.

The NDP-Liberal government is doing what we have seen time and again: dividing Canadians and stripping away our rights and freedoms one by one. Now, the government is creating a three-headed dragon to take away freedom of expression online from Canadians. These three heads are the Internet censorship Bill C-11, the news regulation Bill C-18, and the expected return of Bill C-36, which would block online content that the government does not like.

If members do not think that this government wants to shut them down, they have not been paying attention. We have seen this government target law-abiding firearms owners by seizing firearms from normal, hard-working Canadians and at the same time reduce sentences for criminals who smuggle illegal firearms into Canada. We have seen it target energy workers who work day and night in our natural resource sectors that, by the way, allow the leader of the NDP to fill up his \$80,000 BMW with gas every morning. We have seen it target western Canada’s entire energy sector by threatening to shut it down, calling our oil and natural gas “dirty” and at the same time importing oil from countries with horrible human rights records and next to no environmental standards. The Prime Minister still cannot figure out why there is so much division in our country. He is creating it.

In February, when the minister tabled the bill before us, he said that cat videos and social media influencers would not be covered by it. However, this week, YouTube warned Canadians that this simply was not true. A Canadian Press story reported the following:

Jeanette Patell, head of government affairs at YouTube Canada, said the draft law’s wording gives the broadcast regulator scope to oversee everyday videos posted for other users to watch. She told the National Culture Summit in Ottawa that the bill’s text appears to contradict [the] Heritage Minister’s public assurances that it does not cover amateur content, such as cat videos.

I have heard back from many people across this country since last year about their concerns, from when the bill was called Bill C-10. Since then, the calls and emails have just amplified about Bill C-11.

I have a very hard time believing that the use of the bill would only target big online streamers, especially when I have seen firsthand how far this government will go to end criticism. If we flash back a few months to the Prime Minister’s trip to Europe, many politicians in the EU called out the member for Papineau’s actions during the convoy, and I tweeted about this. Gerry Butts, the former chief of staff to the Prime Minister, tried to dismiss it right away. He said, “If you’re getting your news from news outlets—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I want to remind the hon. minister that there will be a time for questions and comments. Heckling is not acceptable in the House.

The hon. member for Saskatoon West has two minutes to continue.

● (1700)

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, sometimes these things are hard to hear, I understand, but what Gerald Butts said is, “If you’re getting your news from outlets whose primary purpose is to divide you from your neighbours, the topic doesn’t matter. It’s long past time we figured this out.”

Is this what we can expect under Bill C-11: big government telling us what news is fact and what is misinformation when it does not match a certain narrative?

It is obvious what voices the government wants to bring to Canadians online and what voices it would like to tune out. The problem with this is that Canada is a free and democratic nation. The foundation behind this trademark of ours is freedom of speech and expression. We all have people we may disagree with, but all voices deserve to be heard, regardless of whether they align with our political views. The moment we push forward with online censorship, divisions rise and Canadian democracy declines.

We need to work on healing these wounds that have developed in our country. Leadership starts at the top. This begins with treating our fellow Canadians and members in the House with the dignity and respect they deserve. Some have lost hope in reuniting our country, but I certainly have not.

Canada is known as one of the friendliest countries in the world. We look out for our allies, neighbours and friends. Back home in Saskatchewan, we always look out for one another no matter how bad our winters are. I am proud to be from a country and a province where we are there for each other. Over the past two years, we seem to have forgotten this trademark that makes us who we are.

Bill C-11 works to divide us rather than bring us together. It would pit certain content providers against other ones. It would force Canadians to watch things they do not really want to see, and make it difficult for them to watch things they do want to see. This is unacceptable. Censoring voices online is wrong and it splits our nation even further. It is time to bring our country back together so that we get back to who we truly are: kind and friendly Canadians who are only known for heated arguments when the Stanley Cup playoffs are on.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, from an economic interest, would the member agree that it is important for us to support our creative industry, which is an important economic sector in our country, to make sure that the intellectual property they create stays here in our country and that we sustain that industry going forward, rather than allowing it to be sold off and only watching creators from other countries?

Is it not important for us as a country to show support for our creative industries and to show the distinct voices, prairie voices such as *Heartland*, a great TV show from Alberta? Is it not important that we have that at the centre of our policies when we are looking at this?

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, that is a good question. Absolutely, we want to support culture in Canada. We want to support our content creators.

There is always a fear by certain members of this House to actually let our people free in the world. Our content creators, our talent in Canada, are second to none. We have great producers, actors, everybody. We have a lot of talent. We should not be ashamed of that. We can work hard. We do not need to give them special rules and special controls. They are big people. They know how to compete on the world stage.

The world is their stage. That is the beauty of the system we have today with the wide open Internet. We just need to let our Canadians shine. We need to help them where we can, but this is not the way to do it.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am of the view that we really need to get this to committee. We have so many questions. We have issues we need refining.

To the extent that the online streaming bill does not take into account how some online streaming and online services promote disinformation and misinformation, we see it more now than we did last year when we were looking at Bill C-10. I am wondering if the member would agree that it is time to get the bill to committee so we could hear the witnesses, and refine and improve the legislation.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, it is up to the House to put this committee.

Last time this bill went to committee, there was a very important provision that was removed, which caused a lot of stress. It caused a lot of reactions in my office, for sure. The committee will do its work when the time comes, and would add or strengthen or do whatever needs to be done to the bill. At the end of the day, we have to be very careful that we are not limiting and constricting the

ability of our content producers to actually compete in the Internet world of today.

• (1705)

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member had some thoughtful reflections on this bill. I am wondering if my hon. colleague would agree with me that the government is moving on a slippery slope in this bill towards determining what is truth and what is not, and who gets to ultimately determine that as it relates to disinformation.

I think Canadians are rightfully very concerned that this is an overreach by a government, which seems to continually be trampling on their individual rights and freedoms of speech, conscience and belief. You have raised some very appropriate concerns. I would appreciate any further comments you would have on that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do not think that I have raised any concerns. I would ask the member to address his questions through the Chair and not directly to the member.

The hon. member for Saskatoon West.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, that is a very good question.

This is kind of the heart of what we are talking about here today. Conceptually, it is easy to say this person can speak and this one cannot, but in reality it is very difficult to do that. Who is the person who is going to decide that?

We all know there is content on the Internet that is wrong and that is incorrect. We know there is content that is true. It is sometimes hard to tell. That is where we need to do some work. When we start saying that we can listen to this group and not listen to that group, this news organization is valid and this one is not, that is a very slippery slope, as the member stated. We have to be very careful as we go down this road.

We do need to have some controls over things, but the way this is written, it gives way too much power to the CRTC to be the gatekeepers in saying who is good and who is bad. That is not a good place for us to go. We need to be very concerned about that.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House once again on behalf of the great people of Cypress Hills—Grasslands. I will begin my speech in this debate by considering the background of the bill. There is a disturbing trend happening under this NDP-Liberal coalition. They do not seem to respect the democratic process, and they do not seem to be interested in protecting it.

Among many other examples, the most recent is the passing of Motion No. 11 to give themselves the power to prematurely shut down Parliament. They do not even pretend to use COVID as an excuse anymore, but they also do not like it when the Conservatives mention that it is long overdue for them to remove restrictions on members, their staff and regular citizens from entering this place or from travelling within our own country, insinuating that they are supposedly undesirable Canadians.

Government Orders

Leaving those things aside though, we are here to debate yet another attempt by the government to extend its overly controlling approach to online content that people can access or publish. That is the problem with Bill C-11. The vast majority of it is a near carbon copy of its predecessor, Bill C-10, with the exception of some minor changes surrounding user generated content. To debate this legislation properly, we need to fully understand how we got from Bill C-10 to Bill C-11.

Let us refresh a few memories here. Originally, Bill C-10 had a section which excluded user-generated content from its scope. At heritage committee, that was suddenly removed. This threw the door open for the CRTC to regulate nearly anything on the Internet. The government faced severe opposition to this and rightly so. At first, it might appear that the Liberals learned something from all the embarrassment, but sadly, if we dig a little deeper, it is clear that they have not.

What is even more sad is that the NDP has sold out and is going along with it. Section 4.1 is back in Bill C-11, but it is now accompanied by section 4.1(2), which allows for an exemption on the previous exception. This creates a loophole for the CRTC to regulate any content that either directly or indirectly generates revenue. In other words, the CRTC can regulate nearly anything on the Internet.

At the heart of the bill is the lurking threat of expanding censorship. It is only a matter of time, as this new opening moves through the process of bureaucracy. We must carefully consider more than the bill in front of us as it exists on paper, otherwise we will move too close to Big Brother for comfort, and it will turn out to be just as toxic as a reality show, but without any of the entertainment value. I hope bad jokes will remain safe from censorship as well.

