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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: We will now have our national anthem, and today it is led by the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies.

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

SOO GREYHOUNDS

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this season, the Soo Greyhounds have been celebrating their 50th anniversary in the Ontario Hockey League. Since they joined the OHL in 1972, they have become one of the top producers of hockey players in the league. They have had over 160 players drafted to the NHL, and numerous players are playing around the world.

Wayne Gretzky, Darnell Nurse, Jeff Carter, Joe Thornton, Ron Francis and Ted and Jordan Nolan are just a few to name. They started their careers on the great red and white and continue to make Sooites proud of their ongoing accomplishments.

The Soo Greyhounds' current and alumni rosters continuously support and inspire younger players by teaching and guiding them to success. The Soo Greyhounds are playing incredibly well in the playoffs this year and are swiftly moving forward in the season. Hound power continues to burn up the ice, and we look forward to winning the Robertson Cup.

I wish to join my fellow neighbours and colleagues in wishing the Soo Greyhounds the best as they move forward this season. Congratulations on 50 years. Go, Hounds, go.

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NATIONAL MARCH FOR LIFE

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the thousands of Canadians who will be

participating in the March for Life right here in Ottawa and in provincial capitals across the country.

Every year, folks from all backgrounds march for the lives of those in the womb, who have no legal rights or recognition here in Canada. The theme for this year's march is "I am".

Participants recognize the value and dignity of human life at all stages, especially among the most vulnerable. This includes the 300 babies who lose their lives every single day here in Canada, and many of them simply because they are just a girl.

This year's events connected with the March for Life include a candlelight vigil at the human rights memorial, the Rose Dinner, a youth summit and more events. I want to welcome and thank those who are coming to honour, respect and celebrate life. As abortion survivor Gianna Jessen said, "The best thing I can show you to defend life is my life. It has been a great gift."

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[Translation]

NATIONAL NURSING WEEK

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this week is National Nursing Week and I would like to take a moment to highlight the tremendous contribution that nurses make to our society. This is nothing new, but it is all the more evident since the pandemic.

This year's theme is #WeAnswerTheCall. Entirely appropriate, I think. Given the many roles they play in our health care system, these essential caregivers have truly answered the call. They are the ones who interact the most with patients, and their tasks are as much about caring as they are about medicine. They have to be both competent and compassionate, all while under tremendous pressure.

That is why they deserve our utmost admiration, gratitude and support during this week dedicated to them. I say bravo and thank you to all our wonderful nurses.

Statements by Members

[English]

ROTARY CLUBS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a Rotarian, I was pleased to attend the Rotary District 7040 conference last Saturday to hear from Michel Rodrigue, president and CEO of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, and our own Dr. Vera Etches, medical officer of Ottawa Public Health, on the impact of COVID-19 on mental health. Their insight and experience in the field were very insightful and presented valuable lessons in dealing with the remnants of the pandemic and in transitioning to a post-COVID environment.

I also had the pleasure to witness Orléans Rotarians Julia Ginley and Gayle Oudeh receive the Paul Harris Society fellowship award from District Governor Fay Campbell, who is also an Orléans resident. The Paul Harris Society fellowship awards recognize individuals who have contributed their time to community involvement. Because of their dedication, the Orléans rotary chapter will continue to flourish as an indispensable branch of Rotary International. Bravo.

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[Translation]

ESPACE MONARQUE PROJECT

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, May 9, the David Suzuki Foundation unveiled the 15 finalists for the 8th Prix Demain le Québec.

Among the finalists are projects that spotlight the culture and heritage of Canada's indigenous peoples as well as initiatives to protect territory and biodiversity. One of the 15 finalists is a project from my riding, Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation.

Espace Monarque is a project that gives kids a chance to explore the world of insects and monarch butterflies and deepen their understanding of how plants and animals interact. It focuses on ecology and provides young people with an opportunity to learn and develop their sense of belonging and engagement.

It is a wonderful partnership between the RCM of Argenteuil, Oasis elementary school and the Club Richelieu de Lachute. I applaud the reeve of the RCM of Argenteuil, Scott Pearce, and his team, Éric Pelletier, Renée-Claude Bergeron and Émilie Jutras, for this initiative, which really puts the RCM of Argenteuil, Quebec and Canada on the map.

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● (1410)

[English]

VACCINE MANDATES

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was the great Winston Churchill who said this: Never does a man portray his character more vividly than when proclaiming the character of another.

I am deeply troubled by the rhetoric the Prime Minister has used to describe Canadians who have chosen not to be vaccinated. According to the Prime Minister, the unvaccinated are racist, misogyn-

nist and dangerous extremists who do not love their neighbours, do not believe in science and should not be tolerated by society. He continues to use mandates to punish millions of Canadians, including federal public servants, by taking away their livelihoods for simply making a personal, private medical choice.

The government says it is following the science. It obviously means the political science. It is not our job to judge the medical choices Canadians make for themselves and their families. This fearmongering, this division and this stigmatizing must stop. It is time to end these divisive and discriminatory mandates.

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ROHINGYA CENTRE OF CANADA

Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share with the House that just last month, the Rohingya Centre of Canada opened its doors in Kitchener. Waterloo region is home to 60% of the Rohingya living in Canada, the vast majority of whom are in my riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler. We are honoured to have this centre located in our region, as it not only benefits those receiving services, but enriches the wider community as a whole.

The Rohingya are often cited as among the people who are the most discriminated against in the world. However, through this tragedy, they have shown us their ability to persevere, no matter the odds.

The Rohingya Centre of Canada perfectly captures this spirit of perseverance, as it ensures that Rohingya Canadians thrive after arriving in Canada. Here, new arrivals can get employment resources, celebrate their culture and receive assistance in navigating the customs of their new country.

I ask members of the House to join me in applauding the Rohingya Centre of Canada and the work it does to support people and empower communities.

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AMERICAN IDOL CONTESTANT

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those who do not recognize the name Nicolina Bozzo must google her right now. The 18-year-old singer and songwriter from the city of Vaughan took the world by surprise back in February with her rendition of *She Used To Be Mine* on *American Idol*.

Of the life that's inside her
Growing stronger each day
'Til it finally reminds her
To fight just a little
To bring back the fire in her eyes

These are the lyrics from Nicolina's audition song, and she brought back the fire in our eyes. Nicolina keeps raising the bar on *American Idol* week after week, "flawless" being a recurrent word used by the judges to describe her artistry. The journey of her voice is so infectious that it leaves us all at the edge of our seats and wanting more.

Now in the top five, Nicolina could become the first Canadian American Idol. We cannot get enough of her voice. She makes Canada proud. The city of Vaughan and all of Canada are rooting for her, along with her parents Dave and Marcella, her grandparents and her sisters Alessia and Isabella. Go, Nicolina, go.

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WILLIAM DWYER

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I am rising in Parliament to commemorate the loss of a Barrie fundraising hero, William Dwyer, who passed away this week at the age of 96. My condolences go to his family, friends and the organizing team he was part of.

Will was the epitome of selflessness and perseverance. He struggled with cancer, was hit by a car, was a World War II veteran and had several other health conditions. Despite all this, Will never stopped fighting for a cure for cancer.

Will spent over four decades tirelessly fundraising for The Terry Fox Foundation. Whether he was on foot, using a walker or wheelchair, or having his son drive him door to door, he never gave up on his goal to raise over \$1 million for the foundation. As soon as Will had accomplished the goal of raising \$1 million, he set his sights on \$2 million. No one doubted that with more time, he could have done that.

The member for Barrie—Innisfil and I would like to thank Will for dedicating his life to serving the community and our country and for all the difference he has made. Rest in peace, Will.

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● (1415)

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Brampton plays a significant role in Canada's automotive sector and is home to top-tier manufacturers, such as our Stellantis assembly plant. This auto manufacturing plant is an essential part of our community.

Since being elected, I have understood the importance of protecting these well-paying, middle-class jobs and securing the future of manufacturing in my city. I have spoken directly with union leaders and workers regarding their fears around a potential plant closure.

However, those fears can be put to rest because last week, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry announced, alongside Stellantis, an investment that protects the existing 3,000 jobs, creates over 1,000 new jobs, will return the plant's third shift and provide a plant-wide transition to producing electric vehicles.

I am proud that the highest-quality, Brampton-built technology will help shape the next chapter in Canada's electric vehicle transition for years to come.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

BLAIS FAMILY

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the achievements of the Blais family from my riding, who were named farm family of the year for 2021.

Marcel Blais acquired a small farm in Honfleur in 1969. He married Monique Bélanger the same year, and they would go on to have two children, Dominic and Guillaume. In the early days, the business operated with 23 cows, 92 acres of crops and a maple grove. Today, their herd numbers 300 head on 235 acres and they tap 1,400 maple trees. The farm produces 11,900 kilograms of milk of exceptional quality, as recognized by Les Producteurs de lait du Québec.

Marcel, Monique and their sons own M.B. Marroniers farm together, and their grandchildren will hopefully take over the farm when the time comes. I do not have enough time to list all of this family's achievements, but I would like to highlight the incredible social engagement of everyone in the family.

I want to tell the Blais family how much I admire them, and I wish them the very best for many years to come.

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[English]

BILL C-11

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, excessive control and a distrust of the Canadian people are the trademarks of the Liberal government. The Liberals want to choose what Canadians watch online. This is the latest of their assaults.

They justify this power grab in Bill C-11 by saying they need to “protect Canadian culture”. Not only do the Liberals think that Canadians do not do a good job of promoting themselves and their culture, but they actually laugh, as they are doing right now, or criticize those who suggest that we have the ability to promote our own culture. I thank the minister very much.

Here is the truth: Canadian artists are hitting it out of the park when it comes to growing online audiences and reaching a global market. Government interference, or so-called modernization, is unwelcomed. We do not need it. There is nothing about it that actually promotes Canadian culture.

Here is the thing: Canadian artists do not want their content downgraded just because it does not match the government's values test, and viewers do not want to be told what needs to be forced in front of their eyeballs simply because the government wants them to watch it.

Instead, Canadians want to stay “true north, strong and free”. Choices matter. Leave them up to the Canadian people.

The Deputy Speaker: I just want to remind folks to keep the chatter down as we finish Statements by Members.

The hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country.

*Statements by Members**[Translation]***THE FRENCH LANGUAGE**

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the French language is an integral part of life and of the history and future of Canadian culture, which has been supported nationally through official bilingualism.

I had the privilege of attending French immersion at École Pauline-Johnson, where I started learning French at an early age. It is one of many French immersion programs in the regions in my riding.

Our government has introduced a bill to modernize the Official Languages Act in order to protect and promote French throughout Canada, including in my province of British Columbia.

We also rely on francophone immigration programs to recruit more francophone immigrants, such as the wonderful Moroccan chefs who were recruited in Whistler and have enriched the community, becoming a cherished part of it.

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● (1420)

*[English]***SEX TRADE WORKERS**

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, women working in Canada's sex trade deserve safety. Unfortunately, one shared experience by all those working in the trade is stigmatization.

Stigmatization means barriers in accessing health care. Stigmatization means workers are not reporting abuse, in fear of judgment by those in power. Stigmatization means indigenous women, girls and two-spirited individuals overrepresented in the sex trade continue to go missing or are murdered. Stigmatization means organizations working to provide essential supports are struggling to access reliable funding. Stigmatization means those working in the sex trade were not eligible, by the government, for CERB. Finally, stigmatization means the government is dragging its heels to deliver legislation to protect sex trade workers. Instead, it is driving them further into isolation.

How many lives need to be lost before the government finally takes action?

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*[Translation]***30TH ANNIVERSARY OF ALUMINERIE ALOUETTE**

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this year, the largest aluminum manufacturing company in the Americas is celebrating its 30th anniversary. Aluminerie Alouette is a source of pride on the North Shore, a jewel for Quebec and the perfect example of how it is possible to be a major, environmentally responsible business on a human scale.

A company such as Alouette represents above all the strength, knowledge and expertise of its employees. More than 900 people on the North Shore work hard for a company that has been involved in the community from the beginning.

Whenever I can, I do not hesitate to promote this company, which has deep roots in our region, and every time I visit I am reminded of just how proud we can be of the expertise and know-how of the North Shore and Quebec, especially when it comes to technology.

I want to wish a happy 30th anniversary to Aluminerie Alouette, its employees, its suppliers and everyone who contributes to its success and, of course, to its very dynamic CEO, Claude Gosselin.

Let us work together to ensure the company can continue to grow and showcase the know-how of the North Shore and Quebec all across the Americas and beyond.

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*[English]***ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH**

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, May is Asian Heritage Month. Over six million people of Asian heritage live in Canada and have enriched our country with their unique cultures, languages and traditions.

I am proud to note that Douglas Jung, the first Chinese-Canadian MP, Bev Oda, the first Japanese-Canadian MP, and Nelly Shin, the first Korean-Canadian MP, were proud Conservatives.

As we celebrate this year's theme of "Continuing a Legacy of Greatness", I encourage all members of the House to take time to learn about the inspiring stories of Asian-Canadians who stood up to injustice and worked to overcome barriers. In spite of the challenges they have faced, Asian-Canadians have made countless contributions to Canada. In medicine, music, literature and business, Asian-Canadians have blessed Canada and added to the incredible richness of our country.

Let us all celebrate these contributions and learn more about the ways in which our country was shaped by Asian-Canadians.

Happy Asian Heritage Month.

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CANADA-UKRAINE PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise in the House today to welcome the Canada-Ukraine parliamentary program class of 2022 as it begins its first full week here in Ottawa.

This program began in 1991 under the authority of the then Speaker of the House, John Allen Fraser, and happened every year until 2020, when it was put on hold due to COVID-19.

This year, we welcome back the program with the largest number ever having participated, and for the first time they are all women. All 40 interns will be working in the offices of MPs from different parties until the House rises for the summer, and will have the opportunity to learn more about Canadian government and parliamentary procedure.

This program began in the same year the Ukraine parliament adopted its declaration of independence, and has produced over 1,000 alumni, including current Ukrainian cabinet ministers. It is fitting that the program is returning this year, even though the road has been far more difficult. This is why I invite all members of the House, and their staff, to join us tonight at the Metropolitan in support of these resilient young women who continue to work for a democratic and free Ukraine.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1425)

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister invoked the Emergencies Act on Canadians, he said that it was because police said they needed it.

Yesterday, we found out that was not quite true. The RCMP Commissioner clearly stated in committee yesterday that the RCMP did not request that the act be invoked, and that police used existing legislation to resolve border blockades.

We cannot trust the Liberals to tell the truth on why they used the Emergencies Act. Will they stop the cover-up, come clean and release all the documents related to cabinet decisions around the Emergencies Act, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Commissioner Lucki told the committee, the Emergencies Act allowed police to maintain a secure perimeter and refuse entry of individuals travelling to the illegal protest with the intent of participating.

It gave police “the enforcement authority to arrest individuals who continued to supply fuel, food and other materials,” and it gave police “new powers to compel individuals to provide essential goods and services for the removal, towing and storage of vehicles and equipment.”

We have now announced the independent inquiry to examine the circumstances that led to the declaration and the measures taken in response. We all look forward to Justice Rouleau's work and the inquiry's answers on this matter.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the Prime Minister has been spreading misinformation and disinformation about the protest. He called people names. He wedged, divided and spread misinformation about them.

Those who have nothing to hide, hide nothing, but it is clear the Prime Minister is worried about Canadians hearing the facts. The

Oral Questions

fact is the Prime Minister did not have a legitimate reason to use the emergency measures act.

It was an overreach, and now he is trying to cover that up and use cabinet confidence as an excuse. Is that not the truth?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the issue seems to be that the Conservatives seem really frightened about the fact that there is going to be an open, transparent inquiry into these illegal blockades: these illegal protests that they were continuing to support throughout.

Canadians were disrupted in their homes, in their communities and in their places of work by these illegal blockades. We took the responsible and restrained measures necessary in order to restore order to this country, and continue to defend peaceful protests everywhere. That matters, and that is what we are continuing to do.

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GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are struggling every day because of the government's policy, whether it is the cost of living, long lineups at airports or continued mandates. Canadians are worse off today than they were six years ago.

Canadians know the Prime Minister does not have to go to a grocery store. He does not have to pump or pay for his own gas. Canadians know the Prime Minister does not have to wait in line at airports. He does not have to wait for a passport at a Service Canada office. The Prime Minister simply has no understanding or empathy for Canadians, and because of that, he is doing nothing to fix all of the problems he has created over the past six years.

Is that not the sad but real truth?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past six years, we have been focused on supporting the middle class and helping those who are working hard to join it.

We have continued to have Canadians' backs with things like lowering taxes on the middle class, so we could raise them on the wealthiest 1%. We moved forward with a Canada child benefit that stopped the Conservatives' practice of sending millionaires cheques for their families, and instead gave more money to the families who actually needed it.

We continue to move forward on increasing supports for seniors and increasing supports for young people. During the pandemic, we had Canadians' backs. Unfortunately, every step of the way, Conservatives voted against these measures.

Oral Questions

● (1430)

*[Translation]***PUBLIC SAFETY**

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously, the Prime Minister has become a master of misinformation.

It is not me who is saying that; it is the RCMP Commissioner herself who made that clear in committee yesterday. First, the RCMP never asked for the Emergencies Act to be invoked. Second, the RCMP never asked for bank accounts to be frozen. Third, the RCMP found out that the Prime Minister was invoking the Emergencies Act at the same time as the rest of Canadians.

Will the Prime Minister also recognize that it was not necessary to invoke the Emergencies Act and that his decision was purely political?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Commissioner Lucki told the committee, the Emergencies Act allowed police to maintain a secure perimeter and refuse entry of individuals travelling to the illegal protest with the intent of participating.

It gave police the enforcement authority to arrest individuals who continued to supply fuel, food and other materials, and it gave police new powers to compel individuals to provide essential goods or services for the removal, towing and storage of vehicles and equipment.

We have now announced that an independent inquiry will be held to examine the circumstances. We will continue to be open and transparent.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all of that happened after, but the RCMP had said that it wasn't needed. That is what the Prime Minister is trying to avoid saying. The Prime Minister is good at spinning tales and denying the facts. That is his specialty.

Even though the Prime Minister's Office is in possession of a study saying that Canadians now have to take on a second job to make ends meet, to delay retirement or to press pause on their summer vacation plans, the Prime Minister is doing absolutely nothing. We are two years in and Canadians deserve better.

When will the Prime Minister wake up and give Canadian families a break by lowering the price of gas?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Conservative Party truly wanted to make life more affordable for Canadians, then it would not have tried to delay the budget bill on the first day of debate.

To make housing more affordable, the budget implementation bill would implement a two-year ban on foreign investment in real estate in Canada. We plan to double the home accessibility tax credit.

The bill would also implement other assistance measures that Canadians need and deserve, including an additional \$2 billion to the provinces and territories to reduce wait times and surgery backlogs.

We are here to help Canadians. The Conservatives are here to play politics.

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DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Bloc Québécois moved a motion to change the rules of the House so that the prayer of support for the British monarchy would be replaced by a moment of reflection, allowing everyone to have a moment to themselves.

Everyone here had all sorts of preposterous arguments for why it was not important. However, everyone here will have to stand up and vote under the watchful eyes of Quebecers. It comes down to a vote for Christian prayer and the British monarchy or a vote for the separation of church and state.

How will the Prime Minister be voting?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent the riding of Papineau, and I am proud to be a Quebecer. However, I can tell the leader of the Bloc Québécois that, these days, Quebecers are concerned about the cost of buying a home, the price of gas, buying groceries for their families, the fight against climate change, Putin's illegal war in Ukraine, and other such issues. We on this side of the House are going to stay focused on Quebecers, on Canadians and on their everyday needs. That is our priority.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, anyone can be attached to the prayer and the monarchy. That is totally legitimate. However, given the context, I would like to make a religious reference: whitewashed tombs.

Those parties are afraid of having to say one thing to Quebec and another to Canada. Here and now, they cannot do that. They will have to stand and vote, and the outcome could change the Standing Orders of the House.

Is the Prime Minister for or against maintaining the symbolic power of religion and the monarchy in Canada and Quebec?

It is simple.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, apparently the Bloc Québécois is so desperate that it is trying to pick a fight wherever it can.

The fact is, we do have separation of church and state in this country. We respect all religions, and we will continue to make decisions based on the values and interests of all Canadians, both in this House and in legislative assemblies across the country. We will always respect other people's choices, and we will not go picking fights where there simply is no fight to pick.

● (1435)

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are paying \$2 or more per litre at the pumps. People are hurting. Families are hurting. At the same time, big oil and gas companies are posting huge profits, in some cases record profits. We also know that the government has seen an increase in revenues. Will the Prime Minister take the side of people, tax the excess profits of these companies and reinvest that into the pockets of Canadians by increasing the child benefit and the GST credit by \$500 each?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a number of years ago, we attached the Canada child benefit to the rising cost of living, so indeed the cost-of-living increases go with the Canada child benefit.

On the issue of asking those who have succeeded most to pay more, we have done that. We raised taxes on the wealthiest 1% and lowered them on the middle class as our very first action. Unfortunately, the NDP in those days voted against that measure. Furthermore, in our latest budget, we are moving forward and asking the largest companies and banks to pay a little more to help Canadians. That is exactly what we are doing.

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people are struggling. They are paying nearly two dollars a litre for gas. Meanwhile, Imperial Oil is making its best profits in 30 years. Big businesses are making more, while ordinary people pay the price.

Will the Prime Minister tax big companies' excess profits and put the money back into Canadians' pockets?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, building a fairer and more inclusive economy has always been a top priority for our government. That is why we raised taxes on the wealthiest 1% in order to cut taxes for the middle class.

We introduced the Canada child benefit and stopped sending cheques to millionaires so we could send more money to the families who need it most, and the list goes on.

That is why budget 2022 introduces a temporary Canada recovery dividend and increases corporate income tax on banks permanently.

We will continue to ensure that our system is fair for everyone.

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[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in a strong and clear decision, Alberta's highest court ruled that the job-killing Bill C-69 is an ugly power grab. In her ruling, Alberta's justice stated, "History teaches that government by central command rarely works...[and] Canada...by deliberate choice, is a federation, not a unitary state."

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister was very quick yesterday to say that his government would appeal this decision. His tactics are well entrenched: my way or the highway. With all the bright lights around this Prime Minister, how did they not see that this overreach would not withstand a constitutional challenge?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a few years ago, the carbon-pricing issue ended up in our favour at the Supreme Court. The Impact Assessment Act delivered on an important promise we made to Canadians to reform a broken system. While the previous Conservative government passed a bill that gutted environmental protections, we took a different approach.

We spent years working with companies, with communities, with indigenous peoples and more. That input made Canada's rules stronger. These better rules for major projects restore public trust in the process and protect the environment, advance reconciliation and ensure that good projects can move forward.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the truth is zero pipelines have been proposed or built under the Liberals, and they have killed billions in projects and hundreds of thousands of jobs. The PM ignored experts, workers, indigenous leaders and investors in every province and territory on Bill C-69. The court said it is a "profound invasion" that places a chokehold on provinces. It called it a "wrecking ball" that "smacks of paternalism" and overrides indigenous agreements. It is uncertain, unpredictable, unquantifiable and unreliable, just like Conservatives warned. Therefore, instead of wasting more time and tax dollars to appeal, will he just repeal Bill C-69?

● (1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the Conservatives' failed approach on major projects, nothing was getting done in Canada. Communities, indigenous peoples and others kept taking every project to court, because they did not have a proper environmental assessment process and they did not have a proper evaluation process for major projects. We changed that by working with communities and companies to give the clarity that understood that it is essential to both protect the environment and build a stronger future. That is the only way to get things built. Unfortunately, Conservatives remain stuck in a world in which they think they can ignore environmental responsibilities.

*Oral Questions***CANADIAN HERITAGE**

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, will the government commit to releasing its policy directive to the CRTC before voting on Bill C-11?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know how important it is to ensure that Canadian producers and Canadian creators of content resonate, not just across the country, but around the world. We have always had measures in Canada that promote Canadian music and content on Canadian TV and Canadian radio. That is something we have long had, to protect Canadian content creators. Unfortunately, once again, Conservative politicians stand against the arts community and creators. We believe in making sure Canadians can succeed around the world, and in a digital world, that is what we are doing.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister is so proud of his approach, why does he not simply release the policy directive that he will be sending to the CRTC to implement this law? This “just trust us” approach does not inspire confidence in the Canadian people. The government is asking an entity that has neither the capacity nor the competence to regulate vast swaths of the Internet, but the government will not disclose how it will instruct it to do so. Canadians are rightly concerned about how this will impact what they see and hear online.

Why is the government asking Parliament to give the CRTC more power over Canadians without telling Canadians what the CRTC will be doing with that power?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in this country, the CRTC has always ensured that we promote Canadian creators creating Canadian content. That is what it has done on the radio waves for decades, ensuring that we have Canadian music played on radio stations. That is what it has done with TV, ensuring that Canadian content gets put on Canadian TV, not just as a way of telling our stories, but also as a way of encouraging creators and producers in Canada.

In a digital world, we need to ensure, in the same way, that Canadian producers of content are protected and upheld, and that is exactly what Bill C-11 would do.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister continues to mislead Canadians.

He tells them that Bill C-11 will level the playing field. What he means by this is actually that digital-first creators, those who produce on YouTube, TikTok or Twitch, are too successful, so they actually need to be held back through more regulation and by putting fees on top of them. Digital-first creators would be forced to subsidize commercial broadcasters.

I will let that sink in for one moment: The government's definition of levelling the playing field looks like punishing those who are successful, so they can be equal with those who are not. How is that fair?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have heard for quite a while now the member for Lethbridge get up and completely mischaracterize what this bill is all about. It is there to ensure that Canadian creators, the Canadian artistic community and Canadian producers of content are able to be found by

Canadians and by people around the world on the Internet. That is something that matters in order to continue to support our creative and artistic community in this country. Why are Conservatives continuing to stand against creators, artists and the stories Canadians want to tell to each other?

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Prime Minister has proved he is either incompetent or absolutely committed to misleading Canadians every step of the way.

He continues to do this over and over again. The fact of the matter is that Bill C-11 would actually tip the scales in favour of traditional broadcasters by punishing digital-first creators, artists and those who use TikTok, YouTube, Twitch or Spotify in order to get their message out. Somehow, magically, this is supposed to protect Canadian culture. “Punish the little guys; reward the big guys” is the plan here.

Why does the Prime Minister insist on punishing digital-first creators?

• (1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for decades, Canadian music has been succeeding, not just in Canada but around the world. One of the reasons is that we had a system in place that made sure Canadian content got played on Canadian radio stations, which allowed extraordinary artists to succeed, not just in Canada but around the world.

The fact is that in a digital world we need to ensure the same opportunity for Canadian creators of content to resonate across Canada and around the world, and that is exactly what Bill C-11 would do. Unfortunately, yet again, we see the Conservative Party standing against artists and creators of content in this country.

Why are Conservatives so scared of Canada's artists? I think we all know.

* * *

[Translation]

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said himself that he of course wants to stand up for all religions.

However, every day, he asks parliamentarians to pray to the western Christian God. That must bug more than a few people here.

Why not simply deal with this? We could vote to change the Standing Orders, and every religion would be equal during a moment of reflection.

*Oral Questions***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the federal government must be doing something right for Quebecers if the Bloc Québécois has to try to pick a fight over something as innocuous as a prayer in the House of Commons.

We will continue to focus on helping Quebecers and all Canadians. We will be there, as we were during the pandemic, with \$8 out of every \$10 of all assistance sent to Quebec coming directly from the federal government. We will continue to be there to help people with what matters to them, while the Bloc continues to pick a fight.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am so desperate to pick a fight that I, too, am on the verge of tears.

In the meantime, I have a very simple question that should give the Prime Minister pause. If state secularism is so unimportant, why is he spending Canada's resources to challenge a legitimate Quebec law that all Quebecers agree with?

That must mean it is in fact important. Why not just let Quebec do what it will and let members choose their religion?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, now we are finally getting to the big debate on secularism that the Bloc would like to import from Quebec to the House of Commons.

The reality is that we will always be there to defend the rights of all Canadians and of different religions because that is what makes our country strong. Our communities, our Parliament and our country will always be resilient because of our diversity.

We will continue to be there to defend fundamental rights and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms for all Canadians.

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[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is true that the Liberals will tax anything and anyone, even vulnerable Afghans. The Toronto Sun has reported that 50 Afghans who worked at Canada's embassy in Kabul were taxed 50% on their pensions and severance money, and the government wanted more. None of that money was earned in Canada. They were Afghan citizens, and they had already paid income tax in Afghanistan.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and return the money that was taken from these vulnerable Afghans?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for 20 years now, Canada has been there for Afghanistan, giving support with our Canadian Armed Forces, with our humanitarian aid and through the work Canadians continue to do to resettle Afghan refugees. We will continue to be there to support vulnerable Afghans and to support the families of people who have supported Canada over many years. We will continue to do what is right by them all.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this has failed wonderfully. As the Taliban hunted for heads outdoors, the Prime Minister kept his ministers busy hunting for votes at doors. After nine months, only 31% of the promised Afghan refugees have arrived in Canada. At the Afghan committee, the defence department stated that 3,800 Afghan files were referred to IRCC, but only 900 have arrived. Where are the other 2,900 applications? Did the government lose them in the Liberal-made immigration backlog, or are they not as important as other refugees when it comes to photo ops?

• (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we remain firm in our commitment to resettle 40,000 Afghan refugees to Canada, and we are working tirelessly to bring them home to Canada as quickly and safely as possible. In the last month alone, more than 2,400 Afghan refugees have arrived in Canada, with hundreds more arriving every week. We have now welcomed over 12,000 Afghan refugees to Canada. I was very pleased to meet with representatives of the Afghan community last Friday in Hamilton.

We will continue to support families seeking a better life by remaining the open and welcoming country that Canadians expect us to be. It is something we will always stand for. We believe in stronger immigration for all Canadians.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's lawyers are stuck in Afghanistan. There are 28 of them. They worked for the Canadian embassy, and they are being hunted by the Taliban because they worked for Canada. The foreign affairs department passed along their names to the immigration department so they could escape to freedom and to Canada, but the immigration department has yet to process their applications. This has been going on for eight months, which should be plenty of time to fix this problem. When will this problem be fixed?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in December of 2021, we opened a pathway to permanent residence for extended family members of previously resettled Afghan interpreters. We know that many of their families may face danger because of the work of their loved ones. That is why we are sparing no effort in our work to reunite families.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government announced that it planned to grant asylum to more than 40,000 Afghans, but we must also give priority to the Afghan interpreters who risked their lives to help the Canadian soldiers who were deployed there over 10 years. The interpreters have not been able to come, however, because the minister has made ridiculous demands, such as requiring travel documents that cannot be accessed without the help of Taliban terrorists.

Oral Questions

We want to know two things. One, exactly how many interpreters worked for Canada, including their family members; and two, how many of them are already in Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we remain firm in our commitment to resettle 40,000 Afghan refugees in Canada, and we are working tirelessly to bring them home to Canada as quickly and safely as possible.

In the last month alone, more than 2,500 Afghan refugees have arrived in Canada, with hundreds more arriving every week. We have now welcomed over 12,600 Afghan refugees to Canada, and we will continue to do what it takes to bring in even more.

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[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, our health care system is on the brink. We are seeing long waits for emergency rooms and long wait-lists for surgical procedures. These wait-lists are out of control. Our health care workers are exhausted, overworked and under-resourced, and while our health care system is struggling, the Prime Minister will not even meet with the premiers to discuss how we protect our public health care system.

We need an injection of long-term, stable funding to defend our public health care system. Why will the Prime Minister not meet with the premiers to discuss how we save our health care system?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, throughout the pandemic, we have invested and worked with provinces and territories to keep Canadians safe from COVID-19, committing over \$69 billion in new spending on health care-related measures. We procured enough vaccines for everyone. We have delivered billions of items of PPE. We have sent out rapid tests across the country. We announced a one-time top-up of \$2 billion to help clear the surgery and diagnostic backlogs created and made worse by the pandemic, and we will continue to work with provinces and territories to strengthen our health care system for all Canadians, both for today and tomorrow.

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Rogers and Shaw merger will only result in massive layoffs of workers and increased prices for Canadians when Canadians already pay some of the highest prices for cellular and Internet services in the world. The Competition Bureau opposes this merger because it knows it is going to be bad for Canadians.

Why does the Prime Minister not oppose this merger as well?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that Canadians have long faced some of the highest bills for cellphones and wireless in the world. That is why we made a commitment a number of years ago to reduce the cost of cellphone bills in this country by 25%, and we did exactly that.

Canadians continue to save money because we increased competition. We continue to ensure that Canadians are given proper services and reliable Internet and cellphone services, and we will con-

tinue to make 10 times the amount of investments in a few years that the Conservatives made over 10 years.

* * *

● (1455)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, residents in my riding of Etobicoke—Lakeshore continue to watch in horror as Russia pursues its war of aggression against Ukraine. The courage shown by the people of Ukraine is inspiring. Canadians expect our government to do everything it can to support their fight for freedom and democracy.

Can the Prime Minister update this House on his recent visit to Kyiv with the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, including the raising of our flag above the Canadian embassy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore for his solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

I recently travelled to Kyiv with the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to announce the reopening of our embassy. I met with President Zelenskyy to discuss how we can help them defend their democracy and bore witness to the atrocities committed by Russian forces.

I think all Canadians are extremely proud to see the maple leaf flying once again over the streets of Kyiv.

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THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the cost-of-living crisis under the Liberal government is getting more and more dire. Gas prices across the country have skyrocketed, and we know it will only worsen over the coming weeks. In places such as Vancouver, the average price of gas is \$2.23 a litre. Canadians simply cannot afford for it to keep rising.

When will the government finally take this crisis seriously and provide Canadians with some much-needed relief?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the global inflation crisis, caused first by the pandemic and second by Vladimir Putin's illegal war in Ukraine, is putting far too much pressure on families, including with the rise in gas prices. Canadians deserve more support. Instead, the Conservative Party has opposed policies that put money directly back into Canadians' pockets. They voted against cutting taxes for the middle class. They voted against cutting child care fees in half this year. They voted against more support for families, seniors and students. Also, by opposing our price on pollution, they opposed giving more money to eight out of 10 Canadian families in the places where we brought in the price on pollution.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister can learn that we can have both. If we did not have the unconstitutional Bill C-69 limiting our Canadian oil and gas exports, then Canadians would actually be able to afford to fill up their tanks so they could go to work and take their kids to school. When will the Prime Minister take responsibility for his role in this cost-of-living crisis and finally stop making life harder for the average Canadian?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for 10 years, Stephen Harper tried to create large projects in this country to solve problems by ramming them through by gutting environmental protections, and big surprise, nothing got done because Canadians know that the environment and the economy need to go together. We brought forward Bill C-69, which actually protects the environment and gives clarity to companies.

We have been able to move forward on large projects since. Canadians know the environment and the economy go together. Why do Conservative politicians not know this?

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bill Seabrook has owned Belmont Engine Repair for 30 years. He serves farmers, seniors and everyday Canadians. The cost of fuel is crippling his company, and like all small businesses, his increased costs will be downloaded to the already struggling customer.

People are having to choose between buying food, gas or rent. I know the Prime Minister has never been in a situation of such hardship, nor does he know the cost of these necessities. How would he advise my constituents? Should they choose to buy gas, rent or food?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has always had the backs of small businesses by lowering small business taxes to 9%. We have moved forward with budget 2022 and allowing businesses and workers to succeed by reducing costs, by supporting made-in-Canada innovation and by investing in a sustainable future.

We are supporting entrepreneurs and businesses as they start up and scale up across Canada and around the world. Through this

pandemic, we had the backs of small businesses with the CEBA and with the wage subsidy, things that the Conservatives regularly railed against. We will continue to support small businesses during this difficult time.

* * *

● (1500)

[Translation]

HOUSING

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the right thing to do is to make home ownership a possibility for aspiring Canadian homeowners.

Right now, in the Quebec City region, property and house prices have gone up 21%. Even with a good job, home ownership is not a given. Young families are completely giving up on their dream of owning a home. Unfortunately, the Liberals are unsympathetic to their plight.

Will this government be remembered as a government of shattered dreams?

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

That is why budget 2022 makes investments to double housing construction over the next decade, help Canadians buy their first home, curb unfair practices that drive up the price of housing, and support the construction of affordable housing.

We are taking action and we will continue to take action to help Canadians buy their first homes.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, enough is enough with Roxham Road.

The Premier of Quebec wants the Prime Minister to close this loophole now. If things keep up, 36,000 irregular migrants will enter Quebec via Roxham Road this year. Quebecers are the ones who have to foot that bill. We already take in 92% of the irregular migrants arriving in Canada.

Quebec simply does not have the capacity to provide services and housing to an extra 36,000 unexpected people every year.

The Prime Minister can unilaterally close Roxham Road. Will he just suspend the safe third country agreement?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working closely with the relevant stakeholders on the Roxham Road situation.

Oral Questions

Our government is working with its American counterparts on challenges around our shared border, including the safe third country agreement. We remain determined to modernize the agreement.

We will always ensure that our asylum system is robust and compassionate and that it protects Canadians and the people who are most in need of help.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister can unilaterally suspend that agreement. He does not need anyone's permission. He needs to do his job.

He has another job to do, as well. He needs to pick up the tab. Asylum seekers are a federal responsibility. Right now, Quebec is being forced to invest \$50 million in apartment buildings for irregular migrants. It is costing Quebecers \$72 million in last-resort assistance alone.

Will the Prime Minister suspend that agreement, shut down Roxham Road and compensate Quebec for costs incurred providing services to people for whom the federal government is responsible?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we believe in the strength of our asylum system and our immigration system.

We are working closely with relevant stakeholders on the situation at our border. Our government is working with its American counterparts on issues related to our shared border, including the safe third country agreement.

We will always respect our domestic and international obligations towards asylum seekers.

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[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has never met a single emission reduction target, and the commissioner of the environment has now told it how it has failed to meet another target. This is with respect to a just transition for coal workers, despite repeated promises that the government would be there for coal workers as it shifted away from coal. It was not. Coal workers were left out in the cold. Now the government talks about other transitions.

What are energy workers across the country supposed to think? Will the Prime Minister actually be there for them, or will he leave them out in the cold just like he did with coal workers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government's plan for the futures fund is clear. It will deliver comprehensive action, including through legislation. We are speaking with workers, unions, indigenous groups, stakeholders, provinces and territories on the best path forward. We are delivering strategic investments in skills and training, regional strategies and projects across Canada that create sustainable jobs. Achieving the economy of the future requires coordinated planning to make sure Canadians have sustainable jobs that will carry them from tomorrow into a sustainable future.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, coal workers lost their jobs years ago and they got nothing. That answer gives them nothing. They do not have a trust fund. They do not have an expensive Mercedes. They are on EI or nothing, because the government did nothing. To listen to the Prime Minister talk about some future fund while coal workers are sitting there with nothing is an embarrassment.

Will the Prime Minister apologize for the deplorable treatment of coal workers?

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservative governments at the federal and provincial level have long denied that climate change is a reality and have long resisted taking action to support families and workers in the transition toward cleaner economies and a lowered reliance on fossil fuels. On this side of the aisle, we have recognized where the future is going and we have been there to support and transform communities and jobs for everyone. The Conservatives are continuing to ignore the science and the reality of climate change and are not taking the action that is necessary to support people, their careers and their communities into the future.

* * *

[Translation]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government promised that by 2035, every car sold in Canada would be zero-emission.

RBC estimates that building the network of charging stations will require an annual investment of \$25 billion. Officials have said in committee that the construction of this network has not even been costed yet.

Is the government choosing to stay in the dark or does it just not care that it is sending another bill to Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians from coast to coast to coast have been very clear about wanting more access to electric cars and zero-emission cars.

That is why our government has laid out an ambitious plan to ensure that Canadians have access to electric vehicles, with rebate programs, with investments in charging stations, and with mandates that will ensure that 20% of our cars will be electric by 2026, 50% by 2030, and 100% by 2035.

We will be there. We have confidence in the future we are building together.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers want to know what the government is doing for them. Once again this week, we see that our Bloc colleagues are trying to find fault where there is none by claiming to defend the interests of Quebec.

On this side, there are 35 Liberals from Quebec who are working tirelessly to get things done for Quebec and Quebecers.

Can the Prime Minister update the House on how this government is supporting Quebecers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to thank the member for Laval—Les Îles for his question and hard work.

Our government is always there for Quebecers. In Quebec, we recently announced \$13.3 million for the PHI Foundation, in Montreal, so it can expand and continue to offer contemporary art experiences, \$9.4 million for the construction of an innovation and advanced training centre in Rivière-du-Loup, \$9.1 million to build a new arena in Magog, \$2.2 million to build the Innofibre research centre in Trois-Rivières, and many other investments.

We have been there to support the interests of Quebecers and we will continue to be there for them.

* * *

[English]

JUSTICE

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, exactly 14 months ago the Conservatives stood in this House and warned the government not to ignore Canadians with disabilities and mental health advocates and their very real concerns with the Liberals' medically assisted dying bill. Look where we are now. We have all read the horror stories over the last few months of medically assisted death being administered to people not because they were near death but because they were vulnerable.

Does the Prime Minister see any issues with how medically assisted death is now being misused in Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, respecting the rights and the choice of all Canadians has always been a priority for this government and we will continue to stand up for Canadians' rights to make choices. At the same time, we need to make sure we are investing sufficiently and partnering with the provinces and territories to ensure quality health care for seniors, including with national standards, and quality palliative care, things that we are ready to work with the provinces on and invest in. We respect provincial areas of jurisdiction, but we will also always ensure that we are standing up for the fundamental rights of all Canadians.

• (1510)

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is not what we are talking about here. We are talking about the lives of vulnerable Canadians, yet the Liberals took months to reconstitute the committee to review this legislation after the Prime Minister put a stop to its work when he called his election.

Oral Questions

Now we are learning of Canadians who see medically assisted death as an alternative to a lack of health care or a lack of safe housing. When it comes to this tragic misuse of medically assisted death, why does the Prime Minister continue to ignore the pleas of vulnerable Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question of medical assistance in dying has always been a deeply personal one and a deeply important one for all Canadians. Getting the balance right between respecting people's fundamental freedoms to make their own choices about their life and the protection for the most vulnerable has always been the priority of this government. That is why we took a responsible, step-by-step approach on this and continue to be informed by data.

Obviously, we have heard extremely concerning stories about this. That is why we need to be there to continue to protect the vulnerable and to ensure top-quality health care right across the country, including palliative care and support for seniors.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been several well-documented cases of abuse and non-compliance under the Liberals' MAID regime. This has drawn rebuke from disabilities rights organizations and a UN special rapporteur, and now the RCMP has launched a criminal investigation into the questionable MAID death of a B.C. woman who suffered from depression, and until now there has not been a word of concern from the Prime Minister.

Will he admit that Canadians who are vulnerable are falling through the cracks and that there are serious abuses happening under the MAID regime?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning of this debate, this government has moved forward with a careful mindset of both upholding Canadians' fundamental rights and protecting the most vulnerable. That is what the Supreme Court decision demanded we do as a government, and that is what we have moved forward with in a responsible way: incrementally, with massive consultations and with the collection of data. We will continue to follow the evidence. We will continue to base ourselves in science, while the Conservatives continue to be wrapped up in ideology. We will respect Canadians' choices and protect the most vulnerable.

*Oral Questions***WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY**

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that everyone in Canada deserves access to safe and affordable sexual and reproductive health care. It is vital to abortion rights and necessary for equitable and appropriate access to a full range of reproductive and sexual health services for vulnerable Canadians, women and girls, indigenous peoples, 2SLGBTQ+ community and youth.

Could the Prime Minister tell this House how the government intends to support Canadians in need of such services?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to first thank the member for Saint-Laurent for her important question and her leadership on standing up for women's rights.

We firmly believe that all people in Canada, no matter their circumstances, should have access to a full suite of sexual and reproductive health care information and services that are safe and free of stigma. It is why we just announced four million dollars' worth of funding to projects under the sexual and reproductive health fund to develop resources and tools to support the 2SLGTBQI+ communities. It will help three national projects led by the Community-Based Research Centre, Egale Canada and Sherbourne Health.

We will continue to improve reproductive health services for people who experience the greatest barriers.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week another report was released about the over-incarceration rate of indigenous women, who currently make up over half of the female population in Canada's federal prisons. The Liberal government is aware of this crisis and has chosen not to address it, in spite of the calls for justice in the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

It is time to stop making excuses. When will the Prime Minister implement the calls for justice and put an end to the systemic racism?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his passion on this file. It is something that we absolutely share.

That is why, since 2015, we have moved forward on the calls to justice, the calls to action. We have moved forward on the path of reconciliation. We recognize there is so much work to continue to be done, but the government is continuing to move forward in partnership with indigenous peoples to change the systemic discrimination and racism that continue to exist at all levels and institutions across Canada.

We continue to stand strong and move forward with indigenous peoples.

• (1515)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my question for the Prime Minister is on the subject of single-use plastics, but first I really want to thank the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the foreign affairs minister for their recent trip to Ukraine.

Turning to single-use plastics, there are less thanks and more demands that we do something about the mounting amount of plastics in our environment, the microplastics that permeate almost all the water on Earth and the plastics that are found in the stomachs of animals that wash up dead.

The Prime Minister promised to eliminate single-use plastics by 2030. We do not have a plan. The regulations that are in draft form are completely inadequate. When will we see a plan to eliminate single-use plastics by 2030?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2018, when we hosted the G7 in Charlevoix, we moved forward with a historic ocean plastics charter, which moves forward on eliminating single-use plastics and on working with partners around the world to reduce the impact of plastics in the oceans and in our biosphere.

We will continue to work with science, experts, corporations and Canadians to make sure that we are eliminating toxic single-use plastics and continuing to protect our environment for future generations. I thank the leader of the Green Party for all her devotion to this and many other important issues.

The Deputy Speaker: That is all the time for question period today.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the next sitting be 12 midnight, pursuant to order made Monday, May 2.

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 Beloeil—Chambly.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: That, in order to create a lasting solution to the irregular migrant crossings at Roxham Road, this House call on the government to suspend the Canada-U.S. safe third country agreement; that it call for migrants to enter through regular channels across Canada and, consequently, for Roxham Road to be shut down.

The Deputy Speaker: I already hear members saying nay.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: That the House condemn the killing of Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh; call for an independent inquiry into her death in order to ensure that those responsible are held accountable for their actions; and reaffirm that targeting journalists is a war crime.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: I want to say something, too. We have been using these kinds of motions without consultation with the other parties, so all I would ask is for the parties to consult with one another to make sure we know what is coming up so we can pass things amicably here in the House of Commons.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1520)

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CHANGE TO STANDING ORDER 30 REGARDING THE PRAYER

The House resumed from May 10 consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 3:19 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Drummond related to business of supply.