Liberal members, along with their neighbours in the NDP, may say that this is not the intention behind the bill. If it is not, I will remind them that good intentions can still pave the road to a very bad place, and that is why Conservatives keep on saying and trying to remind them of. We are doing our job as the official opposition because it is our duty to point out any harmful risks in legislation so Parliament can make better decisions on behalf of Canadians.

This is what every MP should keep in mind. When I took my oath of office as an MP, I swore to defend the Constitution and the fundamental rights of every Canadian. Every single MP did the same thing. We are all under that same obligation. It is entirely possible to fix the problems with the bill while achieving what the NDP-Liberals say it is supposed to do. There should absolutely be a level playing field between smaller Canadian broadcasters and larger streaming services. Canadian content creators have something unique to bring to the table, and we all want to see them in the spotlight. No issues there. We are happy to pass this part of the legislation that supports Canadian producers.

However, where it goes too far is that it is unnecessarily wrong for government to control what people can or cannot access online, and ironically, what type of content Canadians should or should not produce. It is extremely irresponsible to ignore the warnings we have received. Before we know it, it could completely get out of hand. If the NDP-Liberals want to deny it, they should explain to Canadians how they are leaving room for it to happen without closing the obvious loophole.

It is a failure of due diligence and there is no excuse for it. Canada stands in a long tradition of free expression. We are admired and envied around the world for a heritage of free speech among many other freedoms. For centuries and over the years in our lifetime, we have seen it practised in newspapers, letters to the editor, and people just simply writing letters to their elected officials.

Today, we all express ourselves on the Internet as a free space. We can post our opinions. We can access information and engage with other people around the whole world. We have done it as citizens, and we do it as members of Parliament communicating with our fellow Canadians. Right now, it is easy to make posts and videos with our thoughts on all kinds of issues, and it all could be subject to regulations. Bill C-11 fails to provide safeguards for our freedom as we know it.

• (1710)

The government could eventually control what everyday citizens post online. This is what Peter Menzies, the former CRTC vice-chair, had to say about Bill C-10 in the last Parliament: “[It] doesn’t just infringe on free expression, it constitutes a full-blown assault upon it and, through it, the foundations of democracy.” That should catch all of our attention. The former CRTC vice-chair warned that this legislation is toying with a fundamental right. He is in a position to understand better than some how necessary freedom of speech is for a democratic process to remain intact.

Citizens must always be able to disagree with their governments openly and strongly. We are eroding this right so the government, through the CRTC, could have the ability to regulate what it does or does not like to hear. Quite frankly, it does not like to hear the dissent from the opposition. That said, Bill C-11 would not only give us a paternalistic government, but it might also create practical problems in the area it claims it would help.

Currently, anyone could pull out their device and head over to YouTube, where they can access any content they would like, whether it is kitchen renos, how to fix car problems or content posted by friends, family or people around the world. It works well enough for now, but with the government involved, the CRTC might decide to dictate what content people should see when they search for something specific. While government mandated algorithms analyze how Canadian the content is, what someone is looking for might get pushed to the back of the queue of their search results, if it simply does not pass the test.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, someone could be trying to renovate their back deck, and the helpful video from a YouTuber they saw a little while ago is not so easy to find anymore, because maybe the best creator did not happen to be Canadian. Instead, they are flooded with—

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

I see there are some parliamentarians who are either eager to ask questions or are trying to have conversations across the way. I would say that, if they want to have a conversation, to please take it out of the chamber. If they are wanting to ask questions or make comments, it is not quite time yet.

The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, they are trying to censor me already. It has already begun.

Instead, when looking up that video, they are flooded with videos about beavers and maple syrup, while where they really need to be is on page 27 of the search results to find the video of the guy giving the advice they need to build a deck, who is maybe not Canadian. This would all be because the government thinks it knows better.

Again, we do need to support the creators and the content that is made in Canada. Nobody has any issue with them. We do not need a band-aid solution to do it. What is most needed from the government is for it to take advantage of every opportunity to build and support our entertainment industry so it will be competitive and successful in the marketplace. We need more and more talented Canadians who can make it here, and that is what happens when our entertainment industry has a good foundation from a strong economy, but I wish us good luck with that, underneath the current Liberal government.

With Bill C-11, we are talking about government overreach, censorship, higher entertainment costs and half-baked solutions. Most concerning of all, we see the NDP-Liberals would be giving the CRTC power to regulate not only what Canadians can see online, but also what they can say. They could also try to decide what it means to be Canadian in our video searches or elsewhere.

Bill C-11 is dangerous, it is ridiculous and it just does not make any sense. On behalf of my fellow Canadians, I will continue to stand up and I will continue to defend their rights alongside my fellow Conservatives. It is the right thing to do, and we can only hope the NDP and the Liberals on the backbench will stand with us and make sure this bill gets due process and accomplishes what it should actually be trying to accomplish.

Before I finish, I have an amendment to the amendment. I would like to move, seconded by the member for Souris—Moose Mountain:

That the amendment be amended by adding the following:

“and that the committee report back no later than 10 sitting days following the adoption of this motion.”

• (1715)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Government Orders

My understanding is that when a member sits they are ceding the floor.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member had some time left, so he caught himself in time.

The amendment to the amendment is in order.

We will continue with questions and comments. The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has the floor.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I can assure this member and all Conservatives that nobody is more interested in preserving the content they create in this House than I am: the content that they give me to put out on social media. If I thought for one second that user-generated content would be impacted by this bill, I certainly would not be in favour of it.

I would like to point out to the member that there are several sections in this piece of legislation that explicitly preserve user-generated content: sections 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3(a), 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3(3).

I am curious. This is a simple question. Has the member read the bill, and he has read those sections in particular?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, if the member actually listened to my speech, I referenced section 4.1 and section 2, because part of this bill is the same as the previous bill. It adds onto it, which does not actually help the issue. One of the primary issues that we had in the last Parliament with the bill was section 4.1. I alluded in my speech that there are sections of the bill that we would support, because there are good things in this bill.

Again, the member opposite wants to be the czar of the future ministry of truth, so it is not surprising that he would ask some questions without actually paying attention.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke a great deal about the importance of dealing with disinformation. One of the ways to do that is through our local media, which is interested in what is happening in the community and reports on local events in a factual way. Local media is essential.

Back home in Quebec, these local, independent and community media outlets are calling for this bill. Obviously we must ensure that this bill can evolve because technology evolves quickly. We must ensure that this bill does enough to encourage our local, community and independent media.

I am proud to say that where I am from, there is a fine co-operative, La Voix de l'Est, that has turned itself around. In addition, the radio station M105 is an example of co-operative radio.

All these media outlets are calling on us to modernize this act. It is high time, since 1991 is starting to be a long time ago, as others mentioned.

Does my colleague recognize the important role that the local media plays in fighting disinformation?

Government Orders

● (1720)

[English]

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, disinformation is going to be one of the biggest issues presently and going forward. We have all been bombarded with it a lot over the last number of years.

The member also touched on another very important piece. That was about the small papers, our local community papers and local groups that actually do real journalism. I think that is what we need to get back to. The problem I see with a lot of government legislation going forward is that the supports do not actually line up with supporting the small-town papers and small community papers. As we go forward, we are going to start to see more and more of those little papers be wiped off of the planet. It is going to be the big digital platforms, the CBC and others, that are going to be dominating the space and getting rid of all these other little pieces and maybe even a company like TikTok. She is absolutely right.

I think, though, that we have to find ways to better support those small papers and do better for them going forward.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, it has been very entertaining this afternoon. The Conservatives are saying that Canada is going to be turned into North Korea, and now my friend is saying that the Liberals are going to stop people from watching deck renovation videos.

I did agree with the hon. member about the need to fight for the fundamental rights of every Canadian and how governments control what people can do. I noticed that the cover of *Le Journal de Montréal* today had a picture of 39 Conservatives who are against the rights of women to make choices, and the member's picture is in there. I would like to ask him if that is disinformation, or if his—

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Madam Speaker, this obviously has nothing to do with the debate. From someone who is absolutely pro-choice, who has two daughters and would fight, always, for their ability to have the right to choose—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is more a point of debate.

I am going to allow the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands—

Mr. Charlie Angus: I did not finish my question, Madam Speaker.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I did ask for a short question, and the hon. member has been providing a lot of feedback.

I will allow two seconds for the question so that we can get to the answer, because there are only 37 seconds left.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, it is a simple question. The member's picture is on the front page of *Le Journal de Montréal*, with 38 other Conservatives who are against abortion. Is it a real picture or did they make a mistake and is that disinformation?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, it is pretty fascinating that the NDP, the Liberals and the Bloc have been the ones talking about that issue. We are here focused on the bill that is before us today. We are not focused on that; we are focused on this. At this point in time, we need people to stay focused on the debate at hand,

instead of using these distraction techniques and playing cheap political games.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-11 the online streaming act.

The last time any changes were made to the Broadcasting Act, I had just met the man who would become my partner and husband, the father of my four children. It was 1991, and I was 14 years old. That is saying something.