The question is on the motion. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

• (1535)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 83)

YEAS

Members

| | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Ashton | Bachrach |
| Barron | Barsalou-Duval |
| Beaulieu | Bergeron |
| Bérubé | Blanchet |
| Blanchette-Joncas | Boulerice |
| Brunelle-Duceppe | Cannings |
| Chabot | Champoux |
| Collins (Victoria) | Davies |
| DeBellefeuille | Desbiens |
| Desilets | Desjarlais |
| Erskine-Smith | Fortin |
| Garon | Garrison |
| Gaudreau | Gazan |
| Gill | Green |

Hughes
Julian
Larouche
MacGregor
Mathysen
McPherson
Morrice
Pauzé
Plamondon
Simard
Singh
Thériault
Trudel
Villemure

Aitchison
Aldag
Ali
Anand
Angus
Arseneault
Atwin
Bains
Baldinelli
Barrett
Beech
Bennett
Bergen
Bezan
Bittle
Blair
Block
Boissonnault
Bragdon
Brière
Calkins
Carr
Casey
Chahal
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dancho
Deltell
Dhillon
Doherty
Dowdall
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Fergus
Findlay
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gallant
Généreux
Gerretsen
Godin
Gould
Gray
Hajdu
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather

Business of Supply

Johns
Kwan
Lemire
Masse
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Michaud
Normandin
Perron
Savard-Tremblay
Sinclair-Desgagné
Ste-Marie
Therrien
Vignola
Zarrillo— 56

NAYS

Members

Albas
Alghabra
Allison
Anandasangaree
Arnold
Arya
Badawey
Baker
Barlow
Battiste
Bendayan
Benzen
Berthold
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blaney
Blois
Bradford
Brassard
Brock
Caputo
Carrie
Chagger
Chambers
Chen
Chong
Cooper
Coteau
Davidson
Dhaliwal
Diab
Dong
Dreeshen
Dubourg
Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Ehsassi
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Ferreri
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Gaheer
Garneau
Genuis
Gladu
Goodridge
Gourde
Guilbeault
Hallan
Hardie
Holland
Hussen

Private Members' Business

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Hutchings | Iacono |
| Idlout | Ien |
| Jaczek | Jeneroux |
| Jones | Jowhari |
| Kayabaga | Kelloway |
| Kelly | Khalid |
| Khera | Kitchen |
| Kmiec | Koutrakis |
| Kram | Kramp-Neuman |
| Kurek | Kusie |
| Kusmierczyk | Lake |
| Lalonde | Lambropoulos |
| Lametti | Lamoureux |
| Lantsman | Lapointe |
| Lattanzio | Lauzon |
| Lawrence | LeBlanc |
| Lebouthillier | Lehoux |
| Lewis (Essex) | Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk) |
| Liepert | Lightbound |
| Lloyd | Lobb |
| Long | Longfield |
| Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga) | MacAulay (Cardigan) |
| MacDonald (Malpeque) | MacKenzie |
| MacKinnon (Gatineau) | Maguire |
| Maloney | Martel |
| May (Cambridge) | Mazier |
| McCauley (Edmonton West) | McDonald (Avalon) |
| McGuinty | McKay |
| McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) | McLean |
| McLeod | Melillo |
| Mendès | Mendicino |
| Miao | Miller |
| Moore | Morantz |
| Morrison | Morrissey |
| Motz | Murray |
| Muys | Naqvi |
| Nater | Ng |
| Noormohamed | O'Connell |
| O'Regan | O'Toole |
| Patzer | Paul-Hus |
| Perkins | Petitpas Taylor |
| Poilievre | Powlowski |
| Qualtrough | Rayes |
| Redekopp | Reid |
| Richards | Roberts |
| Robillard | Rodriguez |
| Rogers | Romanado |
| Rood | Ruff |
| Sahota | Sajjan |
| Saks | Samson |
| Sarai | Scarpaleggia |
| Scheer | Schiefke |
| Schmale | Seebach |
| Serré | Sgro |
| Shanahan | Sheehan |
| Shields | Shipley |
| Sidhu (Brampton East) | Sidhu (Brampton South) |
| Small | Sorbara |
| Soroka | Spengemann |
| Steinley | Stewart |
| St-Onge | Strahl |
| Stubbs | Sudds |
| Tassi | Taylor Roy |
| Thomas | Thompson |
| Tochor | Tolmie |
| Trudeau | Turnbull |
| Uppal | Valdez |
| Van Bynen | van Koeverden |
| Van Popta | Vandal |
| Vandenbeld | Vecchio |
| Vidal | Vien |
| Viersen | Vis |
| Vuong | Wagantall |

| | |
|-----------|--------------|
| Warkentin | Waugh |
| Webber | Weiler |
| Williams | Williamson |
| Yip | Zahid |
| Zimmer | Zuberi — 266 |

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

PERMANENT RESIDENCY FOR TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS

The House resumed from May 10 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made Thursday, November 25, 2021, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to Motion No. 44 under Private Members' Business.

The question is on the amendment. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of amendment to House]

● (1545)

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

(Division No. 84)

YEAS

Members

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Aitchison | Albas |
| Aldag | Alghabra |
| Ali | Allison |
| Anand | Anandasangaree |
| Angus | Arnold |
| Arseneault | Arya |
| Ashton | Atwin |
| Bachrach | Badawey |
| Bains | Baker |
| Baldinelli | Barlow |
| Barrett | Barron |
| Barsalou-Duval | Battiste |
| Beaulieu | Beech |
| Bendayan | Bennett |
| Benzen | Bergen |
| Bergeron | Berthold |
| Bérubé | Bezan |
| Bibeau | Bittle |
| Blaikie | Blair |
| Blanchette-Joncas | Blaney |
| Block | Blois |
| Boissonnault | Boulerice |
| Bradford | Bragdon |
| Brassard | Brière |
| Brock | Brunelle-Duceppe |
| Calkins | Cannings |
| Caputo | Carr |
| Carrie | Casey |
| Chabot | Chagger |

Private Members' Business

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Chahal | Chambers | McKay | McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) |
| Chatel | Chen | McLean | McLeod |
| Chiang | Chong | McPherson | Melillo |
| Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek) | Collins (Victoria) | Mendès | Mendicino |
| Cooper | Cormier | Miao | Michaud |
| Coteau | Dabrusin | Miller | Moore |
| Damoff | Dancho | Morantz | Morrice |
| Davidson | Davies | Morrison | Morrissey |
| DeBellefeuille | Desbiens | Motz | Murray |
| Desilets | Desjarlais | Muys | Naqvi |
| Dhaliwal | Dhillon | Nater | Ng |
| Diab | Doherty | Noormohamed | Normandin |
| Dong | Dowdall | O'Connell | O'Regan |
| Dreeshen | Drouin | O'Toole | Patzer |
| Dubourg | Duclos | Paul-Hus | Pauzé |
| Duguid | Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) | Perkins | Perron |
| Duncan (Etobicoke North) | Dzerowicz | Petitpas Taylor | Plamondon |
| Ehsassi | El-Khoury | Poilevre | Powlowski |
| Ellis | Epp | Qualtrough | Rayes |
| Erskine-Smith | Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster) | Redekopp | Reid |
| Falk (Provencher) | Fast | Richards | Roberts |
| Fergus | Ferreri | Robillard | Rodriguez |
| Fillmore | Findlay | Rogers | Romanado |
| Fisher | Fonseca | Rood | Ruff |
| Fortier | Fortin | Sahota | Sajjan |
| Fragiskatos | Fraser | Saks | Samson |
| Freeland | Fry | Sarai | Savard-Tremblay |
| Gaheer | Gallant | Scarpaleggia | Scheer |
| Garneau | Garon | Schiefke | Schmale |
| Garrison | Gaudreau | Seeback | Serré |
| Gazan | Généreux | Sgro | Shanahan |
| Genuis | Gerretsen | Sheehan | Shields |
| Gill | Gladu | Shipley | Sidhu (Brampton East) |
| Godin | Goodridge | Sidhu (Brampton South) | Simard |
| Gourde | Gray | Sinclair-Desgagné | Singh |
| Green | Guilbeault | Small | Sorbara |
| Hajdu | Hallan | Soroka | Spengemann |
| Hanley | Hardie | Steinley | Ste-Marie |
| Hepfner | Holland | Stewart | St-Onge |
| Housefather | Hughes | Strahl | Stubbs |
| Hussen | Hutchings | Sudds | Tassi |
| Iacono | Idlout | Taylor Roy | Thériault |
| Ien | Jaczek | Therrien | Thomas |
| Jeneroux | Johns | Thompson | Tochor |
| Jones | Jowhari | Tolmie | Trudeau |
| Julian | Kayabaga | Trudel | Turnbull |
| Kelloway | Kelly | Uppal | Valdez |
| Khalid | Khera | Van Bynen | van Koeverden |
| Kitchen | Kmiec | Van Popta | Vandal |
| Koutrakis | Kram | Vandenbeld | Vecchio |
| Kramp-Neuman | Kurek | Vidal | Vien |
| Kusie | Kusmierczyk | Viersen | Vignola |
| Kwan | Lake | Villemure | Vis |
| Lalonde | Lambropoulos | Vuong | Wagantall |
| Lametti | Lamoureux | Warkentin | Waugh |
| Lantsman | Lapointe | Webber | Weiler |
| Larouche | Lattanzio | Williams | Williamson |
| Lauzon | Lawrence | Yip | Zahid |
| LeBlanc | Lebouthillier | Zarrillo | Zimmer |
| Lehoux | Lemire | Zuberi — 323 | |
| Lewis (Essex) | Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk) | | |
| Liepert | Lightbound | | |
| Lloyd | Lobb | | |
| Long | Longfield | | |
| Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga) | MacAulay (Cardigan) | | |
| MacDonald (Malpeque) | MacGregor | Gould — 1 | |
| MacKenzie | MacKinnon (Gatineau) | | |
| Maguire | Maloney | | |
| Martel | Martinez Ferrada | | |
| Masse | Mathysen | Nil | |
| May (Cambridge) | May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) | | |
| Mazier | McCaughey (Edmonton West) | | |
| McDonald (Avalon) | McGuinty | | |

NAYS

Members

PAIRED

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment carried.

The next question is on the main motion, as amended.

Private Members' Business

● (1550)

[Translation]

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

[English]

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

● (1600)

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

(Division No. 85)

YEAS

Members

Aitchison
Aldag
Ali
Anand
Angus
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Baldinelli
Barrett
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Benzen
Bergeron
Bérubé
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blanchet
Blaney
Blois
Boulerice
Bragdon
Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings
Carr
Casey
Chagger
Chambers
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cooper
Coteau
Damoff
Davidson
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab
Dong
Dreeshen
Dubourg
Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Ehsassi
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast

Albas
Alghabra
Allison
Anandasangaree
Arnold
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barlow
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bergen
Berthold
Bezan
Bittle
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Block
Boissonnault
Bradford
Brassard
Brock
Calkins
Caputo
Carrie
Chabot
Chahal
Champoux
Chen
Chong
Collins (Victoria)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Dancho
Davies
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Doherty
Dowdall
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Fergus

Ferreri
Findlay
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Gallant
Garon
Gaudreau
Généreux
Gerretsen
Gladu
Goodridge
Gourde
Green
Hajdu
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Johns
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Kelly
Khera
Kniec
Kram
Kurek
Kusmierczyk
Lake
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lapointe
Lattanzio
Lawrence
Lebouthillier
Lemire
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lightbound
Lobb
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saarnich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod
Melillo
Mendicino
Michaud
Moore
Morrice
Morrissey
Murray
Naqvi
Ng
Normandin
O'Regan
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Plamondon
Powlowski
Rayes
Reid
Roberts

Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Garneau
Garrison
Gazan
Genuis
Gill
Godin
Gould
Gray
Guilbeault
Hallan
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Ien
Jeneroux
Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Khalid
Kitchen
Koutrakis
Kram-Neuman
Kusie
Kwan
Lalonde
Lametti
Lantsman
Larouche
Lauzon
LeBlanc
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lloyd
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKenzie
Maguire
Martel
Masse
May (Cambridge)
Mazier
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLean
McPherson
Mendès
Miao
Miller
Morantz
Morrison
Motz
Muys
Nater
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Petitpas Taylor
Poilievre
Qualtrough
Redekopp
Richards
Robillard

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Rodriguez | Rogers |
| Romanado | Rood |
| Ruff | Sahota |
| Sajjan | Saks |
| Samson | Sarai |
| Savard-Tremblay | Scarpaleggia |
| Scheer | Schiefke |
| Schmale | Seeback |
| Serré | Sgro |
| Shanahan | Sheehan |
| Shields | Shipley |
| Sidhu (Brampton East) | Sidhu (Brampton South) |
| Simard | Sinclair-Desgagné |
| Singh | Small |
| Sorbara | Soroka |
| Spengemann | Steinley |
| Ste-Marie | Stewart |
| St-Onge | Strahl |
| Stubbs | Sudds |
| Tassi | Taylor Roy |
| Thériault | Therrien |
| Thomas | Thompson |
| Tochor | Tolmie |
| Trudeau | Trudel |
| Turnbull | Uppal |
| Valdez | Van Bynen |
| van Koeverden | Van Popta |
| Vandal | Vandenbeld |
| Vecchio | Vidal |
| Vien | Viersen |
| Vignola | Villemure |
| Vis | Vuong |
| Wagantall | Warkentin |
| Waugh | Webber |
| Weiler | Williams |
| Williamson | Yip |
| Zahid | Zarrillo |
| Zimmer | Zuberi — 324 |

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion, as amended, carried.

* * *

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN BILL C-250 AND BILL C-19

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to make a statement concerning similarities between two bills that are currently before the House. These are Bill C-250, an act to amend the Criminal Code (prohibition—promotion of antisemitism), standing in the name of the member for Saskatoon—Grasswood, and Bill C-19, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022, and other measures.

[Translation]

Clause 332 of Bill C-19 contains near identical text to Bill C-250. To be more specific, the two bills seek to amend section 319 of the Criminal Code pertaining to hate propaganda, for similar purposes. Both make it an offence to wilfully promote antisemitism by condoning, denying or downplaying the Holocaust through statements communicated other than in private conversation. There is only a minor difference in the wording of one of the acceptable defences.

Private Members' Business

Bill C-19 was adopted at second reading and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance yesterday. The House is now placed in a situation where a decision was made on one of the two bills that contain very similar provisions.

● (1605)

[English]

There is a long-standing practice that prohibits the same question from being decided twice by the House during the same session. As stated at page 568 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition:

...two bills similar in substance will be allowed to stand on the Order Paper but only one may be moved and disposed of. If a decision is taken on the first bill (for example, to defeat the bill or advance it through a stage in the legislative process), then the other may not be proceeded with.

The Chair recognizes that these bills are not identical, as Bill C-19 is much broader in scope and contains other provisions related to the implementation of the budget.

[Translation]

However, in adopting Bill C-19 at second reading, the House has also agreed to the principle of that bill, and consequently, has agreed, among other things, to amend section 319 of the Criminal Code dealing with hate propaganda. As I explained a few moments ago, these are provisions substantially similar to the ones contained in Bill C-250.

[English]

Therefore, the question for the Chair is, should Bill C-250 be allowed to proceed further in the legislative process at this time? In the Chair's opinion, it should not be allowed. The House should not face a situation where the same question can be cited twice within the same session, unless the House's intention is to rescind or revoke the decision.

Government and private members' bills belong to different categories of items and are governed by different sets of rules and precedents. Standing Order 94(1) provides the Speaker with the authority to "make all arrangements necessary to ensure the orderly conduct of Private Members' Business".

Applying this authority, I am ordering that the status of Bill C-250 remain pending and that it not be called for its second hour of debate. This leaves open the possibility that Bill C-250 could be reinstated in the next session, pursuant to Standing Order 86.1, should by any chance Bill C-19 fail to be enacted in this session.

I thank all members for their attention on this matter.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), 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 13 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

The committee advises that pursuant Standing Order 91.1(2), the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business met to consider the order for the second reading of a private member's public bill originating in the Senate and recommended that the item listed herein, which it has determined should not be designated non-votable, be considered by the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the report is deemed adopted.

[Translation]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs entitled "Main Estimates 2022-23: Votes 1 and 5 under department of Veterans Affairs, Vote 1 under Veterans Review and Appeal Board".

* * *

*[English]***PETITIONS**

TAXATION

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great honour to rise today and present a petition on behalf of the residents of Windsor—Tecumseh. As someone in a border community, I can say that the pandemic has changed our relationship with the border. That is especially true for the thousands of residents who cross the border every day to work in the U.S., including nurses, skilled workers and engineers at General Motors, Ford, Stellantis and other companies. That includes serious tax implications. This petition seeks fair consideration by the Canada Revenue Agency of those implications and those issues.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise virtually in this place to present a petition that constituents have pressed upon me, and there are many of them. They call on the government to take seriously the climate emergency that was passed by a motion of this place in June 2019, and that the target to take the climate emergency seriously is 60% below 2005 levels by 2030. The petitioners add that the situation is more

urgent by the day. They also call on the government to stop all subsidies for fossil fuels. There is a long list of measures. I will try to summarize them by saying there is a wide range of social justice elements, including a just transition for workers and setting an end date to create certainty for when Canada will cease the production and use of fossil fuels in accordance with scientific advice.

● (1610)

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to stand in this place. Today, I have the honour of presenting a petition signed by 109 Canadians who have expressed great concern with the Liberal government's election platform commitment where it would impose a values test upon charitable organizations within this country.

Therefore, the petitioners in this particular petition call for the House of Commons to, one, protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis, without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values and without the imposition of another values test; and, two, affirm the right of Canadians to freedom of expression. It is an honour to be able to table this petition in the House today.

FARMERS' MARKETS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table this petition on behalf of people from Courtenay and Cumberland and Royston in my riding.

They are calling on the federal government to support and initiate a national matching program for all provincial farmers' market nutrition coupon programs across Canada that would match provinces that are already contributing to their farmers' market nutrition coupon programs, such as British Columbia, and encourage provinces that do not have such a program to implement one by offering matching funding.

The petitioners cite that farmers' markets are a key tool for COVID-19 recovery as small business incubators, domestic food system and food security builders, and local economy community builders, and that farmers' market nutrition coupon programs are a key support for new market development and support, for existing markets and provincial associations, and so much more.

BANKNOTE REDESIGN

Mr. Han Dong (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present a petition on behalf of 708 residents of Canada to call upon the Minister of Finance to select Won Alexander Cumyow to be featured as the face on the new redesigned \$5 bill. In 1861, Won Alexander Cumyow was born: the first Canadian-born person of Chinese descent.

We believe that in the face of anti-Asian racism, this initiative would give a better understanding and appreciation of Asian-Canadians' contributions and sacrifices made in Canadian history. I am proud to endorse this petition, and I will sign my name to it.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a number of petitions to present to the House today.

The first petition is on Bill S-233, which would make it a criminal offence for people to go abroad and receive an organ taken without consent. It would also create a mechanism by which people could be deemed inadmissible to Canada if they are involved in forced organ harvesting and trafficking.

Members may be interested to note that this bill will be up for debate on Friday. I commit to stop introducing petitions on it as soon as the House passes it.

UKRAINE

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition I am tabling highlights the horrific ongoing situation in Ukraine. The petitioners note recent events, and the fact that the invasion of Ukraine started in 2014, with the invasion and occupation of Crimea and the Donbass, and we have seen the escalation of that violence in recent months.

The petitioners have a number of specific asks with respect to the government's response to these events. They include standing with the people of Ukraine in their struggle, calling on the international community to take decisive action against the Putin regime, including through various sanctions, and the removal or marginalization of the Russian regime within international organizations.

In particular, the petitioners are also calling for a boycott on Russian oil and gas imports into Canada and Europe, and for us to establish secure energy access for our democratic partners, to increase military equipment, in particular lethal military equipment, to Ukraine, and to increase humanitarian assistance. They are also calling for support to refugees, joining the call by all three opposition parties to have visa-free travel for those fleeing Ukraine.

CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the third petition I am tabling is on an issue that is very important in my riding, which is carbon capture, utilization and storage. It notes the important role of carbon capture and storage. While some politicians in this place think that carbon capture does not work, it is happening right now in my beautiful riding. The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to introduce new tax incentives to attract carbon capture and storage investment into Canada.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition I am tabling is on a private member's bill that stands in my name: Bill C-257. The petition speaks to the right of people to be protected from discrimination, yet we see increasing political discrimination, which is the discrimination against people on the basis of their political views. The petitioners note that it is in the best interests of Canadian democracy to

Routine Proceedings

protect public debate and the exchange of differing ideas, and that Bill C-257 seeks to do this by adding political belief and activity as prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act. The petitioners are asking the House to support Bill C-257 and defend the right of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

The next petition I am tabling is on the ongoing detention of Huseyin Celil: a Canadian citizen who has been detained in China for more than a decade and a half and has never met his youngest son, who is now a teenager. His case has moved many Canadians, but the petitioners also note the need for it to get more attention from the government, on par with the attention that has been given to other consular cases of Canadians detained in China.

The specific asks of the petitioners are that the government demand that the Chinese government recognize Huseyin Celil's Canadian citizenship and provide him with consular and legal services, in accordance with international law; formally state that his release from Chinese detention, and his return to Canada, is a priority of equal concern to the unjust detention of the two Michaels; appoint a special envoy to work on securing Mr. Celil's case and seek the assistance of the Biden administration and other allies in attaining his release. That was something we saw in the case of the two Michaels, as well, but does not appear to have occurred in the case of Mr. Celil.

ETHIOPIA

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition is with respect to the ongoing humanitarian situation and human rights concerns in Ethiopia. The petitioners are concerned about what has happened in the Tigray region, and want to see increased and ongoing engagement by the government with the Government of Ethiopia around humanitarian access and human rights issues. They also want to see the government engage with the governments of both Eritrea and Ethiopia, with respect to that conflict.

ENERGY SECTOR

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition I am tabling is one that specifically highlights the importance of Alberta's industrial heartland to Canada's national economy. Alberta's industrial heartland is in my riding: It goes into the riding of the member for Lakeland and those of a number of other members.

Canada's industrial heartland is Canada's largest hydrocarbon-processing region and has 40-plus companies, several being world scale, that provide fuel, fertilizer, power, petrochemicals and more to provincial, national and global consumers. Energy-related manufacturing, as seen in the heartland, is a critical part of our national economy.

Routine Proceedings

● (1615)

Petitioners want to see the government advance policies that support growth in Alberta's industrial heartland and growth in energy-related manufacturing in general, and to support permanent accelerated capital cost allowance for energy-related manufacturing.

● (1620)

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition highlights the issue of energy security and brings together a concern for foreign policy security as well as our energy sector: two significant priorities for my constituents.

Petitioners want to see the Government of Canada work to immediately put in place a plan for an east-west corridor to replace foreign oil, so that Canada is the source of oil and energy for eastern Canada and so that we have a greater capacity to export our energy to Europe.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition that I am tabling highlights concerns about an election platform commitment made by the Liberals to politicize charitable status.

The charitable sector is concerned that the government has said explicitly that it wants to bring in a values test associated with charitable status and deny charitable status to pro-life organizations on the basis of their views. We saw something similar to this with the Canada summer jobs values test the Liberals brought in, and people do not want to see this again.

Petitioners want to see the government apply charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values and without the imposition of the values test, and to affirm the right of Canadians to freedom of expression.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, finally, I want to present another petition on Bill S-223, which is coming up for debate on Friday. It is a bill to make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad and receive an organ taken without consent.

I am very hopeful that debate will collapse on this bill on Friday and we will be able to move it forward. People have been working on this bill for 15 years. It is a no-brainer: everyone agrees. Petitioners hope that we will finally get Bill S-223 passed so that Canada can do its part to combat organ harvesting and trafficking.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 431, 433, 436 and 438.

[Text]

Question No. 431—**Mr. Gord Johns:**

With regard to Canada's involvement in the development of regulations, standards and guidelines that would enable mining in the international seabed: (a) what actions is the government taking to promote good governance, environmental stewardship and the precautionary approach; (b) why has Canada not provided written comments at six of the last 10 submission opportunities since 2015; and (c) what is the government doing to ensure that Canada is an engaged member of the International Seabed Authority?

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

In response to part (a) of the question, Canada is actively engaged internationally to advance marine conservation. This includes ensuring that the regulations for seabed mineral mining under development at the International Seabed Authority, ISA, provide effective protection of the marine environment. As a member of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, also known as the Ocean Panel, and in alignment with the recommendations from the Ocean Panel's "Transformations for a Sustainable Ocean Economy" document, Canada advocates for regulations that provide effective protection of marine environments by applying the precautionary approach, the ecosystem approach and the use of best available science. This includes working toward the Ocean Panel's 2030 outcome of sufficient knowledge and regulations being in place to ensure that any activity related to seabed mining is informed by science and ecologically sustainable.

Canada has also made proposals at the International Seabed Authority to increase transparency and access to information for all stakeholders. Further, Canada is engaging in the UN's Ocean Decade 2021-2030, which is advancing transformative ocean science to support sustainable ocean policy.

In response to part (b) of the question, over the last three years Canada has increased its participation in the meetings and work of the ISA and has also supported the participation of scientists in ISA regional environmental management plan workshops to help ensure that they include sufficient scientific knowledge. Canada submitted comments in writing at various stages of the elaboration of regulations, standards and guidelines, including most recently at the 27th session of the ISA Council in March 2022. Canada continues to provide comments in advance of the next part of the ISA Council session, in July 2022, at which it will engage actively.

Routine Proceedings

In response to part (c) of the question, Canada has increased its participation at the ISA sessions and has expanded the number of people working internally on the issue across Global Affairs Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Natural Resources Canada in advance of a very busy year of negotiations on the regulations for seabed mineral mining. The Government of Canada stands committed to working on the draft regulations with all stakeholders in Canada, and has been in close contact with non-governmental organizations to seek their expertise and guidance. Canada continues to provide comments on all aspects of the regulations and will be participating at upcoming ISA sessions to negotiate the text of the draft regulations and standards and guidelines.

Canada has been a member of the council, which is the executive organ of the International Seabed Authority, since 2005, and currently sits as vice-president of the council for the group of Western and other states (WEOG). Canada also holds the vice-presidency of the finance committee. In addition to its direct involvement at the ISA sessions, Canada continues to contribute between sessions through the support of workshops and scientific exchanges.

Question No. 433—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to the Public Health Agency of Canada's report "Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD): A framework for action", broken down by fiscal year since 2014-15: (a) what measures has the government taken to (i) develop national guidelines for screening and diagnosing FASD, (ii) expand scientific and social knowledge relevant to the prevention of FASD, (iii) build the evidence base and establish mechanisms for knowledge exchange across sectors and communities, (iv) increase awareness of FASD among professionals; (b) how much funding has been directed towards achieving these objectives; and (c) what results has the government achieved from the actions taken in (a)?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has supported efforts across the country to guide action on fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, or FASD. Through the FASD initiative, the Public Health Agency of Canada, or PHAC, undertakes three main activities: leadership, coordination and collaboration; development of the evidence base; and facilitation of knowledge exchange. The FASD national strategic projects fund, the NSPF, supports national, time-limited projects to support these activities. Since 2014-15, the federal government has allocated \$1.5 million annually, for a total of \$12 million over the past eight years.

The Government of Canada has funded projects through the NSPF to support the development of Canadian FASD diagnostic guidelines across the lifespan and of a national screening toolkit for individuals with FASD, as well as training programs for parents and caregivers, frontline service providers and health care professionals. The NSPF has also supported projects working to expand the scientific and social knowledge relevant to health promotion and prevention of FASD by funding studies on prevalence and the development of a FASD database to collect information on FASD diagnoses in Canada. The NSPF is currently supporting projects that promote education and awareness; harm reduction approaches for those at high risk of having a child prenatally exposed to alcohol and other substances; and research into the social determinants of health that impact alcohol consumption and FASD. Through the Centre for Surveillance and Applied Research, PHAC is also piloting system models for FASD prevalence estimation, with a view to identifying proper surveillance approaches for FASD.

The results of these efforts include funding projects that have supported the prevention of FASD and the reduction of stigma associated with FASD. Projects funded through the NSPF reached an audience of individuals who are pregnant or may become pregnant, individuals with FASD, service providers and policy-makers.

In 2020-21, project activities included dissemination of and training on the 2016 FASD diagnostic guidelines; the continued development of a national database of FASD diagnostic data collected from clinics across Canada; the development of guidelines for practitioners to use in screening and talking to people who are pregnant or might become pregnant about alcohol use during pregnancy; the collection of longitudinal data on participant outcomes from the eight level 3 FASD holistic prevention programs across Canada; community outreach to support the development of a toolkit; modification, cultural adaptation, and translation of a school-based FASD education and prevention curriculum to be taught in Canada; the promotion of FASD prevention in Inuit communities, four land claim regions and three urban centres: Ottawa, Edmonton and Montreal; and a bilingual awareness campaign to prevent alcohol consumption during pregnancy and to address stigma associated with FASD.

Question No. 436—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to RCMP actions under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, broken down by province, territory, and year since 2015: (a) excluding offenses related to cannabis, how many arrests were made for (i) possession, (ii) trafficking, (iii) possession for the purpose of trafficking, (iv) smuggling, (v) possession for the purpose of distribution, (vi) production; and (b) how many charges were laid in relation to the arrests mentioned in (a)(i) to (vi)?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP databases do not capture the number of people "arrested" but rather the charges laid. That said, the information is manually entered by police officers into our systems using a free-text field, resulting in wording discrepancies, including the omission of drug/substance-related charges and/or the use of alternate wording, for example, the use of "distribution" rather than "trafficking". In order to respond to this question, an extensive manual search of all RCMP databases would have to be conducted, which could not be completed within the established timelines.

Question No. 438—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to the reference to a "friendly foreign state" in the Foreign Enlistment Act: (a) how does the government define this term; (b) how is a citizen to know whether or not a particular state is a friendly foreign state; (c) which states are currently considered friendly foreign states; and (d) based on the answer to (c), what is the government's rationale for determining whether (i) Russia, (ii) Ukraine, (iii) China, (iv) Azerbaijan, (v) Armenia, (vi) Israel, (vii) Saudi Arabia, (viii) Iran, (ix) the United States of America, are considered a friendly foreign state?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, the Foreign Enlistment Act defines “foreign state” as including “any foreign prince, colony, province or part of any province or people, or any person or persons exercising or assuming to exercise the powers of government in or over any foreign country, colony, province or part of any province or people.” The term “friendly foreign state” is not defined in the statute. It would be for the courts to determine, based on the evidence and arguments presented, whether a specific country is a “friendly foreign state”.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the act does not require Canada to declare whether any country is a friendly foreign state.

In response to part (c) of the question, to date, the Government of Canada has not declared any country to be a “friendly foreign state” in connection with this statute.

Regarding part (d) of the question, as a result of no declarations having been made, there is no rationale to be provided on why a country is or is not declared to be a friendly foreign state.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 426 to 430, 432, 434, 435 and 437 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 426—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to the Departmental Plan and Departmental Results Report from Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the indicator listed in the reports tracking the “Number of influencers reached through Canadian-hosted events”: (a) how many events have taken place where influencers have been reached since January 1, 2020; (b) what are the details of the events in (a), including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) total expenditures, (iv) itemized breakdown of the expenditures, (v) number of influencers reached, (vi) names of the influencers reached; and (c) what criteria does GAC use to determine if an individual is considered an influencer?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 427—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to research projects located outside of Canada that received government funding since January 1, 2020: (a) what are the details of all such projects, including, for each, the (i) recipient, (ii) date the funding was provided, (iii) amount of funding, (iv) country the research is taking place in, (v) project description, including the topics and the type of research, (vi) start and end dates of the research, (vii) country, (viii) municipality, (ix) program under which the funding was provided; and (b) for all the projects in (a) which are completed, what are the findings or the website location where the findings can be viewed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 428—Mr. Gary Vidal:

With regard to the government's Wellness Together Canada portal and the related PocketWell application: (a) how many unique accounts have been created, broken down by (i) province or territory, (ii) gender; (b) how many unique visits have

been made to the site since the portal was launched, broken down by month; (c) how many Canadians have fully completed the course of treatment; (d) what has been the total cost of each of the programs or services identified through the portal and the application; (e) what is the total operating cost for the portal and the application; (f) what provisions are in place to provide identity theft protection to those impacted by data leaks related to the portal or the application; and (g) what is the budget for the identity theft protection provisions in (f)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 429—Mr. Don Davies:

With regard to the Safe Return to Class Fund, since its inception, broken down by province and territory: (a) what is the total amount allocated through this fund; (b) what is the total amount received by each province and territory every month; and (c) what accountability measures exist to ensure that students, educators, and other school staff benefit from this fund?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 430—Mr. Don Davies:

With regard to provincial and territorial requests for assistance in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020, broken down by province and territory: (a) what was the nature of each request received by the government; (b) of the requests in (a), was the government able to meet the request in full; and (c) of the requests in (b) that were not fully met, what was the reason the government could not fulfill the request?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 432—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to the development of a national suicide prevention action plan since May 8, 2019: (a) what resources have been provided to establish culturally appropriate community-based suicide prevention; (b) what guidelines have been established since 2019 for best practices in suicide prevention; (c) what resources have been provided toward the creation of a national public health monitoring program for the prevention of suicide and identification of groups at elevated risk; (d) what progress has been made to identify and fill gaps in knowledge relating to suicide and its prevention; (e) what progress has been made in creating national standards for training persons engaged in suicide prevention; (f) what progress has been made in creating a national online hub to provide essential information and guides related to suicide prevention; (g) what analysis has been done of high-risk groups of people and the risk factors specific to these groups; and (h) when will preparations for the implementation of the national action plan, including a statistical overview of suicide in Canada, be tabled in Parliament?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 434—Mr. Adam Chambers:

With regard to transcriptions or transcripts procured by the government since January 1, 2016, and broken down by department or agency: (a) what is the (i) date of the proceeding or event, (ii) location of the proceeding or event, (iii) description or summary of the proceeding or event, (iv) main participants speaking at the proceeding or event, (v) subject matter of the proceeding or event, for each transcription prepared in this period; (b) what was the cost of each transcription in (a); (c) who requested each transcription in (a) be prepared; and (d) what was the total amount spent on transcriptions or transcripts, broken down by year?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 435—Mr. Adam Chambers:**

With regard to the Canada training credit (CTC): (a) how much has the CTC cost the government, or is currently forecasted to cost, for (i) 2019–20, (ii) 2020–21, (iii) 2021–22, (iv) 2022–23, (v) 2023–24; (b) how do the actual costs, or currently forecasted costs, in (a) compare to the projections in budget 2019; (c) for any costs in (b) that are lower than the projections in budget 2019, why have the projections been revised for lower cost and lower uptake; (d) what is the breakdown by (i) age, (ii) federal income tax bracket, (iii) province, (iv) type of the two eligible educational institutions that tuition or other fees were paid to, (v) average refund received, (vi) median refund received, of the 400,000 individuals who claimed this credit in 2020 as referenced in part 4 of the Department of Finance's "Report on Federal Tax Expenditures - Concepts, Estimates and Evaluations 2022"; (e) how much has been spent by government departments or agencies to administer the CTC since 2019; (f) what is the number of employees directly or indirectly involved in the administration of the CTC; (g) how much has been spent by government departments or agencies to advertise or otherwise promote the CTC since 2019; and (h) what is the breakdown of (g) by type of advertising or promotion?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 437—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to the government's response to question Q-306 and its reference to the 40 individuals, associations and organizations who were sent the email to promote the National Shipbuilding Strategy (NSS): (a) what are the names of these 40 individuals, associations and organizations; (b) how were they chosen; and (c) which ones responded to the email indicating an interest in sharing information about the NSS?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

ONLINE STREAMING ACT

BILL C-11—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I see a great deal of excitement for my rising, which I am always happy to see.

I move:

That, in relation to Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period.

I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places or use the "raise hand" function so the Chair has some idea

of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

[English]

The hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, here we go again. The House just went through the process of debating one of the most egregious power grabs I have ever seen in my time here as a member of Parliament with government Motion No. 11, which basically seizes control of the House. We know that the government used the argument that we need more time for members of Parliament to debate legislation, yet here we find ourselves in an arrangement between the NDP and the Liberals to grab that power. They are still moving time allocation.

This House is going to sit until midnight tonight. That is fine. Conservatives are happy to show up to work. We have just received notice that the House is going to sit until midnight again tomorrow night. That is fine. Normally, this House reserves the last two weeks of the spring session to have extended hours, but we are willing to do the work. We are willing to allow Conservatives and all members of this House to speak on behalf of their constituents, the millions of constituents who have trouble with the legislation that is before the House.

Canadians have a lot of trouble with this piece of legislation. This was formerly Bill C-10. The government is now censoring the House with Motion No. 11 and censoring the House with time allocation on a bill that will censor Canadians online. Why?

• (1625)

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, on the first point, on Government Motion No. 11, after almost five months of their delaying the economic and fiscal update, which is from, by the way, last fall, it became very clear that the Conservatives do not have any interest in allowing any government legislation to move forward. We continually asked how many more speakers they had and how much more time was needed, and they would respond, "We will get back to you. We will get back to you." On and on it went.

The reality is that we had to extend the hours to make up for all of the House time that was burned by their obfuscation and, as well, look to move time allocation. The reality is that there have already been four days debating Bill C-11. There were six days in the previous Parliament, and there were 28 days at committee. We see a continued obfuscation. The reality is that this is an incredibly important bill to promote and support Canadian culture and content providers, so we need to be able to move forward.

Government Orders

I would, of course, remind the Conservatives that they moved time allocation just about every day I was in opposition. It is a quite strange to see their aversion to it now. It was quite dizzying to watch the time allocation motions they would move at that time. Now, suddenly, after they have obfuscated for four months, the tactics they used when they were in government are abhorrent and an affront to democracy, which is curious.

We have to move forward on this. That is enough of the blocking.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is critical that we get some work done. Certainly, we do not want to be rushing legislation. We want to make sure that we are doing the work. That is why we supported sitting until midnight, so we can have proper debate.

I was thinking about how the Conservatives obstructed applying votes yesterday. We could have had applied votes yesterday. We had a vote. Looking at the record, we had another vote for which we wanted to see an applied vote, but the Conservatives wanted to vote on division, which they did. They voted on division not just once but twice, which delayed all of the committees that were sitting yesterday afternoon, so they sat later. Most members had previous engagements and commitments, so we had shortened committees on really important issues.

I sit at OGGO, and we had some really important witnesses on the biggest spend in Canadian history on navy and air force procurement. We had really important witnesses to talk about that. Instead, we had a shortened meeting because the Conservatives would not apply their votes.

That is the kind of obstruction that we are seeing here. We need to get to work, and we need to get to work now.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I completely agree with the point the member made. It is passing strange to me that the Conservatives say that they are upset they do not have enough time to speak, yet they move concurrence motions, which block their ability to speak. They did this on Bill C-11 in this Parliament when they cut three hours of debate time and stopped their own members from being able to speak. We have seen this obstruction happening on every level.

This bill, in its previous iteration, had 28 days at committee to hear witness testimony. It had six days previously and four days now. Frankly, based on the experience with Bill C-8, we would have been here for the next four years for them to still have their comments, to stand up and say the things they want to say.

The reality is that we have to move forward. They do not have the ability as one party to obstruct this place and block it from doing its work. It is essential that we move forward.

There will be an opportunity at committee. There will be an opportunity when it comes back to the House again. There were all the opportunities that existed before, and there are still opportunities at committee and when it comes back to the House for a further reading in the future. There is more than enough time to continue having these conversations.

• (1630)

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, let us remember Bill C-10 and the work my colleague from Drummond did. I helped him a few times because we were co-critics for arts and culture in the previous Parliament.

Now here we are with Bill C-11, which covers essentially the same things. The Bloc Québécois has never stopped working with the arts community to make things better.

Here we have a bill that is basically the same and that the community is comfortable with. This is good work that has taken a lot of time and energy, and I think cultural stakeholders in Canada and Quebec are satisfied with it. The Bloc Québécois is very proud of this bill because we were very committed to it and put a lot of energy into it.

I would like to ask the government House leader why he is doing this to us today.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, it is clear that it is time to act.

A lot of time has gone into this. The member across the way is absolutely right.

Bill C-11 is very important for the artistic community throughout Quebec and Canada. Artists and people create a heritage and stories that are essential to our country. It is very important to support people like that.

After the last parliamentary session, after much debate, after much time spent at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, after much time spent in the House of Commons, I think it is time to act. That is what people across Canada want us to do.

That is why we will carry on today in order to get to the next stage, which is study in committee.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am very distressed that we are once again seeing time allocation. I understand the predicament of the House leaders not being able to properly schedule how long it takes to look at a bill.

However, it is not our fault, as opposition members of Parliament, that Bill C-10 was put back to the starting block because of the election, which we as opposition members clearly did not call.

With Bill C-11, we have had very little time in the House to debate it. We do need to have improvements made. That is clear. I do not want to appear to be in any way joining in any overheated rhetoric that the bill is about censorship, but the bill needs work. It does need to go to committee, but we need to discuss it and debate it first because that is what Parliament is for.

I would urge the hon. government House leader to consider that we enforce our own rules. We would have more well-organized debates if we had the discipline to say we would observe the rule that no member can stand up and read a pre-prepared speech. That would reduce the number of members who are truly engaged on a file and who are able to give a speech off the cuff. It should help organize our House time. I would urge the hon. member to think of that, instead of continuing to use the methods that were honed by the previous government of Stephen Harper.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the suggestion by my hon. colleague. There is going to be an opportunity to debate the Standing Orders. It will take place in June. It is essential that members take part in that debate. I, myself, always endeavour to speak extemporaneously because I do think something gets lost in prepared remarks, but that is a conversation for all members to have, to be able to reflect upon what rules best serve this place.

I share the member's frustration. My preference would be to work with all parties to be able to accommodate a calendar where we have fair and reasonable debate, but it has become clear, and it was over months and months with Bill C-8 when there was absolutely no progress made, and nothing offered to even get any progress, none whatsoever.

In terms of this bill, the reality is that Canadian artists and Canadian cultural producers, the people who tell the story of this country, are demanding action. It is time to move forward. There has been an enormous study of this issue. There is going to be an opportunity to move to committee to study the issue further, and of course it is going to come back to the House yet again.

Let us move forward. Our artists and our creators deserve that.

• (1635)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, from my perspective of sitting in the House day after day and witnessing what is going on across the way, it would appear to me as though Conservatives are just hell-bent on ensuring that absolutely no legislation gets through.

It does not even appear to matter what the piece of legislation is. It just seems to be motivated from this place of wanting to make sure the government is unsuccessful, regardless of what the issue might be. I believe that this is why we are seeing time allocation come forward.

Can the member comment on how he sees this and on the opposition's intention in playing these games?

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I obviously share my hon. colleague's frustration. There is an expectation when we are elected to this place that we will continue to move the business of the nation forward. When we get bills before us that were debated not only previously but also, obviously and very importantly, dur-

ing the last election, the expectation is that we are going to engage meaningfully in processes that will advance that.

Seeing all of the dilatory actions that have been taken to slow, delay, shut down and obfuscate, I do not think things are being done in the spirit of what people were expecting from a minority government.

The reality here with regard to the bill is that we have Canadian artists and producers who absolutely expect us to take action. It was run on by not just our party. Many of the opposition parties took action in this regard. Canadians expect it. I understand that Conservatives want to block it, but they are one party, and they do not control the House.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, he has spoken a lot about these concurrence motions and about petty politics.

Can we have a guarantee from the House leader that we will not see a concurrence motion from the Liberals until after June 24, 2022?

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, what I absolutely will offer is the opportunity to sit down, as I have always said from the beginning of this, to work as we did on, as an example, Bill C-3. I have to say that the Conservatives came forward with a number of proposals on Bill C-3 to improve the bill, and we were able to do that. In so doing, we also created a calendar for when we were able to adopt it, to make sure we got Canadians the support they needed, both for the pandemic and to make important changes that the Conservatives brought forward.

I would say to the member opposite, as I have said to their House leader many, many times, that, if they want to bring something forward, if they are looking to improve a bill, or if they are looking to give us concrete information on how long they want to debate something, we would absolutely work with them.

I can tell members that in my time as House leader that has happened exactly zero times. Since we started this session in January, there has not been a single offer of that nature. There has been nothing put in front of us to improve a bill or to work with us on anything.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, the only thing, unfortunately, we have seen is obfuscation and blocking.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would like to remind members that, when someone has the floor, they should not be interrupting. We are getting a lot of it on this side.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to the measure taken to move this forward.

On behalf of all artists in the cultural community in Montreal and Quebec, it is high time that we take action and move forward. The current system is unfair and antiquated. It should have been changed a long time ago.

Government Orders

Why not move ahead quickly to study the bill, improve it and ensure that people on the Web can participate in artistic creation in Quebec and Canada?

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely right. It is time for action. It is time to support our cultural community and the people who produce our heritage across Canada. The cultural sector has waited too long. We need to act now. That is why we are going to take the bill to the next stage.

Obviously, the debate and discussions on this bill will not end today. The study will continue in committee. The bill will then come back to the House for third reading, so there will still be plenty of time to discuss it.

However, it is essential to take action for our cultural communities, and that is what we are doing now.

• (1640)

[English]

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, first of all, I find it passing strange that the minister is citing as an excuse for time allocation that there was a lot of time for debating Bill C-10 in the previous Parliament, so I think Canadians would be interested to know that this is truly just a repeat of Bill C-10 from the previous Parliament.

I have a very specific question for the minister. The government is committed to providing a policy directive to the CRTC after Bill C-11 is passed. The government will decide, after this bill is passed, how it will impact things like discoverability, Canadian content and digital-first creators. That impact will happen after Bill C-11 is passed, so we are being told, “Just trust us.”

I have a very simple question to ease the minds of many opposition MPs: Would the government be willing to table the policy directive to the CRTC prior to the passage of Bill C-11?

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, the member will know two things. One is that the CRTC will only impose regulations that will make material impact in achieving the goal of the bill, which is specifically to level the playing field for platforms showcasing Canadian content.

We have a circumstance today where broadcasters in more traditional lines of media have an obligation to contribute back to Canadian culture and Canadian content, and it is only reasonable in the digital space that the same expectation be held. If Netflix and Disney are profiting from the Canadian market, the expectation that they are going to contribute back to the cultural fabric of that market is absolutely essential. That is not just something we ran on as a party, but many of the parties in this House ran on it.

I heard all over Canada that we have an essential obligation to support Canadian content and Canadian culture. This means that we have world-class talent that not only enriches our lives and helps tell the Canadian story, but, frankly, enriches the planet. Our obligation to say to those Internet giants that they have to contribute to the place they draw their profits from is something that is pre-eminently reasonable and levels the playing field with more traditional media forums.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois does not support closure motions. We believe that democracy must take precedence over all else.

However, we must deplore the fact that the official opposition does not recognize that the current Bill C-11 is much better crafted than the former Bill C-10 and that it could continue to be improved in committee.

Quebec and Canadian artists have been waiting for decades for something to change. The Internet has changed everything. It seems to me that the time has come to pass this bill.

Does the hon. member not deplore the use of closure? It seems to us that the legislative agenda from now until the end of June is not that heavy and that we would have time to continue the debate.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely right. A lot of changes have been made to the new Bill C-11, which is before us today. That is important because, during the last election campaign, we heard a lot of opinions on this issue and on the need to support the cultural sector.

I have to thank the Bloc Québécois, whose members were behind many of the ideas for increasing support for the cultural sector and improving the bill in general.

I reiterate that members are going to have many opportunities to talk about the bill, improve it and amend it in upcoming stages, first at committee and then when it comes back here to the House. There will be plenty of time. This debate is just to move the bill forward to the next stage.

[English]

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Madam Speaker, there is some confusion here in the House.

One thing that is really fascinating from the opposite side is that the Liberals are trying to create legislation for what they are listening to on their Walkmans or Discmans. These are things that people do not use anymore, and the Liberals are trying to create this legislation for things that people do not do anymore. They are using an archaic method, the CRTC, which is nonsensical, in the opinion of many Canadians. When we look at it, there is a new way. It is called “the Internet”. This is how people are now getting their information. They are watching movies on it. No doubt, they are listening to music on it. To think that we need to adopt this “Liberal government knows best” style of government to continue to indoctrinate people in Canada is really beyond what anyone could possibly imagine.

I think the other part, when we begin to think about time allocation on this, is that approximately one-third of Canadians are under the age of 24, so they would probably be the highest users of this information. From this side of the House, we think it is exceedingly important that we give those approximately 10 million to 15 million people their due diligence and understanding of what the government is attempting to make them do.

Government Orders

• (1645)

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, of course, the last time this legislation was updated, the technology the member is referencing was the technology that was prevalent, and the reality for how the technology is utilized now is very different. People are consuming media that is coming from online streaming sites and online streaming services that are not subject to the same rules that traditional media have been subject to.

I know the Conservatives traditionally have not supported Canadian artists and the idea that broadcasters have a responsibility to use some of their profits to support Canadian artists and to promote Canadian artists in what they put on, whether it is on the radio or on television. I suppose they are continuing their battle to block—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I would really appreciate it if the House leader would stick to the facts and not spread misinformation. If he actually has proof that the Conservatives—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is debate.