Like my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill, I watched *Fraggle Rock* and I was a big fan. I also grew up with *Passe-Partout* and *Pop Citrouille*, which were outstanding children's programs in terms of their quality and diversity of content.

It is precisely so that young people can have access to content of this quality on the platforms they use today that I am pleased to see Bill C-11 move forward in the legislative process. This will give creators the funding needed to showcase their creativity at home and abroad.

Over an hour ago, I shared an experience I had with a certain streaming service, which, despite my selecting French as my preference, offered me only American, British and Korean productions. In some cases, I could not even get the French translation, even if it was only through subtitles. I had to search for quite a while to get productions from Quebec, France or French-speaking Africa.

By improving the discoverability aspect, Bill C-11 will help ensure that Quebecers and Canadians have easier access to content from their communities, their creators and their artists.

My colleagues talk about the importance of allowing big foreign companies to play their role and respond to consumer demand. In some aspects of the economy, I would tend to agree with them. However, when it comes to culture, I cannot agree. We must not let a foreign culture decide for our own culture.

In the case of Quebec and Canada's francophone communities, it is totally illogical to let foreign companies with no ties to francophone culture make decisions and act like they know francophone culture better than francophones do. This is modern-day colonialism and imperialism, nothing more and nothing less. The aim is to make an entire population believe that its culture is not important, that it has less value than another.

My colleagues have also compared the current situation with the Internet to the situation 25 or 30 years ago, when the Internet was not as widely available as it is now. My colleague from Edmonton Riverbend was correct in saying that people used to access Canadian productions via the radio and television. Now they go on the Internet. That is true.

I would like to remind everyone that it was the radio that enabled people to discover music of all genres in French, English and, in my case, even Innu. This meant that we had access to a variety of music. It also gave listeners a chance to discover new artists.

Quotas at the time gave people an opportunity to discover Quebec and Canadian artists, which is a great thing. It was not always perfect, of course. I remember at one time, when I was working in radio, we had a Brian Adams record that did not count toward some of the quotas. Those who worked in radio will be familiar with the little circle, and one of the quarters was not filled in because the record was produced abroad. Because of that, it was not considered a 100% Canadian product, so it did not count toward the quotas.

Are there are improvements to be made? Most certainly, but that does not mean we have to slam on the brakes and do nothing. On the contrary, proposals have been made and agreed to. I am sure there are other proposals to be made now and in the future, but we have to make them. Unfortunately I have heard few proposals from the official opposition. I have heard a lot of opposition, but not much in the way of proposals.

• (1725)

Is it right that it is easier for francophones to access Korean content than their own? Let us be clear. Out of curiosity, I went and had a look at some of the things that were recommended to me. I liked the plots, I liked the sets and I liked the costumes. My natural curiosity led me to discover another culture. Why do we not offer that sort of thing here? We should be giving people here a chance to discover homegrown artists, both francophone Quebecers and anglophone Canadians, and showcasing them around the world. Bill C-11 would allow that to happen.

Having high-quality content in our language is important. Non-francophones could probably do what I did with the Korean shows, in other words, watch shows that were made here, discover Quebec artists and become interested. These days, curiosity is cultivated. That is probably what my colleagues feel like telling me. Today, to cultivate curiosity and interest, it needs to be easy to access high-quality shows and content. That is what Bill C-11 does.

Some will tell me that those who want to access francophone culture just have to do what I did and go look for it. I find that attitude rather alarming. Why should I have to go look for expressions of my culture when others never have to look at all in order to have access to expressions of their own culture? These people who feel like telling me—

• (1730)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. I must interrupt the hon. member, who will have three minutes when we resume consideration of this bill.

It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ACT

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ) moved that Bill C-237, An Act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act and the Canada Health Act be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Private Members' Business

He said: Madam Speaker, I am very proud to rise today to speak to my bill, Bill C-237, an act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act and the Canada Health Act.

The bill addresses the root cause of the tensions and disputes between the federal government and the provinces, Quebec in particular, and that is spending power. The federal government has given itself the power to tell Quebec what to do in its own areas of jurisdiction, under the pretext that it is transferring money to the province.

Canada is supposed to be a federation. In a federation, the two levels of government are equally sovereign, but not in the same areas.

Section 91 of the Constitution confers powers on the federal Parliament and section 92 confers powers on Quebec and the Canadian provinces. Federal spending that encroaches on provincial jurisdiction calls into question the division of powers and Quebec's autonomy. That is what spending power is. It is the power to tell the other what to do in areas that fall under its exclusive jurisdiction. Respecting Quebec and its autonomy is not a partisan game in Quebec, and this is not new.

It was during the creation of the welfare state, as it was known, when the government started developing various social programs, that tensions arose.

During the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s, Quebecers clearly picked a side. They looked to the Government of Quebec to develop the social safety net, and they expected Quebec to be completely free to do that without having to take orders from Ottawa. Quebec Premier Jean Lesage's campaign slogan was "Maîtres chez nous", masters of our own house, and that is what he was talking about. That is also what the great constitutional talks—Victoria in 1970, Meech Lake in 1987 and Charlottetown in 1992—were all about. In fact, that is what prompted me to get into politics.

When English Canada got itself a new Constitution without Quebec, I decided to make the leap. When I ran in 1984, I ran because I wanted us to be masters of our own house. It is for that same reason that I am now introducing Bill C-237 38 years later.

The bill amends the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act in two ways.

Private Members' Business

On the one hand, it provides all interested provinces with the opportunity to opt out of a federal program that falls under the legislative authority of the provinces. In that case, the government can pay the province a transfer equivalent to the contribution that it would have received had it not withdrawn.

On the other hand, Bill C-237 adds that the government will only pay the contribution if the province has a program whose objectives are comparable to those of a federal program. This mechanism is quite similar to the one that exists in the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act, for example.

If a province has its own program and withdraws from the federal program, it receives the same transfer that it would have received had it not withdrawn. The transfer is unconditional and goes into the province's consolidated revenue fund, but only if it has a comparable program. It can be comparable, but it does not have to be the same. There is no requirement to respect standards or criteria or to allow interference in our affairs. We have a fair amount of control in this kind of relationship. That is not currently the case under this government or under previous governments.

• (1735)

Bill C-237 proposes a second amendment to the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act that applies only to Quebec. This amendment would exempt Quebec from the application of criteria and conditions set out by Ottawa in the Canada Health Act.

The federal government has announced that it plans to set conditions applicable to long-term care facilities, or CHSLDs. It is talking about a series of so-called national strategies, which we understand to mean “dictated by the federal government”, in such areas as mental health, seniors' health, reproductive health, pharmacare and dental care.

The federal government does not develop any services and, in fact, it would not be able to do so. The federal government does not deliver any services either, as it knows nothing about them. It will just transfer the responsibility to the provinces so they will do the work in its place. It is going to hire them like subcontractors, and it is going to use its spending power to tell them what to do.

Fifty years ago, Pierre Elliott Trudeau said that “there's no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation”. Today, his son is saying that the state has its place in every room in the house, which is unacceptable to us. Our house is Quebec, and we do not want Canada deciding on the decor and furniture.

As I was saying, it is not a partisan issue in Quebec. I would like to quote Benoît Pelletier, Quebec's minister of intergovernmental affairs in Jean Charest's government, the same Jean Charest who is a Liberal in Quebec and a Conservative in Ottawa. It would be difficult to be any more transparent.

Benoît Pelletier said, “I have a great deal of difficulty in reconciling the values underlying the Canadian federation with the idea of a federal spending power that is in no way subject to the division of powers.”

The Séguin commission on the fiscal imbalance said the same thing: “The 'federal spending power' displays a singular logic in that the federal government intervenes every time in a field falling

under provincial jurisdiction without having to adopt a constitutional amendment.”

The current government of François Legault, which was elected on an autonomist platform, is still calling for jurisdictions to be respected. Between autonomist François Legault and Jean Lesage's “masters in our own house”, it is very clear that Quebec does not want the federal government to tell us what to do in areas over which we have exclusive jurisdiction.

This is not a constitutional matter. It is, quite simply, a jurisdictional matter. The federal government does not manage the health care system and knows nothing about it.

In March, the Bloc leader held a press conference to demand that the federal budget include an increase in health transfers, with no conditions attached. He was accompanied by the entire Quebec health care community: unions, physicians' federations, various health care professionals, everyone. These people, the backbone of the health care system, are all asking for the same thing, and that is a boost in transfers, with no conditions.

These people make the health care system function, together with the Quebec government. The last thing they need is the federal government coming in and telling them what to do. This consensus goes far beyond the political parties in Quebec; it includes the entire health care community. I would like to reiterate that all the provincial premiers are unanimously asking for the same thing. That consensus is reflected in Bill C-237.

A few weeks ago, the Speaker ruled that my bill requires a royal recommendation. In other words, the House can vote on it at third reading only if the government agrees. We still have second reading, committee and report stage, which gives us several months to convince this government, which, I remind members, is a minority government.