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's anxiousness to participate in the debate, but I will say very clearly that the Conservatives talk about defunding the CBC and about not supporting Canadian content, including in this specific case. Does the member across, who is arguing against support for this bill, not believe that Disney or Netflix, which profit here, should be promoting Canadian content? Does he not believe they should be giving dollars back to Canadian producers of culture and content? It is a battle they fought for a long time—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have a lot of individuals wanting to ask questions.

The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, maybe my colleague, the government House leader, could speak about the sense of urgency. Cultural workers and artists suffered the most under the pandemic. Many of them could not operate at all for two years, and many of them could not even access the programs that were offered to them. When people have zero revenue coming in, the wage subsidy does not help them, nor the rent assistance program. The sense of urgency is real.

In the meantime, the big web giants had record profits. They took all the gas out. There was a massive economic leakage happening in our country. Maybe the House leader could talk about how critical it is that we plug the economic leakage to the big web giants and that we get to this work rapidly and quickly and get this to committee.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, the reality is that, as we have seen a shift in the way we consume entertainment and media, there has not been a similar shift to apply the same rules that apply to traditional media to new media.

The member is absolutely right. We saw during the pandemic that the artists who perform in local venues and enrich our local

communities got hit incredibly hard; they were not able to participate during the pandemic. At the same time, the streaming giants enjoyed record profits and record participation.

This bill would continue a long tradition in Canada of saying that if people profit from the entertainment industry in this country and profit from the cultural sector, they have an obligation to pay back into it and help build it up. As I look at cities and communities across the country, and I look at the quality and depth of the culture that is there, I would say it is there, in no small part, because of that rule, because of the obligation we put that if people profit from that sector, they have to invest back in it. I would say that it is not only our local communities and artists that have benefited from it, but I think the world has valued the Canadian voice in culture and heritage.

• (1650)

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, what we continue to hear again and again from across the aisle is that there is an agenda that needs to be followed, and therefore there needs to be this push for Bill C-11 to be brought through the House of Commons without proper debate.

That is wrong. That is absolutely anti-democratic. There are 338 elected individuals who were sent to this place to rigorously debate issues. That is our responsibility, and that responsibility is being taken from us right now. That is not just shameful for those who are in this House; it is actually shameful because of what it does to Canadians.

I represent 125,000 people from the riding of Lethbridge. You just squashed their voices.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind members not to address questions and comments directly to the Chair.

I will allow the hon. House leader to answer.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I want to make two points. The first is on this bill, which is that there is absolutely an agenda. The agenda is to say that those who make money from the cultural sector in this country have an obligation to invest back into it. That has been the tradition in this country. It just has not been updated to reflect the new media so that our content creators and the community that suffered during the pandemic can be supported and Canadian art and culture can be expanded.

With respect to democracy, let us be very clear. I was there in opposition when the Conservatives created a 200-page handbook on how to control, like puppeteers, committees, how to shut them down and how to run them through their parliamentary secretaries. I was here in this House day in, day out as we saw incredible command and control of everything that happened in this place.

It is rich beyond measure to compare that to this. There is more than enough opportunity to go from here, to have further debate at committee and for it to return to the House.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Speaker, here is one last little plea on my part. I am always appalled to see how the government ignores the reality of our artists, artisans, content creators and those who revitalize culture in our world, our beautiful world.

Today, we are spending more time debating whether we should take even more time to debate something that already existed and is now back on the table.

In the previous Parliament, we had Bill C-10. Now it is back on the table as Bill C-11. It has been reworked and improved. The Bloc Québécois put a lot of effort into that, and the sector is happy, but here we still are, talking about the time allocated for debate.

I am rather appalled. I would like the House leader to comment on the urgent need to take action on behalf of these people who are losing money—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. There is very little time left and I have to give the government House leader the opportunity to respond.

The government House leader.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, time is of the essence for our artistic creators and our cultural community.

The pandemic has been really hard on the cultural sector. People in our communities could no longer attend events in person. The major broadcasters and online streamers pulled in huge profits, but it was just the opposite for our cultural community.

That is why it is essential that we act swiftly and move this bill on to the next stage, namely study in committee. The debate will not just be happening here today. We will continue to debate this bill.

It is odd that the Conservative Party is upset that the process is moving on to the next stage. The reason the Conservative Party is so angry is that it is generally against supporting the cultural sector.

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 Dufferin—Caledon, Climate Change; the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton, Taxation; the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands, Health.

• (1655)

It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith the question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

[English]

The question is on the motion.

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

The hon. member for Perth—Wellington.

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, we request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

• (1735)

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

*(Division No. 86)***YEAS****Members**

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Aldag | Alghabra |
| Ali | Anand |
| Anandasangaree | Angus |
| Arseneault | Arya |
| Ashton | Bachrach |
| Badawey | Bains |
| Baker | Barron |
| Battiste | Beech |
| Bendayan | Bennett |
| Bibeau | Bittle |
| Blaikie | Blair |
| Blaney | Blois |
| Boissonnault | Boulerice |
| Bradford | Brière |
| Cannings | Carr |
| Casey | Chagger |
| Chahal | Chatel |
| Chen | Chiang |
| Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek) | Collins (Victoria) |
| Cormier | Coteau |
| Dabrusin | Damoff |
| Davies | Dhaliwal |
| Dhillon | Diab |
| Dong | Drouin |
| Dubourg | Duclos |
| Duguid | Duncan (Etobicoke North) |
| Dzerowicz | Ehsassi |
| El-Khoury | Erskine-Smith |
| Fergus | Fillmore |
| Fisher | Fonseca |
| Fortier | Fragiskatos |
| Fraser | Freeland |
| Fry | Gaheer |
| Garneau | Garrison |
| Gazan | Gerretsen |
| Gould | Green |
| Guilbeault | Hajdu |
| Hanley | Hardie |
| Hepfner | Holland |
| Housefather | Hughes |
| Hussen | Hutchings |
| Iacono | Idlout |
| Jaczek | Johns |
| Jones | Jowhari |
| Julian | Kayabaga |
| Kelloway | Khalid |
| 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 | Mathysen |
| May (Cambridge) | McDonald (Avalon) |
| McGuinty | McKay |
| McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) | McLeod |

Private Members' Business

McPherson
Mendicino
Miller
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
Petitpas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
Spengemann
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vuong
Yip
Zarrillo

Mendès
Miao
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Zahid
Zuberi — 174

Moore
Morrice
Motz
Nater
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Plamondon
Rayes
Reid
Roberts
Ruff
Schmale
Shields
Simard
Small
Steinley
Stewart
Stubbs
Therrien
Tochor
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Willemure
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer — 145

Morantz
Morrison
Muys
Normandin
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Poilievre
Redekopp
Richards
Rood
Savard-Tremblay
Seeback
Shipley
Sinclair-Desgagné
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Thomas
Tolmie
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

NAYS**Members**

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Beaulieu
Bergeron
Bérubé
Blanchet
Block
Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe
Caputo
Chabot
Champoux
Cooper
Davidson
Desbiens
Doherty
Dreeshen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Gallant
Gaudreau
Genuis
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Jeneroux
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Lake
Larouche
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Maguire
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo

Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Barsalou-Duval
Benzen
Berthold
Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas
Bragdon
Brock
Calkins
Carrie
Chambers
Chong
Dancho
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferrerri
Fortin
Garon
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Gourde
Hallan
Kelly
Kmieć
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lantsman
Lawrence
Lemire
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
MacKenzie
Martel
Mazier
McLean
Michaud

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being 5:40 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION PRICING ACT

The House resumed from March 25 consideration of the motion that Bill C-234, An Act to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in today's debate on private member's bill, Bill C-234. This is an important issue.

Agriculture plays an essential role in Canada's economy. Our farmers also help to feed the world. I am a city person, and I can tell members that city people rely on farmers across our country for the food on our tables. For that, we are deeply grateful. Perhaps now, more than ever, at this time of geopolitical uncertainty and rising costs, it will be vitally important to ensure that Canada's agricultural production continues to grow.

Private Members' Business

Our government is supporting Canada's farmers to make that happen, and we will continue to do so. The question we have to consider is how best to do so. More specifically, the question is how we deliver support for farmers that is effective in helping them ramp up production, without undermining important goals like addressing climate change, which itself poses a severe threat to agriculture production.

We know for a fact that farmers across the country are experiencing the impacts of climate change first-hand, with floods and droughts. In fact, I was looking at some reports about the recent flooding over the last year in B.C., which is an example of a weather event caused by climate change. It caused massive damage to farms in the area. In one report, one farmer was talking about having lost 600 acres of crops, which were all under water. There were stories of expensive farm technology lost in floods and cattle that died, along with other farm animals, and that is tragic for so many reasons, like for the disruption in people's lives and also in hitting their bottom line.

To their great credit, they are taking action to address it. Farmers have been leading the adoption of climate-friendly practices, like precision agriculture technology and low-till techniques, that can help reduce emissions and save them both time and money. Just recently, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change went to visit a farm to look at some of those practices.

Our government is taking action to support them. Our recent budget, for example, proposes to provide a further \$329.4 million over six years starting in 2022-23, with \$0.6 million in remaining amortization, to triple the size of the agricultural clean technology program. It also proposes to provide \$469.5 million over six years, with \$0.5 million in remaining amortization, starting in 2022-23, to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, to expand the agricultural climate solutions program's on-farm climate action fund.

The budget proposes \$150 million for a resilient agricultural landscape program to support carbon sequestration and adaptation and address other environmental co-benefits, with the details of this to be discussed with provinces and territories. It proposes to provide \$100 million over six years, starting in 2022-23, to the federal granting councils to support post-secondary research in developing technologies and crop varieties that will allow for net-zero-emissions agriculture.

The budget also proposes renewing the Canadian agricultural partnership, which delivers a range of support programs for farmers and agriculture in partnership with provincial and territorial governments. Each year, these programs provide \$600 million to support agricultural innovation, sustainability, competitiveness and market development. This includes a comprehensive suite of business risk management programs to help Canadian farmers cope with volatile markets and disaster situations, delivering approximately \$2 billion of support on average per year.

At the same time, Canada's agricultural sector already receives significant relief compared to other sectors under the federal carbon pollution pricing system. The federal fuel charge regime provides substantial upfront relief for farmers for their purchase of gasoline and diesel fuel, provided that all or substantially all of the fuel is for

use in eligible farming activities, such as the operation of farming equipment and machinery.

● (1740)

Our government has also proposed a refundable tax credit in the 2021 economic and fiscal update for farm businesses operating in backstop jurisdictions, starting in the 2021-22 fuel charge year. It is estimated that farmers will receive \$100 million in the first year, with this amount increasing as the price on carbon increases. This will help farmers transition to lower-carbon ways of farming while maintaining the price signal to reduce emissions.

These are the right ways to help farmers increase production while addressing climate change that threatens production.

My concern is that Bill C-234 could take us in a very different direction. The bill would amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, sometimes referred to as the GGPPA, to expand fuel charge relief to farmers by modifying the definition of "eligible farming machinery" to include heating and grain drying.

More specifically, it would modify the definition of "qualifying farming fuel" to include natural gas and propane. This raises a range of potential concerns that must be carefully considered. For example, as this bill stands, farmers would effectively be double-compensated.

In effect, they would benefit from the proposed tax credit while also being almost fully relieved from the fuel charge. This would come at the expense of households or other sectors in those provinces, as the federal carbon pricing system is revenue-neutral and proceeds must remain in the jurisdiction of origin.

Let me remind hon. members that Canada's carbon pollution pricing system is efficient and cost-effective precisely because it puts a price on carbon pollution and then allows businesses and households to decide for themselves how best to reduce emissions.

With the significant support for farmers already in place under Canada's pollution pricing system, the additional financial supports proposed in Bill C-234 run the risk of removing this price signal completely. This price signal is the linchpin for effectively executing Canada's climate change plan.

A price on carbon pollution provides Canadians with an incentive to make more environmentally sustainable choices and to invest in greener alternatives that create a greener, cleaner economy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Rather than telling Canadians how to reduce emissions, a price on carbon pollution allows businesses and people to make those decisions in a manner that best suits their own circumstances.

Carbon pollution pricing also delivers economic benefits, because it encourages Canadians and businesses to innovate and to invest in clean technologies and long-term growth opportunities that will position Canada for success in a cleaner and greener global economy.

That means more jobs for Canadians, benefiting their families and communities across the country. Bill C-234 may very well undermine the effectiveness and benefits of this system. These are all important considerations Canadians expect us to take into account as we assess the potential merits of Bill C-234.

As we do so, we must bear in mind that the federal carbon pollution pricing system is not about raising revenues. The government is not keeping any direct proceeds from the federal carbon pollution pricing system. That must be underlined: It is not staying with the federal government.

Our plan directs all proceeds from federal carbon pollution pricing back to the jurisdictions from which they were collected. Returning these proceeds helps Canadians make more environmentally sustainable consumption choices, but it does not change the incentive to pollute less. With this system, consumers and businesses have a financial incentive to choose greener options every time they make a purchase or investment decision.

Canada has been a leader in this regard and we should not do anything to compromise this. In the context of Bill C-234, we must be carefully considering it within the context of this pricing system.

• (1750)

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-234, an act to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act.

I listened carefully to the previous speech and I want to reassure my colleague that we fully support the pollution pricing principle. It is an important principle, because polluting has to cost something. However, this tax is supposed to be an incentive.

We do not want to tamper with the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act. That is not what we want to do. However, we think that exempting certain farm fuels from the tax is the right thing to do.

The bill before us today was already debated in the previous Parliament, as Bill C-206. Everyone remembers that. A democratic vote was held by the political parties that hold a majority in the House in the context of a minority government. It passed third reading. However, just before it was passed in the Senate, the Liberal government decided to call an election, which means that we have to start the entire process all over again. I want to take the opportu-

nity this evening to say that I think that is unacceptable. That was an undemocratic move.

If we need to start over, then let us start over. The main principle of Bill C-234 is simple enough. The carbon tax puts a price on pollution to encourage people to make the transition. However, we need alternatives if we want people to make the transition. That is the problem.

Madam Speaker, I am sorry, but I have been hearing conversations since I started my speech.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have too, and it was going on during the parliamentary secretary's speech as well.

[English]

Could I ask the hon. members to take their conversations to the lobbies, please? We would like to respect the speeches being made in the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, what I was saying is that it is an incentive. For an incentive to lead to a transition, there needs to be a possibility for change.

If I decided to buy a sports utility vehicle with a V8 engine to drive home from my work when I do not need it, it would make a lot of sense to tax the vehicle to encourage me to buy an electric vehicle or a smaller one. I would be in favour of such a measure.

However, I would not support such a measure being applied to grain producers who absolutely have to dry their grain. To begin with, we have to look at the basic context of North American agriculture. We do not have the same climate as our competitors. At harvest time, the grain often has to be dried. If the grain is wet when harvested, there is no choice but to dry it; otherwise it cannot be stored. There is no other way to dry grain that is as efficient, as fast, and less polluting as with propane. That is what this measure is all about. I hope that my clarifications at the beginning of my speech reassured people about my party's intentions. The Bloc is in favour of taxing pollution. We are in favour of transition measures. However, in this case, we must also act wisely.

If we put a tax on fuel we will see real repercussions: Either we reduce our agricultural producers' margin, which is already very small because they do not control the selling price of products sold on international markets, or we increase the sale price of the product.

This measure will not reduce pollution. We need to act where it counts. Where it counts is in oil, natural gas, deposits and new projects. Where it counts is in not approving the Bay du Nord project, for example. I want someone to promise me that the oil sands development will be scaled back because the Bay du Nord project was approved, but that is not what we are hearing. We need to act where it counts.

Private Members' Business

I spoke earlier about the bills that failed because the Prime Minister called an election. There was Bill C-206. The conversations in the House distracted me a bit, but I also wanted to mention that the bill respecting supply management was at the end of the process. We will also reintroduce that bill.

What Bill C-234 does is quite simple: It changes the definition. There are already exemptions for farming fuel because there is no alternative, and natural gas and propane are simply being added. We will not be polluting more because we are adapting this bill. We are going to ensure that we do not hike the costs of agricultural production. Agriculture is the basis for everything else. That is the big difference.

As members know, the bill does not affect Quebec directly. In Quebec we have a parallel system, the carbon exchange. In theory, farmers are exempted from the carbon exchange, but they still feel the indirect impact, because when they purchase fuel, part of the costs incurred by the major companies is passed on. There are claims for that, but that is managed by Quebec.

Nevertheless, our farmers in Quebec tell us that we need to pass Bill C-234 because it is the right thing to do. It is what our farmers need. Therefore, that is what we will do.

The principle behind our support is a fair transition. I could draw a parallel with products, for example, pesticides used in fields. My colleagues know that this is a sensitive issue, and that the Bloc Québécois was among those who reacted vigorously last July when there was a rather sneaky attempt to increase limits during the construction holiday in the hope that no one would notice. This issue is a very sensitive one for us.

However, before taking a product off the market, we need to make sure there is an alternative and look into what will happen after that. Sometimes we must act prudently, but we should still use common sense and go even further. What does going further mean? It could mean establishing the famous environmental partnership I keep talking about. What is this environmental partnership?

We are asking our farmers to make an effort to reduce their environmental footprint. That is fine. They are essential to us, and they almost always volunteer to do the right thing.

• (1755)

However, we will be asking them, for example, to stop farming a buffer strip they have been harvesting for 25, 30, 40, 50 years or more. We are asking them to give up part of their income for the common good. That is fine, since it is the right thing to do. What is not fine is imposing this burden entirely and solely on these farmers when the entire community benefits.

I think we need to provide direct support for these measures and compensate farmers fairly. This will provide a considerable incentive for our farms to improve their performance on the ground.

This is not my first time saying this in the House, but I am convinced that we need to trust our people and decentralize these funds. Some programs are well designed and make sense. Consider, for example, the on-farm climate action fund, which is a step in the right direction. However, we need to stop asking farmers to fill out

huge forms when the government decides it needs them. We must decentralize these decisions.

For example, the amounts we would pay to compensate the non-use of a buffer strip or its reforestation would be deposited in an account, a bit like the AgrilInvest program. That way, the entrepreneur, in this case the farmer, would have access to it for the next technological innovation. Two years later, the farmer could use that money to build a new stable using geothermal energy. That would be another innovation made at the right time, and we could provide compensation so he could have that money for the next innovation.

None of the farmers I have met want to pollute. They are the first victims of floods and droughts. Members will recall how bad things were in the west last summer. Farmers are aware of that and they have always been aware, long before these problems arose. They work on the land all week long. They understand the situation far better than we do. We need to trust them.

Let us make the compromise proposed in Bill C-234 and provide financial relief for our farmers for a limited time. Let us foster the transition.

• (1800)

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-234, an act to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act. This bill was introduced by the hon. member for Huron—Bruce, whom I greatly respect.

I will point out that this bill was previously introduced in the House by my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Northumberland—Peterborough South, and that it was about to be passed before the Prime Minister called a useless election.

Bill C-234 makes sense, and it will provide our farmers with substantial financial support, making it possible for them to supply the products Canadians need. Canadian farmers and livestock producers need propane or natural gas to dry grain, irrigate their lands and heat their buildings and greenhouses in order to feed Canadians and stimulate our export markets.

The Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act unfairly penalizes Canadian farmers and livestock producers by increasing the price of carbon.

This tax, in addition to the general increase in food production costs, reduces farmers' ability to invest in high capital intensive innovations and technologies that foster sustainability and productivity gains.

In my riding of Beauce, there are many different types of production. We have a high concentration of pork and poultry producers, to name only two.

I can say that the message is clear and that the farmers I have spoken to support this legislation. I would like to point out that our party also had the support of the Bloc Québécois and the NDP the last time this bill was debated in the House and put to a vote.

I just hope that with the advent of the NDP-Liberal coalition, our friends in the NDP will not turn their backs on farmers and forget what we are talking about right now.

I would also like to point out to the House that all members of the Agriculture Carbon Alliance are in favour of this bill. This group is composed of Canada's largest agri-food associations.

I think it would be extremely unwise of us to ignore the importance of this measure for our country's main food suppliers.

Canadians are being hit hard by the highest inflation rate in over 30 years, and the price of everything is skyrocketing.

The Conservative Party of Canada continues to look for ways to help Canadians get by. What better way to help Canadians than to lower the price of food in this country? That is precisely what this bill would do.

When farmers are hit with ridiculously high carbon tax bills, who will shoulder the increase in costs? The consumers, of course. They will be the ones to pay the consequences.

We must be able to find tangible ways to help reduce food prices, and this bill is one of those ways.

I am certain that my Liberal colleagues will be wondering what impact this will have on the environment. My reply is that I know what I am talking about, since I am a fourth-generation farmer on a family farm. Farmers are known as protectors of the environment and innovators. They have adopted new technologies and proven their ability to constantly decrease their environmental footprint while increasing production and maintaining productivity, without the need for a carbon tax.

● (1805)

Unfortunately, since there are no viable alternative fuel sources to heat and dry grain, the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act as it stands will not achieve the targeted emission reductions in this area.

I would like to point out that the Parliamentary Budget Officer conducted a study on the effectiveness of the carbon tax and its reimbursement system. It was a scathing report that must have been shredded in many a Liberal office. In the House, I always hear that Canadians will end up with more money in their pockets. The Parliamentary Budget Officer's study used a farm in Manitoba as an example; this farm received a mere 32% reimbursement on all of the carbon tax it would have had to pay in 2021.

Our agricultural industry in Canada wants to look to the future and find ways of being more efficient and greener, but it needs time to adapt and make the necessary changes. Placing a high carbon tax burden on our farmers will not help anyone.

The government always seems to find new ways of standing in the way of our farmers and livestock producers. I could give you a few examples. Our farmers are already facing difficult weather con-

ditions and other problems over which they have no control, such as border closures in importing countries. The government has now decided that it should increase the carbon tax starting in April. The government also intends to cap the use of fertilizer. This is not to mention its 35% tax on fertilizers, which is crushing Canadian farming families.

In closing, Canada must be considered a world leader in livestock production. There are so many things going on in the world right now, including the war in Ukraine, tensions between numerous countries, heat waves in India and Pakistan and conflicts in Afghanistan. Canada should be able to provide food assistance to these countries, but our farmers can barely stay in business because of the tariffs and taxes imposed by the government. That is ridiculous.

As I have said many times in the House, Canada must use its agricultural and agri-food sector as an economic driver to move our country forward. There is nothing in the 2022 budget for agriculture, just the same old announcements.

Can we now expect the Liberals to block this bill as well? They often show great imagination when it comes to finding ways to slow us down as a country.

I hope that my colleagues listening to me today understand the importance of this bill and the good that it can do, not only for farmers, but for young parents trying to put food on the table, seniors who have trouble making ends meet, and the many families in other countries we could surely be helping by providing food aid. Everything this bill does will have a positive impact on the people in our ridings across the country. I hope that, when the time comes to vote on this bill, all parties will come together and do what needs to be done.

● (1810)

[English]

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a privilege to rise in the chamber and speak on behalf of the residents of Chatham-Kent—Leamington and, indeed, on behalf of agriculture across Canada.

I am also pleased to speak to my colleague from Huron—Bruce's private member's bill, Bill C-234, which affects so many constituents, including our own family farm.

Private Members' Business

The bill seeks to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act by adding natural gas and propane to the list of qualifying farm fuels, and that is for the purposes of both grain drying and heating and cooling farm buildings.

I did have the opportunity to speak to this bill's predecessor, Bill C-206, in the previous Parliament where it was passed, only to die in the other place when the Prime Minister called the unnecessary election.

Our farmers are the first environmentalists and our farmers are great competitors. They can hold their own against anyone, but not with one arm tied behind their back. They cannot continue to be first-rate environmentalists when they are hamstrung by policies that their competitors do not face.

Before getting into the specifics of this bill, I wish to remark on four different framing points that will outline where I am going.

One, as I just stated, as individuals, farmers are environmentalists by nature and by necessity. The drive to leave the land in a better condition than when they found it is innate to every farmer that I know. Farmers are environmentalists by necessity. It is the condition of their land, the condition of their flocks and of their herd that supplies the farm family with a return on their labour, on their investments and on their inputs, so it is in their own self-interest to leave the vehicle of their own prosperity in better condition for the next generation.

Two, collectively, agriculture has a strong record of reducing its environmental footprint, be it through the adoption of low till or no till; be it through the refinement of working through nutrients, such as through the lens of the 4Rs, putting the right nutrient at the right place at the right time with the right amount; be it through more intensive use of cover cropping or rotational grazing. Farmers have largely done all of this without regulation and without additional taxation or without an additional government-imposed price signal. I will come back to that point in a moment.

Three, agriculture has a strong record of innovation, of adopting new technologies, such as the use of GPS technology on the farm, the use of variable rate technology in seeding and in crop protection products, robotics in our dairy sector, and climate controls and automation in our greenhouse sector. Believe me, as soon as a viable commercial alternative to fossil fuels is available in rural Canada, farmers will adopt it and quickly, without the stick or a price signal embedded in a tax. That leads me to my final framing point.

Four, by and large, farmers are price takers. They cannot effectively pass along cost-input increases to their buyers.

Let these four points set the stage for my remarks on Bill C-234. When we initially debated its predecessor, Bill C-206, the harvest from hell in 2019 had just occurred in western Canada. That really demonstrated the need for this carbon tax exemption. It was a particularly wet fall where, with frost and rainfall, et cetera, interrupting the harvest, the use of natural gas and propane was required to put the grain into a storable condition.

Farming in Ontario and in eastern Canada requires the use of grain dryers each and every year, particularly for grain corn, but also for soybeans, wheat, canola, oats, et cetera.

When we studied Bill C-206 in the previous Parliament at committee, we did look at alternatives to fossil fuels. In many parts of our economy, electrification is a potential alternative, but given the obvious nature of agriculture being situated in rural Canada and the lack of our grid capacity, this is simply a non-starter.

We also looked at a second option, and that was the use of crop residues as a fuel source. That means gathering them after harvest and then burning them in heaters. While there are some prototypes being trialed, they are simply not available at scale.

Even more problematic with this approach, crop residues are incorporated into the soil or are left on the surface, and they become organic matter for our soils. They sequester carbon and they increase soil organic matter levels, which help both with crop production and our climate goals.

The voluntary adoption of reduced or eliminated tillage provided improvements in soil moisture retention, a reduction of soil erosion and, of course, an increase in carbon sequestration, all without the imposition of a tax. This is something that was not acknowledged in the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act.

• (1815)

It does not make sense to apply a tax to reverse the environmental improvements that the farmers put in place voluntarily. However, the question remains, does it make any sense at all to apply such a tax on fossil fuels to increase the agricultural community's focus on reducing the use of fossil fuels? The answer to that is no, for several reasons.

There simply are not commercially viable, scalable alternatives to using natural gas and propane available today, but because there are not viable alternatives, the demand for fuel tends to remain unaffected by price. That makes these additional fuel charges simply an additional tax and an inefficient policy to lower carbon emissions. This very fact was confirmed by the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

The recent budget, which has been alluded to in other speeches here this evening, did put some more funds into the agricultural clean technology fund to upgrade present drying systems to a higher efficiency, but these funds only have the potential to update 500 of the 50,000 grain dryers across Canada. That is 1% of them.

Also, as opposed to granting an exemption from paying the carbon tax, they have proposed in Bill C-8 a rebate program to maintain, in their words, a “price signal” to the farm community to change their ways even though there are no viable alternatives.

I explored with several of my constituents the impact of these two approaches. My riding is a large rectangle and in the northeastern corner, Ron and Francine Verhelle farm with their family. This past year, they needed 89,670 litres of propane to dry their almost 7,000 tonnes of corn. They paid over \$5,550 in carbon tax. If the 2022 conditions on their farm are the same, they are anticipating that cost to go up to almost \$7,000 this year. Under the Liberal plan, the eligible farm costs on their farm would have to be over \$3.2 million using the planned \$1.73 per thousand in eligible farm expenses in order for that rebate to recoup their carbon tax cost. Farm input costs are definitely skyrocketing, but fortunately they will not be that high or no farmer will be in business this coming year.

Paul Tiessen and his family farm just down the road from my home farm. They are a third-generation grain farm and their total natural gas bill for 2021 to dry 107,000 bushels, or just over 2,900 tonnes, of corn this past year was \$10,010, of which almost \$2,500 was a carbon tax. Under the Liberal proposal that would have been in place for 2021 rebating back \$1.47 per thousand in expenses, they would only get a fraction of their carbon tax cost returns from this past crop.

My final point is simply to call for basic fairness in the marketplace. Our Canadian grain competes directly with American grain. It is priced off of the Chicago Board of Trade. No customer of grain will pay more for Canadian grain because it incurs a carbon tax, not if they can source it from the Americans.

The Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act did exempt gasoline and diesel fuel on the farm for this very reason and Bill C-234 is looking to correct the oversight regarding natural gas and propane for grain drying and barn heating and cooling.

Surely if the government cannot control its spending ways, it does not have to use farmers' bank accounts as a cashflow mechanism to finance its own spending. Making farmers pay this carbon tax in the fall and then having them file their taxes the following spring to apply for a rebate, all that does is return a portion of their costs plus now incurring all the administrative costs on the farm and the administrative burden on government to manage this program.

In fact, this past budget estimated that cost for the government alone to be \$30 million. What does that do? All that does is serve to increase the size of government and not add any additional value to our climate goals.

In conclusion, I would again urge all members of the House to support passing a bill that removes the potential of being at cross purposes for lower greenhouse gas emissions. Please support the removal of a tax where the users have absolutely no viable options and please support basic inherent market fairness.

• (1820)

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank all the speakers who have presented this

Private Members' Business

evening. I would especially like to thank my colleagues from Chatham-Kent—Leamington and Beauce. They are both farmers and are very familiar with the costs of operating a farm and making a living at it.

The member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington highlighted pretty much everything I wanted to talk about, but the key point I would like to highlight, in addition to that, is that we still have an outstanding issue with the fertilizer tariff in this country. That is going to add another \$100 per acre to the corn crop and other crops, in addition to all the other issues we have. In addition to the carbon tax that farmers are paying to dry their grains and heat their barns, this is another tariff that has not been dealt with by the government. It is our belief that on March 2 there should be tariff relief for farmers on that. It is millions of dollars and they need the help now.

The member made another good point when he talked about how the fall economic update from the Liberal Party highlights the carbon tax rebate. It is \$1.47 per \$1,000, and as I said in my first speech, I thought it was \$1.47 per \$100. If we calculate it at \$1.47 per \$1,000 and \$1.73 per \$1,000 of eligible farm expenses, it is a slap in the face to farmers.

I welcome the Liberal member who spoke earlier today to come to my riding, the ridings of the members of Chatham-Kent—Leamington and Beauce or any rural riding. She should talk to some farmers, get in the cab of a tractor or combine, stand around while the grain is being dried in the fall and see what it is like. She would have a whole new appreciation for the programs she is trying to create.

Farmers get no credit for the carbon they sequester on farms through their crops, the fall crops they plant for cover crops, the grasslands, the hay and the hay lands. They also do not get any carbon credit for the sequestration that takes place on their ethically managed woodlots. There are thousands of acres in my riding and hundreds of thousands of acres of ethically managed woodlots across the province of Ontario and beyond. They get no credit for that.

The idea is that a farmer is somehow a huge emitter, contributor or whatever, but we should be embracing these individuals. We should be looking to them to learn some of the best practices that have been in place in this country for over 100 years. That is where we need to begin the discussion. We need to cut this unnecessary tax on farmers' natural gas and propane to dry their grains and heat their livestock barns.

Government Orders

We do not want farmers to walk away from their livestock barns because they can no longer afford to heat them. We want them to be able to keep those barns warm to keep the chicks warm when they are first moved into the barn, or keep the hog barns warm when the weaners are at a very young age and very small. That is what we want to do, so I would ask all members of Parliament, particularly the Liberals, to reconsider this and take a long look at what we are talking about. They can maybe replay the tapes and see.

I would like to thank all the farmers across this country for what they do day in and day out. Right now, they are in the cabs of their tractors in my area planting corn, thinking about soybeans and trying to get things right, but they are facing huge costs for fuel and fertilizer. What is it for? It is to feed the country and the rest of the world. That is what we have to keep in the backs of our minds when we are looking at all this stuff.

I would like to thank farm groups, farm families and the complete supply chain that works 24 hours a day this time of year to keep crops growing. Let us look at agriculture, the environmental good it does and the economic good it does. It is the number one economic driver in the province of Ontario, so let us support it. Farmers are a line of credit, as the member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington said, for our GST and HST rebates. They are the government's line of credit in AgriStability, and now with this new program, they will once again be the government's line of credit.

I humbly ask for support. Let us get the bill to committee. Let us have some farm groups come. Let us have some farmers come and explain the pain they are feeling right now and the relief Parliament can provide them.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The question is on the motion.

• (1825)

[Translation]

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

The hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

[English]

Mr. Dave Epp: Madam Speaker, I respectfully ask for a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 18, 2022, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6:30 p.m. so that we can continue with the business of the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

ONLINE STREAMING ACT

The House resumed from May 5 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, and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I remember the discussions we had about Bill C-10 during the previous Parliament, especially with respect to potential breaches of freedom of expression and concerns about social media users being taxed. These same concerns are being raised again, even though the summary, clause 2 and clause 4.1 clearly state that users will not be taxed and even though there are no clauses that restrict freedom of expression.

I now want to talk about access to culture.

It is not right that it is easier for francophones to access Korean content than it is to access media in their first language on some sites. Out of curiosity, I watched a few of the Korean offerings suggested to me and I enjoyed the production, set design and costume quality.

Bill C-11 will ensure that francophones have access to content that is just as good a quality in their language and will ensure that non-francophones can do what I did and watch content that is made in Quebec and in Canada. Curiosity is something to be developed.

If we want to encourage curiosity and interest, we need to make it easier to access good-quality content, and that is what Bill C-11 will do. Some members will tell me that people who want access to francophone culture just need to seek it out like I did, but that is a troubling thought.

Why should I have to go looking for expressions of my culture when others never have to look at all to have access to expressions of their own culture?

Are those who might say such a thing really telling me that the only good culture is culture that is readily accessible, or in other words, American culture?

Could it be that they have no problem with the fact that they have no access to content about their own culture, Canadian content? Could it be that they think Canadian culture and American culture are similar?

I can almost hear those same individuals telling me that those two cultures are not one and the same. In that case, why would they not want more people to have easier access to Canadian culture? Why would they not want francophones and francophiles from Quebec, Canada and elsewhere in the world to have access to Quebec and francophone content just as easily as they do to American or anglophone cultural content?

Bill C-11 will allow online streamers to broadcast culture and improve access to the cultures present in Canada.

To sum up, for anyone who cares about their own culture, Bill C-11 is a good bill that deserves to move through the legislative process in good faith on all sides. It deserves it because we should never have to let our culture be managed by a foreign culture.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I studied economics at university. When classes started, we were given a model of a very competitive market where power was shared equally. However, we quickly learned that whoever controls the distribution network can successfully distribute their products. In my opinion, this bill is designed to influence the distribution network, so that everyone can distribute their products.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

• (1830)

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, often, the way it works is that, in order to get access to cultural programs or what have you, users have to ask for it. However, on the Internet, users are highly influenced by what the algorithms decide to show them, and that can be a bit more problematic. If broadcasters are encouraged to present more Canadian content, this will pique consumers' curiosity and interest in the excellent content that is available in Quebec and Canada.

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a great deal of concern about the fact that time allocation was moved on this bill. I also have serious hesitation about being able to trust the government members, who are saying to simply take them at their word that it is not impacting the ability of Canadians to have free expression on the Internet, especially after some of the outrageous things that the previous minister of heritage said. He said that he was not censoring the whole Internet; he was simply censoring some of the Internet.

My question, though, is very simple. Does the member support our very simple request that the government provide the terms of reference that it will be providing to the CRTC prior to the bill being passed so that members in this place can understand exactly what is being asked of the CRTC when it comes to the impacts that this bill would have on Canadian content?

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, that is an excellent question.

Since I do not have in front of me the proposal my colleague's party wants to make to the government on the CRTC, I will not give a direct answer. However, that being said, it is important that things be done right. For that to happen, we need to move the bill forward through the legislative process and examine it in committee.

I encourage all my colleagues to read Bill C-11. I know that this bill is thick, but we need to take the time to read it clause by clause, to understand what it means in lay terms, and to look at every side of the issue, so that we can thoroughly examine it in committee and then make proposals that make sense.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, we know that every artist and the entire arts and culture sector in Que-

Government Orders

bec support the bill. There must be something in it that helps protect francophone culture.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, this bill will not only give funding to artists, but that funding will also give those same artists the opportunity to showcase our culture, particularly francophone culture, which is extraordinary. Francophone culture is unique in the Americas, and even though some of us may have a funny accent, that is part of our charm.

This bill will also help us to shine.

[English]

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is kind of a pleasure to speak to Bill C-11. I will offer a few things based on a career, at least my first career, of dealing with the CRTC as a broadcaster, as a person who was on the radio and occasionally on television, and especially as a manager of stations that were required to follow the CRTC regulations.

The concerns that have been expressed about Bill C-11 need to be paid attention to. We should not just dust them off and say there is no problem here. The questions are legitimate, but we also need to drill into the details and see exactly what the implications are. When we do that, we are going to end up feeling a lot more secure and confident that Bill C-11 is going to add significant value to Canada.

First of all, this is the Broadcasting Act that we are talking about. The Broadcasting Act relates to broadcasters. I want to quote a couple of things that kind of settle what we are talking about. The first is:

undertakings for the transmission or retransmission of programs over the Internet as a distinct class of broadcasting undertakings...

In other words, basically we are saying that the web platforms that distribute and carry programming to Canadians will be classed as broadcasters. The legislation also says:

the [Broadcasting] Act does not apply in respect of programs uploaded to an online undertaking that provides a social media service by a user of the service

In other words, cat videos, homegrown YouTube and even the productions that someone may have spent some money to develop will not be covered. They will not be influenced by this.

Further, there is one exception that we need to note in the legislation. It says:

A person who uses a social media service to upload programs for transmission over the Internet and reception by other users of the service—and who is not the provider of the service or the provider's affiliate...does not, by the fact of that use, carry on a broadcasting undertaking...

Government Orders

I want to go back to my radio days. It was 15 years of misspent youth, but an amazing education in a lot of ways. I got into the radio business just after the initial Canadian content regulations came to radio, and here is how that worked. The original rules said that 30% of the music that we played from 6 a.m. until midnight had to be Canadian content. I will describe what that is in a second. Later, the CRTC and the governments of the day came forward with a formula in which the radio stations had to contribute to a fund. Initially, it was called the Canadian talent development fund. There have been other names and other versions of it.

The two things were that, first of all, we had to profile Canadian content, and then later we had to contribute financially to the creation of Canadian content. What we are doing here now is no different from what was done 50 years ago.

How did we know what Canadian content was? In the radio business, every record had what was called the MAPL logo. It was a system that identified music, artist, production and lyrics of the piece. The rule was that anything produced after 1971 or 1972 had to have two of those categories covered as being Canadian to be classified as a piece of Canadian content. It was tough in the beginning, I have to say. I had grown up listening to radio that was free to play anything it wanted at any time, within reason. I will get to that, but the fact is that all of a sudden we had to play Canadian content. In those days it was scarce; at least, the kind of music we wanted to program on our station was scarce. I still today cannot listen to *Snowbird* by Anne Murray because we played it to death. It was what we had at the time. That no longer exists, and it is because the Canadian content rules led to the development of a Canadian music industry that punches way above its weight around the world.

• (1835)

There was a unique proposition to those early CanCon days that is totally different from what we face today. Radio, by its nature, is very linear. The listeners listened to the piece of music I had on the air, and got it in the order that I gave it to them. If they were going to listen to our station, they would get that 30% of Canadian content, period.

It is different in this case. We are asking online broadcasters to simply make Canadian content available. The people who use Netflix go in and there are little tiles that show them all of the movies available. What this rule would do is tell Netflix that it has to make sure that Canadian content is represented in those tiles. People do not have to choose it, but they have to know that it is there. That way, we are going to at least give Canadian creators access to audiences who can choose to view or listen to their material, or not.

The actions of the regulator have certainly changed throughout my lifetime. Sometimes, when I talk to kids in schools, they ask me what it was like in the old days when I was a kid: when we would ride our dinosaurs to school and all that good stuff. When I was a kid, Canadian radio stations were not allowed to play commercials on Sundays. If they played a recording, they had to announce that it was a transcription so that people would not think that the performance was live. That was then.

Over the years, the broadcast regulator updated, streamlined and allowed things that were not allowed previously. I remember only

two times, or maybe three, when the Canadian regulator stepped in and got in the way of a licensed broadcast undertaking.

One was at one of the first stations I ended up working for: CJOR in Vancouver. The family who put the station on the air was forced to sell it because it lost control of the programming. The programming in the mid-1960s was pretty rough, when we look at the community standards of the day.

Another refers to a general category of radio called *radio poubelle*: garbage radio or trash radio, which has been a unique property, particularly in the Quebec City area. Station CHOI was forced to be sold, again because it could not control some of its announcers who were doing some hideous things on the air. I could quote them, but will not because members really do not need to hear the sorts of things that were going on there. The CRTC had been more than patient, but it was far beyond what anybody could ever accept.

With respect to the obligations of the broadcaster, there was an article co-written by former Supreme Court Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin entitled, “Regulate the System, Not the Speech”. When we look at Bill C-11, what it is really going to do is regulate the broadcaster so that it is responsible for the material that is played by it. I could play any record I wanted, but if I did not follow Canadian content rules the broadcaster, i.e. the station I worked for, would get into trouble, but nobody was standing over my shoulder saying that I had to play this song next or that I could not play a record, except if it did not match the format. It is not the content producers, but the platform that provides the content to the public, that the bill will regulate.

By making Canadian content more available to Canadians, we will do something about that cultural, and I use this word advisedly, juggernaut to the south of us, particularly when it comes to French production. One of the most delightful things in my time as a member of Parliament has been that I have a home in Quebec. I love it here. Quebec is such a wonderful, unique thing and we must do everything we can to protect this unique culture in a unique country such as ours.

I will end it there to let us go to questions, but I have to say that although some of the fears may be quite legitimate, they actually do not get borne out when we look at the details behind Bill C-11.

• (1840)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate a fellow British Columbian speaking here tonight.

The gentleman has described his experience in radio with the CRTC, but the Internet operates on much different principles. I speak to younger constituents who specifically cite the concerns around net neutrality. Net neutrality is literally a commitment by governments to not hold back data unless it is illegal content, but now the government, through the CRTC and some unknown policy directive, will throttle back and block certain content from being seen by consumers when they want to see it, which violates the very principle of net neutrality.

The member might say this is about the platform and the consumers and making sure they can see it. Does he not see that the Internet functions much differently, and that this would violate net neutrality?

• (1845)

Mr. Ken Hardie: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member misunderstands what net neutrality is.

The notion came up that the network providers, basically the people who allow the streaming, would constrain access to bandwidth unless more money was paid to get more bandwidth. This would certainly choke off the ability of content providers to stream, let us say, movies, etc., unless they ponied up the money to get the bandwidth to do it.

That is what was meant by net neutrality. The government has been firmly onside that everybody deserves the same treatment by those platforms, so that any content put into the platform would be treated equitably and equally across all potential users.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to note that I really appreciate my hon. colleague's wonderful radio voice.

I have to pick up on the comment by the previous speaker, my hon. colleague from the Conservative Party. I appreciate much of what was said, but I think the analogy between a radio station in the 1980s is not a completely apt metaphor for the Internet today. The average radio station listener could not add to the content or participate in generating content on the radio station. It was a one-way platform, whereas the Internet is something the public meaningfully participates in.

I am interested in my hon. colleague's comments on that. More particularly, I have constituents who are concerned that there would be an attempt by the government to regulate and cause broadcasters, in this case online providers, to remove content that is deemed hateful: in other words, that requires a subjective determination. They are worried that this may lead to censorship of the Internet. I am curious about my hon. colleague's thoughts on that. Is he concerned that Bill C-11 may lead to that consequence?

Mr. Ken Hardie: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's question, and I also appreciated his comments on my output here.

I think we have to be concerned about that, absolutely. That said, I think we have seen very clear examples of Twitter, particularly, banning people for some of the things they have put on it. Facebook will send people to "jail" if they put things on there that they believe offend community standards, and of course the CRTC has done that sort of thing at the two stations I mentioned.

Government Orders

That kind of regime has always been in place, but community standards tend to rule. We can get away with things now on conventional radio that we could not dream of doing when I was still on the air, and certainly not when I was a kid. Things change. Community standards change. Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin, in her article, said that we should regulate the platform but let the platform deal with the content. That is probably the best way to go forward.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, does the member really think that the CRTC is the right entity to regulate the Internet?

The CRTC has spent more than 14 months trying to renew the CBC licence. It spent over a year trying to implement a three-digit suicide prevention hotline. It has a chair who has private meetings, and goes out for beers, with one of the largest businesses that it regulates: Bell Canada. The government wants the CRTC with some unknown policy drive to do this. Does this member really think the CRTC is going to be able to regulate the Internet?

Mr. Ken Hardie: Madam Speaker, yes, I do. I think the CRTC has demonstrated over time that it keeps in touch and stays in sync with community standards. It uses a very light touch, if we really look at some of its pronouncements over time. In fact, if—

• (1850)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to resume debate.

The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Internet is an incredible invention. We have all the information in the world in the palm of our hands. Just as the creation of the printing press in the 1400s changed the course of history forever by allowing information to be disseminated to the masses, rather than just to the elites of society, bringing literacy to millions of people, so too has the Internet revolutionized how we exchange ideas and amplify our voices. It has brought freedom of knowledge and expression to billions of people.

Before the printing press, censorship of dangerous ideas by the elites was easy. All one had to do was round up the heretics who held fringe or unacceptable views, hang them high in town square and burn their handwritten notebooks. With the use of the printing press, dangerous ideas could be shared far and wide, leading to the Protestant Reformation, the scientific revolution, the French Revolution and the age of enlightenment, just to name a few.

Likewise, the Internet and social media have helped spark political revolutions and political movements. They have empowered brave resistance to foreign dictators, like our Ukrainian friends against Vladimir Putin and their courageous fight. Social media has helped empower that and allows for the exchange information at a rapid pace.

Government Orders

We really do live in extraordinary times. This is especially true for our online Canadian content creators. “Influencer” is now a career choice, and Canadian musicians, painters, bakers, commentators and do-it-yourselfers can access billions of people to share their ideas and creations with the click of a button. All one needs is an Internet connection and a smart phone.

Actually, one needs one more thing. They need a government that believes in their freedom to do so. Unfortunately, Canadians are experiencing a government that is trying desperately to control the Internet.

From the very wild and extreme online harms bill, to Bill C-18, the online news act, and now Bill C-11, the online streaming act, which we are debating today, Canada's Liberal government is really butting into every aspect of our online world. It is proclaiming it is here to help and that it will show those big, scary boss streaming services, such as Netflix and Spotify, who the boss is and save us all from the scary, dangerous ideas on the Internet.

In reality, these three Internet bills all have the same aim, which is to regulate what we see when we open our cellphone apps. Canadians may remember how Bill C-10 exploded in controversy last year, but it died on the Order Paper. It is back now in Bill C-11, and while the Liberals claim they have fixed the concerns we had with Bill C-10, Bill C-11 is really just a wolf in sheep's clothing.

The issue with Bill C-10 was its control of user-generated content, the posts and videos that we share and upload on social media. The Liberals say that issue was removed in Bill C-11, but experts do not agree. Notable communications law professor Michael Geist has pointed out that the CRTC has the power, with Bill C-11, to subject user-generated content to regulation, should it so choose.

If folks at home are asking what the CRTC is, it is the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, which has heavily controlled what we have seen on TV and heard on the radio over the past 50 years. Bill C-11 essentially expands the CRTC's powers not only to streaming giants such as Netflix and Spotify, but also to the podcasts, audiobooks and news channels we consume online. It will not just control Canadian-produced versions of those things, but anything coming from anywhere in the world that Canadians want to consume online in Canada.