Of course, the Bloc Québécois wants Quebec to be a country, but in the meantime, we want to be masters in our own house to the extent possible.

• (1740)

The Conservative Party campaigned on a platform of respect for provincial jurisdiction. The NDP had its Sherbrooke declaration, which supported Quebec's right to opt out. Together, the three of us can move Bill C-237 forward. Today, I am calling on these three parties to do just that.

My people built a unique society on our part of the continent. Our distinct nature is evident in our language and our culture, but it is much more than that. Quebec has the highest rate of female labour market participation, the most advanced family policy on the continent, the best wealth distribution and the lowest poverty rates. Almost 80% of the population belongs to the middle class, compared to under 75% in the rest of Canada. How did we make that happen? We did it because we were free to do it. That is all there is to it.

The federal government wants to use its spending power to replace our freedom with conditional freedom. It cannot recognize the existence of a nation while simultaneously wanting to control it. Everyone here rejects that brand of paternalism toward indigenous nations, whose right to self-government we recognize. I expect the same level of respect for my nation, the Quebec nation.

That is why I urge all members to support my Bill C-237 so we can have a little more mastery over our own house.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I totally disagree with the member's legislation, and I will expand on the reason why shortly.

My question for the member is this. Would he apply the same principles with respect to health in other jurisdictions? For example, the Province of Manitoba would often put conditions to the City of Winnipeg on issues that the City of Winnipeg is fully responsible for. With respect to education, we have school trustees and they are fully responsible for education. Would he apply those same principles to those jurisdictions?

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Madam Speaker, my answer is very simple. It is well established in the Canadian Constitution that education and health are areas of provincial jurisdiction. Manitoba has full authority in education and health, as does Quebec. The federal government needs to stop meddling in these areas of jurisdiction.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, the dean of the House, for his speech. It was interesting to hear him talk about the time when he first got into politics. Here we are in 2022 still having to demand that our areas of jurisdiction be respected.

This week I attended a summit on the dignity of seniors. I asked a question in the House yesterday about the importance of increasing their purchasing power, but beyond that, everyone at the summit was calling for health transfers. It is about time we took care of our health care system, our seniors and Quebecers. Everyone agreed that we need to stop arguing and stop accepting transfers with conditions. They were clear that we need transfers without conditions.

Could my colleague comment on that?

• (1745)

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

That is exactly what I said in my speech. Quebec's entire health care community, like every premier in Canada, is calling for health transfers with no conditions because it is the provinces that manage the hospitals, that organize them and the work. The role of the federal government is clearly stated in the Constitution. It consists solely of transferring money to the provinces so that they can provide quality health care services. Seniors in Quebec and everywhere are calling for this. The entire health care community, including doctors, unions, and health care workers, is calling for transfers with no conditions.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's speech on the interest of the people of our nation in taking care of the people of Quebec. As he said, the NDP agrees with allowing Quebec to opt out of new federal programs with financial compensation.

The problem with his bill is that he also wants to exempt Quebec from its obligation to honour the five principles of medicare.

Does my colleague realize that his bill opens the door to privatizing our health care system?

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Madam Speaker, that is not how I see it. My bill simply says that the federal government will transfer the funds.

It will still be perfectly possible to uphold the principles in the Canada Health Act, since they are quite general. This does not open the door to privatizing health care.

Since this is a provincial jurisdiction, it is possible that a democratically elected government may decide that one part will go to the private sector, but let us be honest: Even though there is a Canadian law, private sector involvement in health care is widespread throughout Canada.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I indicated, this is a piece of legislation that I could never support in any sort of circumstance. I guess it is because, off-hand, I believe that the constituents of Winnipeg North understand, appreciate and want the federal government to play a strong leadership role on health care in Canada.

I suspect there are reasons why the Bloc, which is a separatist party, wants to see Canada get away with health care, just as there are even separatists who exist outside of the province of Quebec. For me personally, and on behalf of a vast majority of the residents I represent in Winnipeg, I can say that Canadians love our health care system.

The Canada Health Act is one of the things that enables us to have a high sense of pride in who we are as a nation. It is often referred to as one of the things that makes us different from the United States and many other countries around the world. Because we are a caring society, we understand and appreciate the value of the health care system that we have today. Whether in British Columbia, Manitoba, Quebec, Atlantic Canada or in Northwest Territories, there is a basic understanding that health care services are going to be there for people.

My family, like millions of other families in Canada, is not just in one province. We live in other provinces. The heritage of my own family goes back to the province of Quebec itself. I believe that it is not unique to Winnipeg North, but that Canadians in every region of our country understand and appreciate the true value of a national health care system. Yes, it is administered by provinces. I know that. I used to be the health critic in the Province of Manitoba.

Private Members' Business

When the member says that all provinces want more money and they all agree, I have news for that member: They have been wanting more money every year for the past 30 years. Ottawa is more than just an ATM: Ottawa has a responsibility to Canadians to ensure that provinces and territories respect the Canada Health Act.

There are things that we can learn from the pandemic that I believe Canadians want us to look at. One of those issues is long-term care. We saw, during the pandemic, different provinces having different levels of difficulty. In some of those provinces, we had to call in the military. In other provinces, we used the Red Cross. In my own province, in fact in Winnipeg North, we can look at the Maples Long Term Care Home facility. Canadian politicians on all sides of the House, maybe not the Bloc but all other sides of the House, recognized that there were some serious issues in long-term care. I can say that Liberal members of Parliament understand what Canadians expect of their members of Parliament. Dealing with long-term care is one of those. That is why we see a very strong advocacy for standards in long-term care. It is because we care about what is happening with our seniors in care facilities.

We also care about mental health. If we do not do anything on mental health, some provinces will fall far behind. Some provinces might move a bit ahead. I would argue, again, that the national government has a very strong and important role to play on mental health.

We saw in this budget, with the support of my New Democratic friends, talk about expanding into dental care. We will see how that ultimately evolves.

• (1750)

I have talked for years now about the issue of pharmacare and the cost of pharmaceuticals. If we think about an individual who goes to the hospital, while people are in the hospital, they get free medication, but when they leave the hospital, they have to pay for it. Often what happens is that they cannot afford the medication, so they end up back in the hospital.

The idea of looking at best practices in different provinces and territories and trying to encourage and promote them in a national standard, I see as a good thing. Trying to marginalize the role of the national government does a disservice to who we are as a nation. I would recommend to those who would advocate that Ottawa should not play a role in health care to talk to some Canadians about it; I have. If they ask them what makes them feel good about being a Canadian, one of the most common responses members will get is “health care”. They will talk about the importance of health care, and justifiably so.

I am concerned about the backlog of surgeries coming out of the pandemic. Because of all the focus that was put on COVID-19 and the impact it was having on intensive care units and other facilities, a lot of surgeries were delayed or put off. We can imagine a person needing a hip replacement who already had to wait a considerable amount of time, or a person who had been diagnosed with cancer. These are very important issues for our constituents.

However, Bloc members are saying, “Who cares? It is not about Ottawa. All Ottawa does is pony up the cash and let the provinces take responsibility”, believing that all provinces will do that. I say

shame on the members of the Bloc for believing that. Canadians, even some of their own constituents, recognize the value of Ottawa and the leadership role it can play in the delivery of health care services, even in the province of Quebec.

There are different provinces with different governments at different times, but I think Canadians want a health care system that will be there for them no matter where they live in Canada. Many people have moved to the province of Quebec from Manitoba, and I suspect vice versa. I believe that when we take a look at the needs that are there for health care, the federal government should not be sidelined. The federal government should be encouraged to continue to play that leadership role and look at different provinces.

When we want to talk about accountability on health care and the Canada Health Act, I will go back to the Romanow report of many years ago. There was the idea that as part of the five fundamental principles, we should add an additional one about financial accountability. I think we do need to see more financial accountability. I am glad that Ottawa looks at it from the perspective of saying, “Look, if we want to enhance mental health, one of the ways we could encourage that is to tag dollars to the provinces to facilitate and ensure that there is more investment in mental health.” Again, that is a good thing, contrary to what some of the separatists, whether from Quebec or other jurisdictions, want to see happen.

Like the vast majority of Canadians, I believe in the importance of health care and national programs. I am glad that we have seen under this administration record-high amounts of dollars being delivered to provinces in order to provide health care. We are talking about a record amount of dollars. Historically, never has a government invested more dollars in health care than this current government. We have health care agreements with all of the provinces, which is something that has not been there for a number of years.

This is a government that is committed to Canada's health care system, and I am very proud to be a part of that.

• (1755)

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am extremely pleased to be here today to rise and speak to the private member's bill of my hon. colleague for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our dean of the House for his service to our nation. It is a great honour to be able to address the hon. member. I was six years old when he was elected to this place and, I will note, as a Progressive Conservative.

I would like to say to him that his constituents, Quebec and Canada thank him for his years of dedicated, effective and thoughtful service.