More than that, Bill C-11, in fact, provides the Liberal cabinet the power to tell the CRTC how to regulate streaming platforms, how to define what Canadian content is and the general policy direction of these Internet controls. It is important to note that cabinet does not have this power currently over TV and radio. This will be a new power. Under the existing law, the CRTC is not directed by cabinet. It is independent, so it can be free from political interference, which is very important. However, this will no longer be the case under Bill C-11. Cabinet will have power over what we see on Internet, which represents an unprecedented expansion of government power.

The bottom line is that Canadian creators have more freedom now, before this bill comes in, than they ever did before with TV and radio. One can become a YouTube star. It is far more accessible than trying to break into network television. Why would the Liberals want to impose the same CRTC regulations they have on TV

and radio onto our online platforms? It really does not make sense if we are talking about boosting our Canadian content creators. We know that over 90% of those who are watching our Canadian content are from outside of Canada.

• (1855)

The number of influencers online in Canada earning \$100,000 a year or more is rapidly increasing every single year. I really do believe the last thing our online content creators need is the Liberal government sticking its fingers into the regulation controls and messing around with the algorithms that have facilitated the ability of our homegrown creators to share their content with the world.

YouTube, in fact, has alerted the online community and has issued strong warnings to the Liberal government about the negative impacts of Bill C-11, warning that it risks downgrading Canadian content in other countries. If we artificially bump up Canadian content here, and if for whatever reason that Canadian content is not catching the interest of Canadians, the algorithm will actually downgrade that content abroad in competing markets, such as the United States, for example, which a lot of influencers in Canada depend upon.

I do feel that Bill C-11 is not the only thing we need to be worried about. It is worrisome, but there are two other bills as well. There is Bill C-18, which is the online news act, and it has some issues. It has been criticized as interfering in the independence of our news media because it controls how we share news articles on platforms such as Facebook by forcing these platforms to pay news agencies every time we share a news article. Lots of people share news on their Facebook platforms. It is odd this bill would be needed, because this practice is great for news agencies. When one shares their content, it takes us right to their website. It is free advertising.

Australia tried to do the same thing as what is proposed in Bill C-18. Facebook played hardball and banned all sharing of news articles on Facebook until it was able to negotiate something with the Australian government. There are serious issues here. Facebook raised in committee that it is not opposed to doing the same thing in Canada.

Bill C-18 is really just more control from government, but it is not even half as bad as the online harms bill. This is a very scary Internet control bill. In the last Parliament it was known as Bill C-36, and it died on the Order Paper when that unnecessary \$600-million election was called, but the Liberals are trying to bring it back again.

It is important to say I welcome a conversation on how we can better fight terrorism organizing online and better enforce existing laws concerning things that are considered fraud, libel, inciting violence, and in particular, child pornography or the sharing of intimate images online without consent. Those are all very important conversations and legitimate issues that need to be addressed.

However, the online harms bill would create a government regulator of speech on the Internet that would decide what is harmful and must be removed. It would be very subjective, depending really on who is behind the curtain dictating what is harmful. Andrew Coyne, in the *Globe and Mail*, said the bill is “direct state regulation of [online] content”. This is pretty significant.

Twitter said this, which is really concerning:

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 (China, North Korea, and Iran for example) under the false guise of ‘online safety,’ impeding peoples’ rights to access information online.

Twitter is literally comparing this online harms bill to China, North Korea and Iran. It is pretty shocking.

The Liberals are throwing around terms like “misinformation” and “disinformation” whenever they do not like something we say, and we know free speech is constantly under attack. Anything one says these days can offend someone. I am concerned about what bills like Bill C-11 and the online harms bill would do to our freedom of expression online.

Although society has evolved, before the creation of the printing press, the establishment would essentially murder heretics with unacceptable views and burn the books later on. We are not immune to authoritarian control of our freedom of expression.

We would also do well to remember rights and freedoms are not always eliminated in one fell swoop. Often governing authorities will just pick at them bit by bit under the guise of it being for our own good, telling us that they know better than us and they will keep us safe. We have seen this happen in China and it is happening in Hong Kong.

Considering that when he was asked which country in the entire world he most admires, our Liberal Prime Minister said China's basic dictatorship because of its ability to get things done, we should listen when the Prime Minister tells us who he really is. With these three Internet control and censorship bills, I do believe he has made his intentions quite clear. We should all be very, very concerned.

● (1900)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, according to Freedom House, an organization that has been around since before the Second World War, Canada is the fifth freest country in the world, but I am sure that the Conservatives know better than that organization does.

It is interesting. This member brought up the issue about dictatorships. I heard her talk about what Twitter was saying, but I did not hear her give her—

An hon member: I just said “authoritarian regimes”.

Government Orders

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the hon. member will be able to respond. I am asking her a question.

The member told us what Twitter is saying, but she did not tell us if she agrees with what Twitter is saying. I will go back to a comment from the member for Thornhill. She said, “Canada will also become the first country to regulate online content created by people living in Canada. We will be in good company with dictators like Iran, Turkey and North Korea.” That is a bunch of manufactured outrage.

I wonder if the member can comment and answer the question of whether she agrees with the comment from Twitter and whether she agrees with the comment from the member for Thornhill. Does she believe that we will actually be similar to the countries I just listed?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, what is really concerning, and what I discussed in my speech, is giving the Liberal government the ability to decide what is misinformation and disinformation. That is very concerning.

Just the other day, our critic and our shadow minister for defence quoted an Ottawa Citizen news article talking about the military surveillance exercise that flew around the convoy, which was taking photos and recording audio. They said it was a training, which is fine. She did not include anything that was not in the mainstream, far-from-conservative publication, the Ottawa Citizen, yet the Prime Minister of the country said that she was guilty of spreading misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to quote a few key sections of this bill for my hon. colleague.

In the bill, proposed subsection 2(2.1) says:

A person who uses a social media service to upload programs for transmission over the Internet and reception by other users of the service — and who is not the provider of the service or the provider’s affiliate, or the agent or mandatary of either of them — does not, by the fact of that use, carry on a broadcasting undertaking for the purposes of this Act.

Proposed subsection 2(2.2) reads, “An online undertaking that provides a social media service does not, for the purposes of this Act, exercise programming control over programs uploaded by a user of the service”.

Finally, proposed subsection 2(3) of the act reads:

This Act shall be construed and applied in a manner that is consistent with

(a) the freedom of expression and journalistic, creative and programming independence enjoyed by broadcasting undertakings;

Government Orders

I just wonder what my hon. colleague's take on those is. Does she not feel that they make it clear that users of the Internet are not covered as broadcasters and that the changes to the act would be consistent with the concept of freedom of expression?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, proposed section 4.2 of the bill actually provides an exception to the exception that would allow the CRTC to regulate user-generated content.

Further, proposed subsection 7(7) would provide the Liberal government's cabinet the ability to, in essence, dictate the policies of the CRTC concerning online content. Again, it is very concerning. These are new powers for the CRTC that did not exist before for radio and television, and they are powers the Liberal government is now taking for itself to dictate what we read and see online.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, Bill C-11 proposes to give the CRTC the ability “to make orders imposing conditions on the carrying on of broadcasting undertakings;” in 18 different categories of operations.

We know that it has now been just past two weeks since we hit the 500-day mark from when there was a motion in the House for the government to create a suicide 988 hotline, and it tasked the CRTC with this. It has had consultations, but it has not been able to implement this. I am wondering what kind of confidence the member has in the CRTC to take on this giant new mandate and new project, considering its recent record.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, I do not have a lot of confidence at all. I certainly do not have a lot of confidence in the government to maintain transparency. For example, this House compelled the Liberal government four different times to provide the Winnipeg lab documents. For the first time in a century, we brought someone to the bar, compelling them under the democratic powers that we have in this House to bring those documents, and he refused to do so. The Liberals then went and sued the Speaker for it. Therefore, I do not have any confidence whatsoever that these folks will maintain transparency.

• (1905)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to join in this debate tonight. I would like to thank the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands for allowing me to change the speaking order today as I have an appointment later this evening. I appreciate that very much, so my thanks to my colleague across the way.

When it comes to the CRTC and Bill C-11, I am not an expert on information, and they are experts on misinformation, or on the Internet and what the CRTC should or should not be doing, so I am going to read a couple of comments from Michael Geist, who is an expert when it comes to information, the Internet, what should be happening with it and how it should be regulated.

One of the problems that Professor Geist has with Bill C-11, which is very, very similar to Bill C-10, is this:

But dig a little deeper and it turns out that the bill is not quite as advertised. While Section 4.1 was restored, the government has added 4.1(2), which creates an exception to the exception. That exception to the exception—in effect a rule that does allow for regulation of content uploaded to a social media service—says that the Act applies to programs as prescribed by regulations that may be created by the CRTC.

It lays out three criteria that this “exception to the exception” may fall under:

The bill continues with a new Section 4.2, which gives the CRTC the instructions for creating those regulations. The result is a legislative pretzel, where the government twists itself around trying to regulate certain content. In particular, it says the CRTC can create regulations that treat content uploaded to social media services as programs by considering three factors: whether the program that is uploaded to a social media service directly or indirectly generates revenue; if the program has been broadcast by a broadcast undertaking that is either licensed or registered with the CRTC; if the program has been assigned a unique identifier under an international standards system. The law does not tell the CRTC how to weigh these factors. Moreover, there is a further exclusion for content in which neither the user nor the copyright owner receives revenue as well as for visual images only.

I think these are some of the biggest issues that we on this side have with Bill C-11. There are some hidden questions within this legislation. The exception to the exception is a big concern, and also that the CRTC has not received all of its marching orders from the Liberal government as yet. We are not quite sure what the mandate for the CRTC is when it comes to online content.

I have received some comments from constituents. Actually, one of them is from country music singer JJ Voss, who just won an award. He is concerned that we would hold this bill up because there are some things in here about Canadian content and supporting Canadian musicians, Canadian culture and Canadians who are really doing great work. That is not our practice at all. What we want to do is make sure that people are protected. Our job as the loyal opposition is to review legislation cautiously to see where there may be some traps, because there are some things in these pieces of legislation that Canadians might not think are good ideas. This, in particular, is one of those situations for sure.

I believe that a lot of people in Regina—Lewvan, the area that I represent in Saskatchewan, are a little unsure of my voting in favour of a piece of legislation if they are not even sure what the mandate to the CRTC is yet or what exactly “an exception to an exception” means. They are really not comfortable with the “just trust us” approach that the Liberal government sometimes takes to legislation. I can understand why. We have gone through a lot of situations over the past two years where “just trust me” has ended up in people not being able to go to weddings or funerals. “Just trust us. We want to have the ability to tax and spend for 18 to 22 months without having any oversight whatsoever”; that is another situation where people do not feel comfortable with the decisions the Liberal government has made.

When it comes to us deciding if this bill is something we can really support, do we not think Canadians have the ability to actually use their own discretion when they are posting online? Why can Canadians not have that freedom of expression or freedom of speech?

• (1910)

When it comes to Bill C-11, those are some of the questions we have had. There is also the fact that, over the last two hours in this building, when we have been talking about Bill C-11, which some people would see as censorship by the government, the Liberals brought in closure on a bill about censorship. One cannot make this up. We had had 30 minutes of questions and answers, when at one point the NDP member for Courtenay—Alberni had the audacity to say that we were holding up legislation just because we asked for a standing vote and did not pass the piece of legislation on division. That is our job. That is why people sent us to this building, to stand up and be counted.

I will not be talked down to by someone from Courtenay—Alberni when the Liberals do not want me to be doing my job. That was an actual conversation during the 30 minutes of questions and answers, when the Liberals once again used closure to try to pass this legislation faster because, quite frankly, I do not think they believe it stands up to the scrutiny that the loyal opposition has been putting it to. It does not pass the smell test. For the constituents who have sent us here, that is really our job.

I think I understand why some of the members across the way say that everyone should pay their fair share, and we agree with them, but why do they really want to get some money back from Facebook and Netflix? I have a list of how much money a few of the Liberal members have spent on advertising on Facebook. The member for Fleetwood—Port Kells, who just spoke about vinyl records, spent almost \$5,000 on advertising from June 25, 2019 to May 9, 2022, and that is just coming from his member's office budget. That is \$5,000 in taxpayer dollars he spent on advertising on Facebook—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind the hon. member that those expenses are perfectly legitimate and admissible, so I think it is not appropriate to make it out as if they were not.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, this is talking about Facebook, Netflix and the CRTC, so I think this would be something of interest to members.

I will talk about a few of the other bills that have been paid by the taxpayers. For the Prime Minister, \$2.8 million has been spent on Facebook advertising from June 25, 2019 to May 9, 2022. Interestingly enough, the member for Kingston and the Islands, who speaks often here and I enjoy his speeches, spent \$43,578 on Facebook advertising from June 25, 2019 to May 9, 2022. The member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country spent \$23,466 from June 25, 2019 to May 9, 2022. These are all Liberal members. The member for Hamilton Mountain spent \$2,787. The Liberal Party of Canada spent \$4.2 million on Facebook ads from June 25, 2019 to May 9, 2022.

I can understand why they talk about wanting to get some of the money back from some of these big social media companies: It is because they have given them so much money. It is really quite impressive how much money they have given them over the period of June 25, 2019 to May 9, 2022.

When it comes down to it, we still have a lot of questions and we will not be supporting Bill C-11. When it gets to committee, our

Government Orders

members will do their good work and ask some of the questions, especially about proposed subsection 4.1(2) on what the exception to the exception looks like and how the Liberals are really trying to regulate what online users are saying on social media. Those are some of the concerns that our members will bring forward at committee.

When it comes to paying their fair share and whether or not we should make sure that we support our Canadian content creators, we will always do that. I will continue to advertise in my local papers, while the Liberals advertise on Facebook.

• (1915)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was wondering if the member could tell me how much I have spent on Facebook. I am curious. No, I am just kidding.

Every government bill that is introduced in the House has to be accompanied by a charter statement. That is something our government brought in because we care about charter rights. It was a Liberal government that brought in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The great democrat, Stephen Harper, did not care to do that. I would remind the member that he would introduce bills that could violate the charter as private members' bills to get around the Department of Justice scrutiny.

Does the member not respect the charter statement on Bill C-11, which says the bill passes muster regarding the Charter of Rights and Freedoms? If not, is he impugning the professional integrity of the lawyers who drafted that charter statement?

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I look forward to debate on the charter and who respects the charter more between the Conservatives and the Liberals every time, because I remember just recently that there was a huge infringement on the charter when the Liberal Party brought in the Emergencies Act, only a few short months ago. The fact of the matter is that if the Liberals were to respect the charter rights of Canadians and their right to free speech, and actually walked down and talked to some of the people who were here in late February, I think they would have really had a good lesson to learn.

When it comes to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, we will respect it. I really wish the Liberals would show that respect when people want their charter rights taken seriously as well.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member for Regina—Lewvan talked a lot about how much money is going to Facebook for advertising, and the previous Conservative speaker mentioned Bill C-18, which is where the rubber hits the road on the point of how we get value out of Facebook and other web giants for that advertising.

Government Orders

In Australia, 81% of their advertising was going to Google and Facebook, and the previous speaker seemed to intimate that their legislation was a failure, but it has produced revenues of over \$100 million, it has allowed dozens of journalists to be hired and it covers 50% of editorial costs. That does not sound like a failure to me. It sounds like, for all the money everybody here in Canada pays Facebook and other web giants for advertising, we would get something back out of it through Bill C-18.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, we are discussing Bill C-11, and maybe the member did not hear me talk earlier about some of the issues we had specifically with Bill C-11, such as proposed subsection 4.1(2), which talks about an exception to the exception and some of the criteria that the CRTC has laid out on what could be admissible under the new Broadcasting Act and what may not be admissible. There are issues we have with the bill we are talking about right now. I laid that out quite cleanly in my opening remarks, when we were talking about this bill, which is Bill C-11, and we will debate Bill C-18 another time. I look forward to having that discussion with the hon. member, when that is the actual bill we are supposed to be discussing on the floor.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the work being done by the member for Regina—Lewvan tonight. He is a great advocate for his riding.

I want to follow up on what our Liberal friend said earlier about the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms means that the government cannot do something directly to an individual. In this bill, the government would actually be giving the authority to the CRTC, which, through a policy direction from government, would then force the algorithms of these companies to treat content differently. In that case, it would be the company itself, such as YouTube or Facebook, that would say its algorithm believes such content should not be shown. That is a direct change of the way the Internet is supposed to work, and the government tries to work around that through indirect means.

Can the member speak about the need for the government to start respecting charter rights, even if it is using another agent, in this case YouTube or Facebook, to violate Canadians' right of free expression on the Internet?

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I think my friend gets to the crux of the argument Conservatives have on this side, and that is having the content that is put on social media regulated by the government. Is there going to be a Liberal government czar who says what is good and what is not good for online content? That is really what Canadians are scared of, and these are the questions I get in my office, so that goes to the heart of the argument we have of why this bill is so flawed and should be scrapped.

• (1920)

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by sending my regards to all of my friends and associates from the life I led before and sometimes still go back to: the artists, authors, creators and composers. It is a team and a big family that I still belong to, although to a small extent. I send them my sincere regards.

I will begin my speech with a thought, a quote from one of Quebec's great poets, Raymond Lévesque, a friend of mine whom I adored.

Keep running, good people. Don't get involved. At the end of the race, you will find a trash can and death. Tomorrow you will curse those who got you into trouble, and yet you will have let them get away with it.

Let them get away with it. That is what the two main parties that have been taking turns being in government have done over the past 15 years, when broadcasting was revolutionized and digital broadcasters invaded the broadcasting market.

The cultural sector has therefore seen its main sources of revenue swallowed by the digital world. Although it had anticipated this and looked for possible solutions, it came up against outdated federal legislation. Accordingly, as it is capable of doing, it questioned itself, it adapted and tried as best it could to make a place for itself in this miserly and opportunistic monster of a world that values nothing but its own financial interests, without caring too much about what constitutes it, which is content and artistic, cultural, media, literary and visual creation. In short, the gargantuan digital monster is happily helping itself to the buffet, and it has been doing so for a very long time.

The cultural community is losing not only the income from its content, but also the revenue from the sale of traditional media for that content—cassettes, CDs and videocassettes, which we had in my day. In another life, I wrote songs. My songs went from room to room in people's homes on cassettes and CDs. I sold some CDs.

Everyone found their share of income in these media. To keep it simple, let us think of it as a pie, cut into parts proportional to the investment in the production of the work. Copyright revenues and royalties were distributed, as well. There was also an anticipated income from subsequent distribution of the work on radio and television networks for creators, writers and composers.

French-language content quotas on the traditional platforms were not perfect, but we managed to hang on by the skin of our teeth. Any success we had on the radio or on television simply gave us a bit of money to invest in the next project. Unfortunately, since the transition to digital, the whole profitability aspect of the exercise has disappeared. People can no longer afford productions, especially independent productions.

Nothing has been done so far to adapt the legislation to this new digital world. Election promises were made in 2015 and again in 2019. A year later, the Yale report backed the government into a corner by making it clear that delaying the exercise any further would be politically disastrous for the government and noting the frustration and desperation of the creative industry. As a result, the Liberals finally introduced their bill to amend the Broadcasting Act in November 2020.

Better late than never, I guess. We sat down in parliamentary committee, we consulted Quebec's cultural community, and we found several major shortcomings in this bill, including the lack of protections for francophone content; the lack of discoverability, predictability and enhancement of content; and the absence of any obligation for foreign producers to prioritize Canada's cultural potential or to offer compensation if that proved impossible.

The Bloc Québécois has made the priorities of Quebec's cultural community central to its work here. The creators and broadcasters of all manner of cultural expression were pleased to see their needs reflected, first in the original Bill C-10 and then in the current Bill C-11. The community is satisfied and, above all, reassured by our work and our signature collaborative spirit, as we seek to come to find the balance that will make a bill the best it can be.

• (1925)

As Bloc members, that is our job. We did it. Eighteen months and a second attempt at the bill later, we ask only one thing, that the House pass that blessed bill.

Right now, the gigantic digital world is still stuffing itself at the all-you-can-eat content buffet. As the former heritage minister from the previous Parliament said during one of his many appearances on a very popular Sunday TV show, the cultural sector has been losing more than \$70 million a month since the legislation failed to pass. It has been 18 months since the bill was introduced in November 2020, so that represents \$1.26 billion in losses for the creative industry, which equates to \$2.33 million a day or \$97,222 an hour.

I am part of this cultural sector. I know this community: It is generous, resilient and passionate. It has an ability to bounce back that is absolutely incredible. It possesses the magic of universality and perseverance, and it is used to working hard. We cannot deprive it of the income it is owed. It is unacceptable to keep drawing things out like this.

If I were to walk among my colleagues in the House and take from each of their pockets the amount of money that the cultural community has lost since November 2020, I swear that no one here would like that. That is what we do every day when we postpone passing this bill. We have been dragging our feet since 2020.

My 10-minute speech will have cost artists and creators \$16,203. What are we doing, then? Should I pass the hat?

[English]

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. My friend from Lac-Saint-Louis asked me how much money he spent on Facebook ads and I was not able to answer, but he spent \$2,833 on Facebook.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sure he will appreciate the precision.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, in the House, we all share the idea that we want to make sure Canadian content is protected in this country. We want to make sure that Canada's linguistic duality is supported. We want to make sure

that the big Internet companies pay their fair share and that they are regulated properly.

The member must have heard from constituents who are concerned that the attempt to regulate the Internet may negatively impact people's ability to freely access the Internet and post what they want. I am curious about what the feeling in Quebec is and whether or not her constituents are expressing that concern.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Speaker, what my colleagues in the creative community are more concerned about right now is finding their place within this great technological system. It is our job here to do that.

They are worried about losing access to these royalties and rights, some of which belong to creators and are rightfully theirs. Royalties are a right; they are sacred. What we are trying to do in Parliament is to ensure that content creation is profitable.

I do not know if that answers the question. My concern, shared by the creators I know in the community, is really that there should be a return on their creations.

• (1930)

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating my colleague on her wonderful speech.

The Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-11. The Broadcasting Act has not been updated since 1991, and that is more than 30 years ago. Obviously, broadcasting on the various platforms has constantly evolved in that 30-plus years.

I would like my colleague to tell me about the importance of francophone content in this bill.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his comment. That is exactly what matters most to me, francophone content.

Had it not been for the Bloc Québécois taking part in the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage when Bill C-10 and Bill C-11 were being studied, the discoverability of francophone content—its presence, and the obligation to promote it, to recognize it, and to showcase it—would not have been nearly as significant as it is now.

We are satisfied with discoverability now. That was a demand from the sector that we responded to and discussed. My colleague from Drummond did the same for Bill C-11. We are satisfied, and we hope that the sector is as well. I think it is, because we are making sure its voice is heard.

[English]

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour once again to rise in the House to talk about Bill C-11, an act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other acts. As a former journalist and broadcaster, this bill is close to my heart.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

I followed the previous version of this bill as a journalist before I was elected, and I find it very fitting that I now have this new opportunity to contribute to this timely and important legislative measure.

[English]

It has been a while since I was lucky enough to give my first speech in the House as a newly elected member of Parliament, but I would like to revisit something I mentioned in my maiden speech. For more than 20 years, I worked on the ground as a journalist, covering local news and community stories. I experienced firsthand how local news impacts people and how individuals rely on updates to stay informed about their communities.

I worked as a journalist in Honduras while doing volunteer work. During journalism school, I worked at the Edmonton Journal for a summer. I was hired at The Hamilton Spectator after finishing my degree and was then lured over to the broadcast side by the astute and enterprising producers at CHCH News. I then spent another 20 years as a daily broadcast journalist. I heard regularly from viewers, and still do, who were thankful for my work in connecting them with their community and informing them of important issues in their city.

This wealth and breadth of experience gives me a unique perspective on how this legislation will directly impact Canadians and how badly this new law is needed in our country.