That being said, he has 337 members gunning for his job, myself included.

If I ever do have the pleasure of serving as long as my hon. colleague, that would put me at a very young 80 years of age in this place. It is perhaps divine providence that I am the official opposition shadow minister for seniors.

To get to the point at hand, transfer payments are an essential component of Canadian federalism.

As such, I can certainly appreciate any member's efforts to increase payments for their constituency. It is a massive part of what we are all sent here to do.

[Translation]

My hon. colleague has had the honour and privilege of serving in this chamber for over 37 years straight, so he knows the rules of this place and he has surely had the opportunity to introduce and speak to many bills.

My concern today is not with the approach taken by our hon. dean of the House, who I think is only doing his very best to care for his constituents. My concern is with his method.

• (1800)

[English]

One rule in particular, as I am sure we are extremely aware, because the Speaker ruled on this recently, is that private members' bills cannot propose the expenditure of public funds or tax-raising initiatives unless they have a royal recommendation.

Standing Order 79(1) states:

This House shall not adopt or pass any vote, resolution, address or bill for the appropriation of any part of the public revenue, or of any tax or impost, to any purpose that has not been first recommended to the House by a message from the Governor General in the session in which such vote, resolution, address or bill is proposed.

I may be ignorant to the goings-on behind the scenes, but to my knowledge, this particular piece of legislation has not received the required royal recommendation.

[Translation]

My good friend from Winnipeg North, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, rose on a point of order to share his concerns about the content of this bill. In his opinion, this bill was actually a spending bill.

The Chair said the following in response to the point of order.

[English]

I reviewed the bill, and I have reached the following conclusions concerning the impact on the royal recommendations.

Section 1 of the bill provides that Quebec need not apply the conditions set out in paragraph 24(a) of the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act in order to obtain the amounts referred to in subsection 24.1(1) of that act. Section 3 of Bill C-237 provides that Quebec receives the full monetary contribution provided for in the Canada Health Act without being subject to the various grant conditions set out in that act. In other words, the result of the mechanism proposed by Bill C-237 would be to exempt Quebec from having to fulfill the conditions to which it is currently subjected in order to receive the Canada health transfer, which originate in the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act and the Canada Health Act.

[Translation]

The member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel argued that these changes have no financial effect in terms of either the amounts or their destination. However, these changes would amend the terms and conditions initially attached to the Canada health transfer, which were approved by Parliament.

On this, page 838 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, states:

Private Members' Business

A royal recommendation not only fixes the allowable charge, but also its objects, purposes, conditions and qualifications. For this reason, a royal recommendation is required not only in the case where money is being appropriated, but also in the case where the authorization to spend for a specific purpose is significantly altered. Without a royal recommendation, a bill that either increases the amount of an appropriation or extends its objects, purposes, conditions and qualifications is inadmissible on the grounds that it infringes on the Crown's financial initiative.

As the member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel indicated in his intervention, the bill seeks to exempt Quebec from the application of the Canada Health Act. Thus, after analysis and in keeping with the precedents, including the rulings by Speaker Milliken on May 8, 2008, and by my predecessor on December 6, 2016, the Chair is of the opinion that the implementation of Bill C-237 would contravene the conditions initially provided for in the royal recommendation. Accordingly, the Chair is of the view that Bill C-237 must be accompanied by a royal recommendation.

[Translation]

As it stands now, this bill does not have a royal recommendation. Unlike my hon. colleague from Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, I am new to the House. I may not be as aware of how things work in this place, but I think it is safe to assume that, if a royal recommendation has not yet been given at this stage then it will not be given later.

We all know how this will play out. As it stands now, this bill cannot and will not be put to a vote at third reading.

• (1805)

[English]

I want to use the closing portion of my speech to reiterate that my objection to this bill is rooted in the manner through which it was brought before the House. I want to reiterate that I know my hon. colleague from the Bloc is a tireless advocate for the people of Quebec, as is evidenced by his electoral record. I will go so far as to say that his constituents are lucky to have him. His knowledge, experience and record of service are quite literally uncomparable with those of any member of this place.

That being said, the rules of Parliament are the rules of Parliament. Our Standing Orders are our Standing Orders. They explicitly lay out the rules and regulations under which we operate, and based on the Speaker's decision, the future of this bill is crystal clear. It is a spending private member's bill that does not have a royal recommendation. As such, I will not be voting for it.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to the bill sponsored by the hon. Bloc member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, the dean of the House. I am a little older than my Conservative colleague who just spoke. I was 11 years old when my Bloc colleague was elected for the first time.

I agree with much of what was said earlier, and I will focus on three points.

Private Members' Business

We agree on the first point that successive cuts to provincial health transfers have seriously eroded the quality of services. We still see the impact of that today. These cuts began with the Harper Conservatives, but, as members will recall, they continued with the Liberal government in 2015. The provinces thus find it extremely difficult to provide good services. I believe that all of us in the House must agree that serious corrective action must be taken with regard to provincial transfers.

The second point is about the provinces' right to opt out of new federal programs they do not agree with and receive financial compensation. Obviously, we agree with the right to opt out, which I find extremely important. Ever since the Sherbrooke declaration, the NDP has always argued in favour of respecting the Quebec nation's right to make its own choices and of respecting an asymmetrical vision that would allow Quebec to opt out of new federal programs with financial compensation and then set up an equivalent program or some other program in line with the province's priorities. We recognize the power to opt out with financial compensation because Quebec is a nation.

However, I was very surprised that my Bloc Québécois colleague's bill gives that power to all the provinces. That is overly generous. I am a little concerned about the consequences this might have in the case of provinces that have traditionally or repeatedly elected Conservative governments, which could cut or opt out of a new social justice program or better universal health care services that would benefit people from all walks of life, including seniors, people with disabilities and people with special needs.

We support the right to opt out with financial compensation, which could apply, for example, to a project that the NDP really cares about: a universal public pharmacare plan.

Quebeckers strongly support the idea of creating such a plan. A recent CROP poll on this issue found that 73% of Quebeckers surveyed said they were in favour of such a plan. Among NDP voters, support rises to 85%. Among Liberal voters, 80% agree with the idea. Among Conservative voters, 79% agree. Even 66% of Bloc Québécois voters support this. The vast majority of voters, even in the Bloc, therefore agree with a universal public pharmacare plan.

I hope we can come up with a concrete solution, because people know that prescription drugs are too expensive. People cannot afford all the prescription drugs they need, and they sometimes even cut their pills in half to save money.

People know that the cost of prescription drugs imposes a heavy burden on their supplemental coverage when negotiating collective agreements. People know that better access to prescription drugs will improve everyone's health and reduce hospital costs because there will be fewer sick people.

If this type of plan is created as part of a new federal program, but Quebec is unable to reach an agreement with the federal government, it could opt out. The financial compensation it would receive would be put towards Quebec's current plan, which is decent but could be improved. It is a hybrid public-private program that is extremely expensive for companies, workers and the government because of the cost of the drugs that hospitals have to buy in order to provide care.

Up until that point, the bill is relatively good.

However, as progressives with a deep-rooted commitment to public health care, we have a big problem with the second part of the bill. This part of the bill amends the Canada Health Act "in order to exempt Quebec from the national criteria and conditions set out for the Canada Health Transfer".

• (1810)

Let us go over those five conditions. Universality means that everyone is entitled to medicare. Comprehensiveness means that the necessary medical services are covered by the public plan. Accessibility means that the fees cannot be a barrier to accessing care. We do not want to go backward to a time when people had to choose between paying rent or going to the doctor. People should be able to access care with their health card, not their credit card. Portability means that if we travel to another province, we are still entitled to receive care there through a comparable public plan. Finally, public administration means that the hospitals and the health plan have to be managed by a public non-profit organization.

Exempting Quebec from these five conditions, these five values that are essential for the men and women on the left, as well as for progressives, would open the door wide to privatizing health care, which would be an appalling step backward for the least fortunate people in Quebec, for the working class and for unionized workers.

I do not understand how the Bloc Québécois can move forward with such an idea without realizing the collateral damage and consequences that it may have. Being masters in our own house, that is fine. Making good decisions, that is fine. Removing the key requirement for maintaining a public health care system, however, is something I find extremely worrisome and dangerous.

I want to speak on behalf of all Quebeckers who value a public health care system: They can count on New Democrats and the NDP to defend their values, because we will absolutely not back down.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, we on this side of the House have enough faith in our nation that we do not need know-it-all Ottawa and its federal shield to guarantee that medicare remains public. We have faith that we can do it ourselves.

From what I understand, and the member for Winnipeg North did the best job explaining this from the government's perspective, the other parties see the relationship between the federal government and the provincial governments, in this case the Government of Quebec, as a boss-employee relationship. The boss demands accountability from the employee and sets conditions. A mere employee could decide to privatize the entire system but still needs the boss, in this case, paternalistic Ottawa. That is what I am seeing. We said that the NDP's position is centralist, and we have just seen proof once again.

When the member for Winnipeg North was talking, he was speaking on behalf of the government and he said that he was defending his nation, "our nation". That is all well and good, but what about our own nation, the Quebec nation? Some time ago, the House recognized Quebec as a nation. What does that mean? How is the government walking the talk? How is it following through on its recognition?

In this Canada, is my nation only free to follow the rules and instructions set out by know-it-all Ottawa? That means a one-size-fits-all approach from coast to coast to coast, with the same criteria and the same methods. However, our nation is different and has its own special characteristics. Nevertheless, we were told no, that we have to fit into the mould. That is what we saw and what we are seeing more and more.

The government member pointed out that the separatists are the ones who want this. I would like to remind him that, yes, we are separatists, but then so is the rest of Quebec, because there is a consensus on this issue. Indeed, in the federation and federalism, there are powers and jurisdictions, and they must be respected. The various Liberal governments who have sat in Quebec City have asked for the same thing: Jean Charest, his minister Benoît Pelletier, Liberal finance minister Yves Séguin, as well as Coalition Avenir Québec, and of course, the Parti Québécois. Quebec's health care sector is no different. There is a unanimous consensus, and everyone knows it.

As my excellent colleague from Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel said when he introduced Bill C-237, health care funding was originally split 50-50. In the 1990s, the government started cutting, and ever since then, health care systems everywhere have been ailing. This is a serious problem.

Ottawa is not contributing its fair share, and now that things are not going well, Ottawa is telling the provinces and Quebec that they should be doing things a certain way. Fundamentally, the problem is that Ottawa is not respecting provincial jurisdictions and is contributing less than it can to the system.

I thank my colleague for introducing Bill C-237 in the House so that we can debate it. Can Quebec exist in Confederation, have a chance to do things its way, and have its freedom? The question is, is this a federation made up of several nations and will the Quebec nation be able to do things its way without Ottawa constantly bossing it around? That is really all this is about, and I thank my colleague for getting us to this point.

Private Members' Business

I think we need even more freedom than what is being asked for here, but this would be significant progress. I can see my colleague, the dean of the House, nodding in agreement.

What did the government say when we proposed that Quebec have a little more autonomy? It talked about standards for long-term care facilities, pharmacare managed by Ottawa, dental care managed by Ottawa. The government said it was Ottawa's responsibility to make sure it all worked. It said—

● (1815)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: For dental care, it is about paying the bills, not giving—

An hon. member: There is no debate.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind hon. members that this is not a discussion and that the hon. member is giving his speech.

The hon. member for Joliette may continue.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I would remind the House that even if the bills are paid, dental care is part of the health care system and therefore a provincial jurisdiction. This is therefore not the place for that debate.

We are all for people receiving dental care. It makes no sense that people cannot afford dental care or have to choose between oral health and food or rent because they do not have enough money. By the same token, we want seniors to be well cared for in long-term care facilities, and we want everyone to benefit from pharmacare. If we want to talk about that, I invite my hon. colleagues to step down and run for the National Assembly or their legislative assembly to talk about this legislative measure in the right place. The role of members of the House of Commons is to determine whether we will provide them adequate funding or not.

According to my notes, the government member said that, with this bill, all we are trying to do is reduce the central government's power.

He is talking about the national government, but for us, our national government is the National Assembly in Quebec City. He spoke about weakening the federal government's role, even though it continues to overstep and expand its reach. To do things in its own way, our national government in Quebec City tries to work within its areas of jurisdiction as established by the Constitution.

We now see Ottawa cutting its share of funding and increasing the number of standards. That is exactly what the government member told us. That was his direct response. What is then Ottawa's vision in the face of my nation's right to exist? The federal government will continue to suffocate us with standards and keep shoving them down our throat. This means my nation will not exist on its own, it will have to become part of the whole. As we saw in the budget, if we want to discuss funding, we must first discuss standards. It is about standardization. There is therefore less room for my nation in this federation.

Private Members' Business

The member was talking about hip surgeries. Is it up to Ottawa to be talking about hip surgeries when this falls under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces? It makes no sense. It is pretentious and paternalistic. As I was saying, this is a boss-employee relationship. This is not just coming from separatists. Quebec's entire health care community has rejected this.

I thank the members from the Conservative Party for their speeches and for showing up in such large numbers, considering that this an important evening of debate for their party. I do not think that a royal recommendation is required for Bill C-237. I will not have the time to speak to this in great detail, but, essentially, we are not asking for new funding to be allocated. We are asking for the existing funding to be reallocated. This is not about allocating the money to another objective. When Quebec has a comparable program, the money is transferred and, presumably, it will be used to fund the same service. We are not adding anything or diverting the funding. Therefore, in my opinion, a royal recommendation is not needed in this case. I have good arguments in support of this.

First, I would like to point out that the bill presented by the dean of the House does not require any new spending. Second, it does not change the transfer amounts, nor does it change the names of the recipients or how the funding is allocated to them, and it does not change the purpose of the transfer. For example, the Canada health transfer will still be dedicated to paying for health care. The same is true for other transfers that are allocated to a province if it has a program whose objectives are comparable—that is the key word—to those of a federal program. It does not force the executive's hand, which retains the latitude and discretion required to transfer the funds. That prerogative remains in place. The executive will decide whether the province has a comparable program and will determine whether the province is complying with the conditions set out in the Canada Health Act.

Finally, precedents are on my side. I do not have time to go into detail, but there have been many bills that have changed the normative framework without having any financial implications per se. None of them required a royal recommendation.

• (1820)

In the end, the House recognized my nation, which speaks French. Now it must follow through on that recognition. The government is attempting to do so in a modest way, to follow through on this recognition in a modest way with a modest bill.

What we are hearing is that all the federalist parties are going to vote against it. That gives us a good idea of our options for our collective political future.

[English]

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in today's debate on this private member's bill, Bill C-237, an act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act and the Canada Health Act. As proposed, this bill would do two things. It would allow any province to withdraw from a federal program in provincial jurisdiction if comparable programs exist, and it would exempt Quebec from the criteria and conditions that must be met in order to receive a full cash contribution through the Canada health transfer.

Before I get into the concerns that the government has with these amendments, let me very quickly provide a little history of the Canada Health Act. The act was passed unanimously in the House of Commons in 1984 and represents a broad consensus among Canadians and their federal, provincial and territorial governments that access to insured health services should be based on medical need and not one's ability to pay.

Since then, the act has been considered the gold standard of federal spending power being used to set national objectives in an area of provincial jurisdiction. The act, in conjunction with the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act, does so by establishing broad criteria and conditions that provinces and territories must fulfill to receive full cash contributions under the Canada health transfer. Provincial health insurance legislation and regulations, including those of Quebec, meet and in some cases go beyond the requirements of the Canada Health Act.

That leads me to the first concern our government has with this proposed legislation. By accepting this legislation and exempting Quebec from the Canada Health Act's conditions, we would weaken the foundation of Canada's universal health care system. The act establishes the objectives and values underlying universal health care. For provinces to receive full Canada health transfer payments, provincial health insurance programs must be in compliance with five broad principles: universality, portability, comprehensiveness, accessibility and public administration. Provinces have not requested that these conditions be repealed.

Moreover, I would like to remind the hon. member from the Bloc Québécois that since the creation of the Canada Health Act, Quebec has broadly complied with the act's principles. Indeed, the discretionary penalty provisions of the act, which give the government discretion to withhold the Canada health transfer contributions from provinces in contravention of the five principles, have never been used.

• (1825)

There have been some instances of non-compliance in Quebec and other provinces, with respect to extra billing and user charges, where mandatory deductions under the Canada Health Act have been applied.

It is also important to note that the principle of asymmetric federalism renders the proposed amendment to the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act unnecessary for Quebec. As part of the 2004 Health Accord, the federal government and the government of Quebec signed a bilateral agreement on asymmetric federalism.

Under this agreement, Quebec supported the overall objectives and general principles set out by first ministers while respecting Quebec's desire to exercise its own responsibilities in planning, organizing and managing health services.

• (1830)

[Translation]

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

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the chance to come back to my question for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change from a few weeks ago on Bay du Nord.

Let me start by sharing the reality of where we are. If we want at least a 50% chance of staying below 1.5°C, which scientists have shared is what is required for just a chance at a livable future, and if Canada were to do its fair share of what we know remains for the global carbon budget, 86% of Canada's proven fossil fuel reserves need to remain unextracted.

Fast forward to April 4, when the most recent climate report came out, and scientists made clear it was now or never if we wanted to limit warming to 1.5°C. It was called an “atlas of human suffering” and a “damning indictment of failed climate leadership”. The chair said half measures were no longer an option.

The UN Secretary-General described the report. These are his words. He said:

Climate activists are sometimes depicted as dangerous radicals, but the truly dangerous radicals are the countries that are increasing the production of fossil fuels.

Investing in new fossil fuels infrastructure is moral and economic madness.

Some government and business leaders are saying one thing, but doing another. Simply put, they are lying. And the results will be catastrophic.

Just a few days later, the government had its first big climate credibility test: whether to approve Bay du Nord. It is a deepwater oil drilling project 500 kilometres off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1,200 metres below the surface. We expect that it has up to one billion barrels of oil. Combusting that oil is equivalent to 100 coal-fired power plants for a year, and production would not even start until 2028.

I was told by the minister in our previous conversation that there is this net-zero condition. It will be net-zero by 2050. What good is that if we have already burned all the oil by then? The added trick that is often not mentioned is that it is expected that much of this oil would be exported. Of course, this is a global carbon budget. When we do that, it may not show up in our domestic target, which even on its own is not sufficient to do our fair share, but it has the added illusion of not affecting our emissions, when in fact it is directly contributing to the global climate crisis that we are in.

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No one is saying, myself included, that we need to shut down oil and gas industries tomorrow and turn off the taps, but what we do need is an immediate investment in the economy of the future: an investment in workers. Newfoundland and Labrador, for example, we know has some of the highest wind energy potential in North America, so why are we not investing in those workers today? Why are we not investing in their future and their retraining? We know that this new fossil fuel infrastructure that has been proposed is what has been described as moral and economic madness.

Let me remind the parliamentary secretary in closing that Canadians expect more. Last fall, a full 66% of Canadians polled shared that they expected more ambitious climate action.

My question tonight is this. Why is the government continuing to approve projects like Baie du Nord, knowing full well the majority of Canadians expect so much better?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague and friend from Kitchener Centre for his eloquence, passion and commitment to the environment, which I share.

I would highlight to him that over the past six years the Government of Canada has invested over \$100 billion and introduced over 100 measures in support of climate-related commitments.

Since 2016, the Government of Canada has been working with the provinces, territories, indigenous peoples, industry and civil society to implement the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change. This plan outlines over 50 concrete measures to reduce carbon pollution, help us adapt and become more resilient to the impacts of a changing climate, spur clean technology solutions and create good jobs that contribute to a stronger economy.

In addition, the Government of Canada has made significant progress to implement the strengthened climate plan “A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy”, which was released in December 2020. The plan builds on the pan-Canadian framework and includes a suite of new measures to reduce emissions, supported by an investment of \$15 billion.

In June 2021, the Government of Canada adopted legislation to enshrine its commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 into law. The Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act provides a durable framework of accountability and transparency to deliver on this commitment by establishing a transparent process to plan, assess and adjust the Government of Canada's efforts to achieve our national targets based on the best scientific information available.

Adjournment Proceedings

On March 29, 2022, the Government of Canada introduced “2030 Emission Reduction Plan: Clean Air, Strong Economy.” This is the first emissions reduction plan released under the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act and is supported by \$9.1 billion in new investments. The plan reflects economy-wide and sector-by-sector measures and strategies to reduce emissions while creating jobs for workers and opportunities for businesses. The plan also reflects input from thousands of Canadians, businesses, indigenous peoples, communities and governments. These actions will enable Canada to achieve its enhanced nationally determined contribution under the Paris Agreement of 40% to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030 and put us on a path to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

We have made great progress in implementing federal climate actions and we will continue to ensure a healthy and prosperous net-zero future for all Canadians.

Our government recognizes the importance of the oil and gas industry in our energy mix while Canada moves toward a net-zero emissions economy by 2050. This is why we are committed to working with industry, provinces, indigenous partners and Canadians to define and implement the cap on oil and gas sector emissions. Following consultations, the cap will be designed to lower emissions at a pace and scale needed to achieve net zero by 2050.

Further, regulations to cut methane emissions from the oil and gas sector by 40% to 45% by 2025 were completed in December of 2018. In 2021, Canada also joined the global methane pledge and was the first country to commit to reducing methane emissions in the oil and gas sector by at least 75% below 2012 levels by 2030.

I will finish up with—

• (1835)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, while I respect the parliamentary secretary, if approving the Baie du Nord project is what accountability looks like in Canada's climate policy, then we have a problem. Yes, much of what he said is true, and he did not mention Baie du Nord in his response. There is \$9.1 billion in the emissions reduction plan, and I am cheering that on, but at the same time, there is \$7.1 billion between now and 2030 in a new fossil fuels subsidy, a tax credit for carbon capture and storage, which again only further locks us into going in the wrong direction.

When we talk about Baie du Nord, we see why this talk of a cap on emissions is insufficient. We can cap emissions all we want, but if we are not going to look at production, if we are not going to be honest about the reality of the need to leave some reserves in the ground for a livable planet for our children, nothing else really matters.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, the federal assessment of the Bay du Nord project has been led by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada since 2018 and is subject to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012. The environmental assessment considered a wide range of impacts, including those on fish and fish habitat, marine mammals, sea turtles, migratory birds, species at risk, environmentally special areas, commercial fisheries, direct

greenhouse gas emissions, current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes, and the health and socio-economic conditions of indigenous people. In fact, the agency consulted 40 potentially impacted indigenous groups from Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Quebec.

• (1840)

HEALTH

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, last week, I asked the Liberals when they would end their cruel travel ban on the Canadians the government has branded as unacceptable. In response, the Minister of Transport completed a Liberal hat trick, with three misleading statements in one answer, a feat only a Liberal could be proud of.

His first misleading statement was another attempt to play wedge politics with COVID shots. The Liberal Party desperately wants to import American politics into Canada. The Liberals have won fewer votes than the Conservatives in the last five out of six elections. They know they cannot beat our party, so they try to pretend they are running against a different party with different policies.

The minister knows that everyone in this chamber has had at least two COVID shots, and no one in this chamber has spoken against the shots. The minister should apologize for this but he will not. He has swallowed too much of his own hubris. When the Liberals decided to politicize COVID shots, they began to believe their own talking points. They forgot COVID shots are the means to an end, not the end itself.

The minister next misled Canadians when he claimed that the Liberals are doing whatever they can to protect Canadians. This is from a government that initially told people not to wear masks because it would increase the chance of eye injuries, and a government that called anyone racist for suggesting the border be closed.

Finally, for his third misleading hit, the minister claimed he is just following the science. This is perhaps the most grievous example of disinformation being pushed by the government. The government has been taking the name of science in vain for the last two years. The Liberals intentionally conflate the science behind developing and testing COVID shots with a political policy of banning people from boarding planes and trains. The challenge the government has is that it cannot even get its science right.

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Prior to dropping most pre-arrival testing for fully inoculated Canadians, there was a requirement to show up with either a recent negative test or, and this is key, a positive test result from the previous 180 days. The Canada Border Services Agency seems to understand that proof of previous infection lowers the risk of transmission. Maybe somebody there could explain it to the Ministry of Transportation.

While the courts have found limiting the transmission of COVID allows for reasonable restrictions, the government still must follow the section one test laid out by the court. If the goal is to limit the spread, the government must prove this policy is related to the goal of limiting the spread and not a punitive measure for those who will not comply with the Prime Minister's dictates, which goes to the heart of the question. Why is the Prime Minister's test for acceptability whether or not someone has had two COVID shots and not immunity?

While COVID shots may be the safest way to achieve an immune response, they are not the only way. After firing people from their jobs, denying them social assistance, and calling them every name in the Liberal handbook, some Canadians still have not gotten the jab. Clearly, no amount of coercion or duress will work.

If the Liberals truly and honestly believe their own rhetoric about protecting Canadians, they would move to an immunity-based approach to risk management. That they still have not shifted based on the latest scientific evidence proves they care more about punishing a small minority than protecting the vast majority.

I challenge the parliamentary secretary to ignore his department-drafted talking points and honestly tell Canadians how this policy is still reasonable after all we have learned about the science of waning immunity.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a sincere privilege to be here in the House for a late show, and since I know that the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke has strong connections to the Dutch community in her riding, I would like to wish her a happy Dutch Liberation Day and also say hello to my dad, Joe, whose family arrived here on October 15, 1953. We are very proud of our Dutch heritage, and I know they are in Renfrew County as well.

While provinces and territories are easing public health measures, we know that COVID-19 continues to circulate in Canada. Throughout the pandemic, our government has taken clear and decisive actions to ensure the safety and security of Canada's transportation system, its employees and its users.

Federal vaccine mandates were implemented in the fall of 2021 for federally regulated air, rail and marine transportation sectors to pursue key objectives, including to ensure the safety and security of the transportation system, passengers, transportation employees and the public by delivering protection from infection and severity of illnesses in workplaces for all travellers; to increase uptake for better and broader societal protection; and to play a leadership role in protecting the health and safety of our workplaces, our communities and all Canadians.

• (1845)

[Translation]

Vaccination is one of the most effective tools we have for combatting the pandemic and protecting our transportation network.

It is important that Canadians stay up to date with their vaccinations and receive a booster when they are eligible. This will help them protect themselves and others against serious illness.

Vaccination is an important layer of protection. Although the vaccine does not provide complete immunity against infection, it prevents us from falling seriously ill. Vaccination can also reduce the need for potential hospitalization.

[English]

Data from recent weeks show that across the country unvaccinated individuals are still three times more likely to be hospitalized than individuals vaccinated with two doses, and they are six times more likely to be hospitalized than those who have received an additional booster dose.

The incentive for a vaccine is clear. It protects us from severe illness and it lessens the burden on our health care systems. We need to take into account several factors when considering vaccine mandates. These include the global and domestic epidemiological situation and the benefits and longer-term consequences of these measures. We continue to monitor the emerging evidence around vaccine effectiveness and the spread and impact of COVID-19 in Canada to inform our vaccination strategy.

In the meantime, we know that multiple layers of protection, including vaccination, protect against severe health outcomes from COVID-19. Getting as many Canadians vaccinated and boosted as possible and continuing to adhere to individual public health measures is expected to help us get through this phase of uncertainty and support Canada in managing COVID-19.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, sadly, the parliamentary secretary did not take me up on my offer to speak honestly and directly with Canadians. Instead, we received talking points, which clearly ignore the challenge the government has in justifying a cruel, inhumane, and blatantly unconstitutional travel ban on Canadians whom the Prime Minister has labelled as unacceptable.

The member even managed to make the same misleading claims as the minister. No, the member opposite is not following the science. He is engaged in politics.

Adjournment Proceedings

This ban is clearly unconstitutional because there is a less restrictive policy available. Rather than discriminate on the basis of COVID shot status, the government could follow the science on the basis of immunity. I say “could”, because I doubt they will do something that politically unpopular. At the end of the day, the only thing that matters to the government is protecting its electoral ambitions.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, I decided not to stand up on a point of order when the member opposite accused me of being dishonest, but I think we all have a number of words at our disposal and good vocabularies in the House, and calling somebody dishonest across the floor is unparliamentary and uncalled for. We are all doing our jobs here, and I think we can appreciate that we all have a role to play.

[Translation]

The Public Health Agency of Canada continues to examine short- and long-term vaccination strategies, including opportunities to promote confidence in vaccines and address the barriers faced by individuals and communities across Canada.

[English]

Canada's COVID-19 vaccination efforts, which include vaccine education, outreach and accessible programs with provinces, territories and indigenous partners, have benefited Canadians significantly. Vaccines, including boosters, are key to managing emerging variants, preventing severe illness and death, supporting our health systems, and continuing the path to living with COVID-19. They will also be an important part of Canada's long-term recovery.

LABOUR

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, this evening I am returning to a question I asked respecting the Correctional Service of Canada prison farms located at the Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions.

On April 8, I asked the following question of the Minister of Public Safety:

...even though no contract has yet been signed to use the milk from its proposed 2,200-goat prison farm, the government continues to build dairy facilities at the Joyceville and Collins Bay institutions. Given the absence of a contract, it is strange the government continues to act and to spend as if it still plans to use prison labour to produce goat milk for export.

The minister responded by saying the following *inter alia*:

...the Correctional Service of Canada has indeed awarded a contract in Joyceville.... Of course, we will make sure that this contract complies with all of Canada's international obligations.

Now, this response surprised me, as I doubt that it is possible in practice to have an industrial farm producing an export product with prison labour that successfully conforms to the strict requirements of international law. It is certainly impossible to do so while actually producing a positive revenue stream or profit from that facility.

With these thoughts in mind, on April 29, I asked in the House to see the contract. The parliamentary secretary helpfully provided me with that contract or, more correctly, with the offer for tender for the contract earlier this week, so I thank her. It is a \$10-million contract for, according to the tender offer, “a large purpose built dairy

cattle barn including office spaces, a manure holding tank, livestock holding areas, parlours, nurseries, refrigerated milk storage...to accommodate a milking herd of approximately seventy...cows.”

In her response in the House to my April 29 question, the parliamentary secretary also made the following refreshingly clear statement: “While Correctional Service was considering goat milk production, it is no longer under consideration. Correctional Service Canada does not intend to do any goat milk production.” Now, that is clear and definitive, and my human rights concerns would have been set at ease, were it not for the following fact.

Right after I was provided with that answer, one of my constituents asked Correctional Service Canada's media relations team to confirm the answer, and on May 3, my constituent received a response that currently they don't have any goats, that there are no plans under way and that, as previously mentioned, they will reassess the situation at a later date. Now, this is a good deal less definitive and it leaves the door open for CSC to return to a plan that it clearly does not want to abandon: to use prison labour in a commercial dairy operation.

I want to believe the parliamentary secretary, and I hope that her statement, the definitive one, will be CSC's policy moving forward, but I think what is needed is something additional: a clear policy statement from cabinet or in the form of an order from the minister that it is impermissible for Correctional Service Canada to reassess the situation, informing the agency that it is government policy that the industrial goat operation is officially and permanently dead.

Finally, and this is the question, given the parliamentary secretary's comment and the commitment that the goat operation is no longer under consideration, could she explain why the current construction of the cow dairy facility includes the roadway and utilities for the future goat farm that remains in the engineering plans and why the current construction includes a manure lagoon sized for 2,200 goats?

● (1850)

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am delighted that my hon. colleague has a new-found interest in the penitentiary agriculture program, also known as “prison farms”. It is a shame he was not as vocal on this issue when the previous Conservative government implemented mean-spirited cuts to corrections that scrapped this effective and popular initiative.

I want to thank the constituents of Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston and surrounding ridings who were so vocal in their advocacy to reopen the farms at Joyceville and Collins Bay. I am proud of our government's decision to reinvest in correctional programming that we know leads to effective rehabilitation and a reduction in recidivism.

By investing in the penitentiary agriculture program, we are helping offenders gain and develop the appropriate skill sets to find meaningful employment. We have the statistics. Offenders who find jobs are three times less likely to return to custody for a new offence. Meaningful employment contributes to enhanced public safety through increased reintegration and the reduction of recidivism.

I had the privilege of visiting the dairy farm at Collins Bay in November. I met with the head of CORCAN, CSC employees and inmates who were participating in the dairy farm program. I have visited a number of prisons since being elected to this place. I can think of few experiences that were more meaningful than engaging with the offenders who were participating in this program. These men were naming baby calves and bottle-feeding them and were well on their way to transitioning to a life free from crime. One individual, who had a forthcoming parole hearing, had already secured employment at a farm nearby, outside of London, Ontario.

The Government of Canada will continue to support initiatives that have been proven to reduce crime and keep our communities safe.

I also wish to address the question that was raised by my colleague. I want to clarify that the Correctional Service of Canada currently does not have any goats within its program and does not have any agreements with third parties, either domestic or international, for the sale of goat milk. Simply put, there are no contracts because there are no goats.

The operations at Joyceville and Collins Bay are currently focused on the full implementation of dairy cow operations and enhancing other aspects of the program. The Correctional Service of Canada will continue to engage with community members and stakeholders, and proceed with other aspects of the program and its dairy cow operations. This includes the construction of a new barn at Joyceville Institution.

I want to assure the member opposite that all agricultural operations are being implemented in accordance with provincial and federal government legislation, and in accordance with industry standards. That includes the issue of inmate pay. As a founding and active member of the International Labour Organization, the Government of Canada takes its international obligations very seriously. We have ratified all of the ILO's fundamental standards that pertain to prison labour, and we continuously work to meet its strict conditions.

Adjournment Proceedings

I would be delighted to return to Collins Bay with the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston so that he can see how powerful an effective correctional program is. I can promise him that he will meet not only a herd of friendly dairy cows, but the offenders who love them.

● (1855)

Mr. Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, I may very well take the parliamentary secretary up on that very kind offer, which she has also made to me privately.

I do want to say, however, that in her response she abandoned the clarity that she showed on April 29, and moved to the fuzzy language used by the Correctional Service of Canada, which I presume wrote those remarks for her, leaving open the opportunity to move to an industrial goat operation. All of the conditional language about having no plans right now, owning no goats right now and so on is unsatisfying. What would be satisfying is a clear policy statement that we will not have any goat operation in the future.

I hope the parliamentary secretary, and perhaps future minister, will be able to say definitively that this is the case and repeat the clarity she showed on April 29.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, I take pride in making sure that my remarks are my own, so I want to make sure the hon. member knows that the department did not write about my visit with the dairy cows. I will repeat that there are no goats and therefore no contracts.

I am a little confused about what the hon. member has an issue with. Is it the goats? Is it the fact that offenders are learning farming skills with dairy cows? When I visited CORCAN and spoke to the head of CORCAN, they had renovated one of the barns to accommodate cows because they were not moving forward with goats.

I am happy the hon. member is interested in corrections. I hope he is supportive of the dairy farming that is going on. I will reiterate that there are no goats and no contracts.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7 p.m.)

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