I am happy to rise again as this bill has made its way to second reading. I am here to remind the constituents of Hamilton Mountain that I remain a steadfast voice for the value of local news in the city of Hamilton and in communities across this country. Local news ensures that we remain connected, that we continue to engage in important conversations and that we are informed about what is happening in our own communities. Local journalism is a pillar of democracy, and local news outlets are struggling to remain open because web giants offer cheap solutions without the burden of paying for content. It is time that changed.

We have been working hard to ensure that web giants pay their fair share, to level the playing field and to protect Canadian culture, creativity and storytelling. Since I last spoke to the online streaming act back in March, I have continued to receive incredible support from my constituents about the passage of the bill. I have also held meetings with stakeholders who, like me, want to see this bill passed as soon as possible.

Although my area of expertise is in news and broadcasting, I have met with a variety of different groups, such as actors, directors, musicians, radio hosts, writers, producers, broadcasters and many more, about how the unfair advantage of foreign platforms must be addressed to ensure that our Canadian artists, creators and stories continue to not only thrive but shine.

- (1935)

[Translation]

We know where we need to begin. Our system needs to be fair and equitable. There needs to be just one set of rules for Canadian broadcasters and for streaming platforms at all times. I have said it

before, and I will say it again: Anyone who profits from the system must contribute to it.

[English]

Having a fair playing field in place for all players will help ensure that online streamers contribute, help showcase and encourage the creation of Canadian culture. Our local media organizations and stakeholders will lose if this bill does not pass. It is so important that we all work together to see this come to fruition, because this act has not been updated since 1991. Let me say that again: 1991. We know it is time to get this done.

It is hard to even remember back to 1991 before the ease and availability of the Internet. I did not have a cellphone back then. I carried a pocketful of quarters if I needed to make a phone call at the phone booth. If I needed to do research, I went to the library and found the appropriate microfiche.

The landscape has obviously changed significantly since then. We have evolved in how we access music, TV and news. It has all changed. Therefore, our legislation needs to evolve along with the world around us. If foreign streamers are making money off Canadian content and local media outlets continue to lose money to them, we risk a total collapse of journalism in Canada. We need to do what we can now to protect, encourage and promote the immense talent that we have here in our country.

[Translation]

These measures will apply to broadcasters and platforms like YouTube, Netflix and others, not to users or creators.

[English]

Canadian stories, Canadian content, Canadian artists, Canadian creators, Canadian companies and local news are all at the heart of this legislation. We are so proud of our Canadian talent and we want to showcase it. We need to support our own industries, to tell our own stories and support our own creators. Bringing everyone into the same ecosystem and having everyone contribute to this ecosystem just makes sense, and that is what we will do with Bill C-11. By requiring online streamers to contribute to the production of Canadian content, it will ensure that more of our artists are showcased. Prioritizing our own creators, including from francophone, indigenous, gender-diverse, racialized and other equity-seeking backgrounds.

The online streaming act will allow for equitable and flexible contributions from online streamers while continuing to promote discoverability. I have heard from a number of stakeholders that it is imperative we continue to do our best to ensure that Canadians can find Canadian content on any platform. We know our productions and content are great. I do not think I need to tell my colleagues about how incredibly talented our Canadian artists are, but we also need to think a bit deeper about behind the scenes, the work that goes into every song, every movie, every TV show, every piece of content that we see, hear and experience. There are writers, producers, broadcasters and all of the magic that happens behind the curtain. We cannot risk even the thought of the collapse of any of these sectors just because streaming platforms like YouTube or Amazon Prime do not have the same requirements as Canadian companies.

[Translation]

I would like to come back to the broadcasters who are affected here.

[English]

Canadians rely heavily on Canadian news. It is woven deeply into the fabric of our communities. We saw with the COVID-19 pandemic how our local news stations provided updates on case counts in clinics. We see it today with flood warnings and weather updates, keeping citizens safe and informed of potentially life-saving situations.

I know that at CHCH news during the pandemic viewership increased dramatically. People needed to know what was going on. They needed to connect with their community and get important health and safety information. They tuned in to their trusted news and they have continued to turn on the TV. That said, the broadcasting landscape has changed significantly over the past few decades, as I have already mentioned, with bigger players in the game dramatically affecting our Canadian news market. We need to ensure that our broadcasters can keep up and that they are protected. The rules are outdated and in order to ensure fairness, this bill needs to pass now so we can better support our Canadian broadcasting sector.

I will once again make my pitch to the hon. members of this House to support this bill, please, which, in turn, will support our hard-working broadcasting and creative sectors. We need to make these changes now in order to protect our industries and to set the stage for all the great talent we will be lucky enough to see in the years to come.

• (1940)

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

The hon. member made a number of points in her speech. One of the points, as I understood it, and these are my words, is that media is at the heart of democracy. Debate is also at the heart of democracy. What did the hon. member's party do, with the help of the NDP, the party that used to stand up for debate, that used to stand against closure of debate? It has closed debate.

Government Orders

How is it that the member reconciles closing debate on an issue that, in her own words and her own argument, is so vital and important to Canadians?

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: Mr. Speaker, as far as I am aware, this is a debate. This is the second time I have been up to debate this bill. I believe our members have spoken more on this bill than anyone else in this House. I do believe it is really important to debate this bill.

Let us get it right. Let us get it passed. Let us talk about it until midnight.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member tried to take us back to 1991. I seem to remember getting my first email address sometime around then.

The Liberal government has been in power since 2015, so let us go back to there. Since then, Facebook, YouTube and Netflix still have not paid their fair share of taxes. I am just wondering if the member could explain why the government has dragged its feet on this. How much have these web giants avoided in taxes since 2015 because of the delay in the digital services tax?

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe the government has been trying to hold up the legislation. I believe we are trying to get it passed as quickly and as efficiently as we can.

I believe, although I am a fairly new member, that it has been more the opposition blocking the legislation from passing than anything that the government has done.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague, like me, is a recovering broadcaster. There is more than one of us in the House.

Could she recall the heavy hand of the CRTC? In some of my comments earlier this evening, I said that the CRTC demonstrates a pretty light touch when it comes to regulating content, which would be far more direct and focused on conventional broadcasters and not at all on the content online. Could the member recall the CRTC really playing the heavy-handed bad guy in her days in television?

The Deputy Speaker: I can also say, as a recovering broadcaster, the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: Mr. Speaker, thank you from the recovering broadcaster caucus.

I would say that I cannot come up with any specific examples of the CRTC being especially heavy-handed. I would rather the CRTC be helping ensure fairness in this country than leaving it to Facebook.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member spoke about discoverability. This is one of those things that is being left to the CRTC to implement based on a policy directive that the government would send after the bill is passed.

Has the member spoke to the Minister of Canadian Heritage? How would he direct the CRTC to implement discoverability through Bill C-11?

Government Orders

• (1945)

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: Mr. Speaker, of course I have spoken with the hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage, but I do not have any further information. I would have to get the minister himself to answer that question.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, like the member, I am also really looking forward to ensuring more Canadian content is accessible. Folks in my community are also asking for that.

Like her, I am also a newer member in this place. I am trying to make sense of this conversation about user-generated content, understanding exceptions to exceptions, and understanding that proposed section 4.1(2) is a bit of a concern. Could the member share her perspective on the extent to which user-generated content is not part of this bill?

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: Mr. Speaker, platforms are in; users are out. The CRTC has been very clear that it has no interest in regulating the cat videos put up on TikTok and Twitter. It is the platforms that would be regulated with this legislation, not the users.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-11, but more importantly to address the fake outrage that continues to ensue as it relates to anything that comes from the other side of the House, such as the fake outrage from the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo just a few moments ago about time allocation. What the member for Hamilton Mountain was trying to say to him was that there have actually been more Conservative speakers speaking to this bill during second reading than every other party combined.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: There we go, Mr. Speaker. This has been heavily debated by Conservatives, despite the fake outrage from the member, but we continue to see it nonetheless. I have heard a number of things said in the short time we have been debating this bill this evening, and I am going to address some of them.

First of all, one of the most recent questions, and I think it was the last question from a Conservative member, was about the discoverability portion and how it would be decided to inform the CRTC. If the member reads the bill, he will know that it specifically says that it would be an open public consultative process. That is exactly how it would happen. The member should know that, because I know he has read the bill, but this goes to my point of the fake outrage.

Here is the thing. I can understand where the Conservatives are coming from right now. A year ago, they were successful when it came to generating that fake outrage. They were successful. Now, though, they are not. This issue does not have anywhere near the traction it did a year ago, because people have come to realize that maybe they were sold the wrong information when they were being told by Conservatives that their rights would be restricted.

I will go back to another thing that was falsely said in this House a few moments ago by the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, when she talked about algorithms. He specifically said that—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Did I get the name not 100% accurate?

An hon. member: The gender was wrong.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: My apologies—

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Let us slow it down. I know we have a lot to talk about tonight.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I know the member is a he. He and I will quite often talk to each other back and forth across the House, but we use our first names, which I am not allowed to do when I am giving a speech.

Nonetheless, he referenced algorithms specifically, saying that the government would have the ability to control these algorithms that would impact what people see. If we look at page 14 of the bill, there is a whole section about restrictions and “computer algorithm or source code”. It is in the bill.

It states:

The Commission shall not make an order under paragraph (1)(e) that would require the use of a specific computer algorithm or source code.

Why would members from the Conservative Party continually bring up this issue, when it is written right here in black and white in the bill? One has to wonder.

I will go back to fake outrage. The Conservatives want to generate this fake outrage because they want to stir up controversy. They want people to believe that we live in a country that is not free. Look at the almost leader of the Conservative Party of—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I hear some cheers. I know who is on the side of the member for Carleton.

Let us look at the member for Carleton. His whole campaign is focused around the idea that Canada is not a free country. I have news for my colleagues across the way. They may have heard of Freedom House. It is a bipartisan-supported organization in the United States that was started in 1941 during the Second World War. Freedom House ranks countries throughout the world with respect to the degree they are viewed as a free country. Canada is ranked fifth out of all countries in the world. We scored 40 out of 40 points when it comes to political freedom. We scored 58 out of 60 points when it comes to civil liberties. Where are they getting this? They do not have to agree with this organization that has been around since 1941 that has—

Mr. Damien Kurek: Thank goodness Alberta is here.

Government Orders

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, obviously I am hitting a nerve. The Conservatives are very concerned about this and will not stop heckling me because they do not want Canadians to believe that we live in a free country, and I cannot understand that. Why would they run an entire political organization based on the premise that Canadians are not free? It is so incredibly ludicrous, but we see it time after time. It is what the member for Carleton's entire campaign is based on. It is what the fake outrage we see, time after time, from the Conservatives is based on. It is indeed what this particular issue is to them.

This is a bill to make sure that the proper measures are in place to protect Canadian content. That is what this is about. It is about working with those web giants and the very large distributors of content to make sure they pay into the same fund that radio and TV stations and other broadcasters have had to pay into for decades, so that we can preserve Canadian content like The Tragically Hip from my riding of Kingston and the Islands. That was an incredible success story of Canada. Back in the day, bands like The Tragically Hip would not have been able to get on the radio had it not been for some of those requirements that were there, and had it not been for money that was put aside to help promote Canadian content. That is what this is about.

It alarms me to hear the Conservatives play with the importance of that cultural identity just for a tiny bit of what they perceive to be political expedience to help convince Canadians they are not free. It is absolutely crazy when we listen to the narrative that continually comes from that side of the House on issues like this.

I know the Conservatives are champing at the bit to ask me a question. Perhaps one of them can identify somebody other than Michael Geist, who they quote time after time in the House. Can they can quote somebody else, or make reference to somebody who also feels the same way, and can honestly speak to this issue in the same way?

• (1950)

When we talk about ensuring that we put the right measures in place, we are really talking about ensuring that the cultural identity of Canada exists in perpetuity: It exists into the future, so that future generations can celebrate the same success stories of small artists and small bands that had the opportunity to grow and prosper in our country, and not neighbouring countries that have 10 times the population and can be quite overbearing and dominate us from a cultural perspective, from time to time. That is what this is all about. That is the whole purpose.

I know the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells was talking earlier about MAPL, and having to identify with two of four areas of Canadian content. That is where those ideas came from, back in the day. That is what was intended to help preserve Canadian content.

When we look at amending the legislation, we are talking about amending legislation that has not been touched since 1991. I was in grade 10 in 1991, maybe grade 11. What was a popular song then? MC Hammer, I think, was the big artist at the time. That is the last time this legislation was updated. MC Hammer was wearing his big, baggy pants, dancing around in music videos on MuchMusic.

If anyone suggests for a second that there is no need to update this legislation because things have changed, it is a new world now and things are different, I can only imagine what people were saying back then, in the early nineties. I wonder if there are the same arguments coming forward: that TV and radio are dominant now, and we are never going to be able to affect it. It is such a defeatist attitude to have, and it is an attitude that we are seeing time after time from the other side, specifically as it relates to this particular issue.

I am very much in support of protecting and promoting Canadian culture. That is what this bill would do, and I look forward to this bill going to committee so that we can continue to improve it, get it back to the House and pass it.

• (1955)

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am never one to back down from a challenge. The member challenged us to find individuals who might have something to say against this bill, other than Dr. Geist. Andrew Coyne, the columnist for The Globe and Mail; Dr. Irene Berkowitz, senior policy fellow at Ryerson University; Matt Hatfield, campaigns director at OpenMedia; Peter Menzies, former CRTC chair; Monica Auer, the executive director of Forum for Research and Policy in Communications; Scott Benzie, managing director of Digital First Canada; Oorbee Roy, digital content creator, and actually a witness at the Canadian heritage committee; and Darcy Michael, at committee and a digital content creator as well, all spoke against it, as did Morghan Fortier, Skyship Entertainment for YouTube. Those are just a few that my friend across the way seems to have forgotten.

Not only do Michael Geist, and we on this side of the House, oppose this bill, but millions of Canadians across this country oppose it, as well.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, that is great. Why have they not brought any of those names up before? There is only one name that keeps coming up over and over again in the House. It is the only name that they keep referencing.

I am really glad that the member was able to pick up his bill kit from the whip's desk at the back, come out here and read a bunch of names to me, but I would suggest to him that he start using those names, and that some of the members start quoting other references and sources.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his passionate speech.

I just want clarify that, in 1991, people in Quebec were listening to *L'amour existe encore* by Céline Dion.

I also want to remind the member that, at the time, Céline Dion was enjoying great success, but there were also people like Caroline Desbiens who, even though she may not have been a superstar, was also succeeding, and that the CRTC made it possible to manage all those fine people.

Government Orders

I have a question for my colleague. Why are our Conservative neighbours questioning whether the CRTC will be able to do its job when the legislation comes into force when the CRTC has always been able to do its job?

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I regret that when I gave the example, the first one to come to my head was MC Hammer. I should have thought of a Canadian artist, and I apologize for that.

The member is absolutely correct. The CRTC has been able to do this in the past. There is no reason to assume that the CRTC has not been able to do this in the past. As a matter of fact, when the Conservatives get up to criticize the CRTC, as they do with this side of the House and with cabinet in particular, they just start attacking individuals, such as the Chair, or saying this person was going out for beers with that person, rather than actually trying to ever get to the heart of the substance. It is what they do repeatedly. They just attack individuals. They see that as somehow a path to being successful in politics, and I would argue that it is not.

To the member's point, the CRTC is extremely capable of doing this. I have faith the CRTC can do this. It does have experience, having done this for several decades. I do not know why anybody would assume it was not going to have the same ability to do it moving into the future.

• (2000)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, it is great the member made such a great statement about the importance of ensuring Canadian cultural content. What the bill does not specify, though, is how long it would take to make sure that large companies like Netflix pay their fair share.

I wonder if the member could share with us if the government will be transparent and make sure some of these profits are being shared with the public, as well as on which date they will be made to pay their fair share.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I do not know the exact answer to that. I hope that question comes up in committee, because it is a very good question. We should have some kind of timeline as to when that would happen. I encourage the member, or her representatives on the committee, to make sure the point is brought up. I am unaware if she is on the committee. It is a very valid question.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand virtually to join members this evening to contribute to this debate. I am currently in my home riding and am honoured to recognize and acknowledge the territory of the WSANEC nation. I raise my hands to all of them and say *hych'ka siem*, which is in the language of the traditional people of this land. I hope that Bill C-11 will actually deliver on some of the ideas to increase the indigenous content in what we see from our broadcast media in this country. We have a lot of work to do.

I want to address the bill. I have thought a lot about it, and in some of the debate, the notion that we need to do more for Canadian content has been somewhat ridiculed because there is Canadian content in things like *The Handmaid's Tale*. Why would we think that needed more Canadian content?

Just for fun, I looked up some of the things that one could think of as Canadian content that never was, like *Dudley Do-Right*. I grew up with *Dudley Do-Right*, the accident-prone Canadian Mountie who of course had nothing to do with Canada. It was produced by the people who did *Rocky and Bullwinkle*. It was in the 1960s that I used to watch that. In 1999, there was a Hollywood film based on the cartoon, and of course none of the people involved were Canadian, and the indigenous characters, who were played in ways that were racially and culturally inappropriate and offensive, were played by actors who were not themselves indigenous. We can go way back, if we want to look for Mounties, to find Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald from the 1930s, with a score from Oscar Hammerstein, singing *Indian Love Call*.

It is absurd to think for one minute that a Canadian Mountie makes a show Canadian or that the inclusion of an indigenous character makes it appropriate. It is laughable. We really do have to pay attention to raising up Canadian content.

I can share with colleagues that countries with much smaller populations than Canada has, like Norway or Denmark, have really extraordinary hit programs that people watch even if they have to put up with subtitles. They watch *Borgen* or watch the *Occupied* series. Canada has amazing talent, and it is time to make sure that we are not undermined by online streaming.

I am therefore very sympathetic to many of the goals of this bill. It has amendments to the Broadcasting Act, and because the Broadcasting Act protects freedom of expression, we are not going to lose freedom of expression. However, that does not mean I do not have some concerns that I share with other members here.

I want to thank Paul Manly, by the way, the former member of Parliament for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, because he took on all the workload of Bill C-10, which involved a lot of time developing amendments and being stuck in committee, where nothing was moving, and then we had an election. I did want to get out a public thanks to Paul.

I will turn to the things that really need work. The whole piece around the community element needs work. The broadcasters within community radio and community television that take on the role of community really want the community element definition fixed. One of the key concepts that I hope the committee will take on, in listening to community broadcasting, is to make sure that community broadcasting, by its definition in Bill C-11, is understood as fully community run. It is a really important point and we want to take that forward. I will be working in committee as a non-member of committee to get some amendments made so that the act really protects community-run content.

I am also concerned, frankly, about criticisms of the overreach of the CRTC's authority. We should really look at them. I am not sure where I come down on this yet, but Michael Geist, who is a really knowledgeable expert on media, is concerned that there would be an increased and expanded CRTC authority. I did used to practise in public interest law, and I went through some really long, mind-numbing hearings on, for instance, the review of revenue requirements for Bell and the breaking up of Bell, and all the things the CRTC did. It is a very powerful administrative body, and I wanted to mention that to colleagues.

● (2005)

A lot of the councils and advisory bodies to government, like regulatory agencies, generally provide advice to the government. In the case of the CRTC, it has decision-making authority and can only be overturned by a cabinet-level decision, so it is really important that we are careful. This is our one opportunity to really say what the CRTC is supposed to do and what it is not supposed to do. It is what we do when we are legislating, so let us make sure we get that right.

I have to say my confidence in the CRTC was shaken when I realized that it had put Russia Today, RT, on cable networks across Canada. It is a disinformation source that has undermined this country's democracy. I do not know how anyone ever concluded that this was a good idea, but I would like to make sure that we know we have given the CRTC the right instructions by legislation to make sure it is regulating and protecting Canadian content, and ensuring the survival and flourishing of our artistic community, our indigenous community and the French language.

[Translation]

We need to have French broadcasting. That is essential to our multicultural country. I am not convinced that Bill C-11 has this quite right. It is not perfect, at least not yet.

[English]

The other piece I really want to mention is what we do about online content and social media. I know that the hon. member for Fleetwood—Port Kells made reference to this, but I really want to commend the recent work of former chief justice Beverley McLachlin and the quite brilliant academic director of the Centre for Media, Technology and Democracy at McGill, Taylor Owen. They make a very important point: Regulate the system, not the speech.

I really think that our social media approach should not be to look for when there has been a transgression and then go out and punish. I do not think the government or the CRTC should be trying to figure out when speech is hate speech or when it is libellous. We need to create a system where social media enterprises have to themselves take on the responsibility to be fully transparent and accountable.

I am going to read this into the record, before I run out of time. It is from an article by former Supreme Court chief justice Beverley McLachlin and Taylor Owen:

For too long the issue of online harms has been erroneously framed as one of individual bad actors and the regulation of speech, but the problem is one of sys-

Government Orders

temic risk and it must be addressed as such. Canada now has the chance to learn from and build on the policies attempted in other countries and get it right.

That is from the recent May 9 article “Regulate the System, Not the Speech”.

We can do this. Whether it is through this bill or the many others that are looking at social media, we have to fix this. I will close here and just say this. Let us get Bill C-11 to committee. Let us get it right.

● (2010)

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate the reflections of the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands on what we have heard from the Conservatives. They make some very strong points about freedom of speech, but how does that compare with their party's policy toward the CBC, which they say they would defund and basically try to get out of the news business? Is there a conflict there that she could comment on?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, honestly, the hon. member for Fleetwood—Port Kells, who is a dear friend, may be conflating some things there, because it is not so much freedom of speech that is offended by calling for the end of the CBC. Really, it is about making sure we have a public broadcaster that can deliver things that the private sector does not care about.

I lament how many cuts have been made to the CBC. We have lost the supertime news. The swim coach, believe it or not, in our fitness program in Parliament used to be Pierre Lafontaine, the former Olympic swim coach. He helped me and my dear friend Joy Smith, who used to represent the Conservative Party, learn to swim. We all learned how to swim really well because Pierre Lafontaine helped us. Pierre Lafontaine said that when CBC lost the supertime news, it stopped covering local sports. That was a great way to get more kids involved in sports and more parents involved, because the CBC used to have enough money to cover local tournaments and local events.

Our news media in this country, whether community supertime news or national news coverage, has suffered from being undermined. Private sector companies like CTV and Global have been undermined by competition from all kinds of news sites, Google and so on. This took away their advertising revenue at the same time that they have had cutbacks. We need to fund the CBC properly.

As far as freedom of speech goes, again, the Broadcasting Act says that freedom of expression is protected. That is clear. The charter protects freedom of expression too. However, nobody has the right to yell “fire” in a crowded theatre. We have never had that right. That is freedom of speech misused. It is not an absolute right; it never has been.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this evening I rise as an artist. People may not realize this, but in Montreal, 80% of the members of the artists' union earn less than \$20,000 per year. That is kind of a big deal.

Government Orders

At one point in her life, a few years ago, Sylvie Drapeau, a hugely famous stage actor in Quebec, was getting cast in all the biggest roles. She played the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde, the Théâtre Jean-Duceppe, the Théâtre du Rideau Vert. She played lead roles in the evening and rehearsed during the day. Even when she was playing starring roles in all the top productions, she was earning just \$35,000 per year, and she is an outstanding actor, probably one of the greatest actors Canada has ever known. Artists are starving, and the pandemic made things even harder.

What does my colleague think about the fact that we could have passed Bill C-11 a year ago, which would have helped artists struggling to get by? I used a stage actor as an example, but the pandemic has also been very hard on television actors and musicians. What does my colleague think about the fact that, when the Liberals called an election, they delayed a bill that was needed to help our artists in Quebec and Canada earn a living?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I want to sincerely thank my Bloc Québécois colleague because one of the goals of this bill is to protect artists, actors, creators and directors.

We need to protect their role in our society because that is our wealth, our roots as a society. Canada's true soul lies in our artists. We need to protect them. I totally agree, and it was not our idea, as members of an opposition party, to hold an election.

• (2015)

[English]

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this House to speak in favour of Bill C-11, the online streaming act.

This legislation passed through this House just last year after extensive Conservative filibustering, but it had to be reintroduced because it ended up dying in the Senate. I felt it particularly important to speak to this legislation because there has been a coordinated attack of misinformation and disinformation that has confused people as to exactly what this legislation would do. In my brief speech, I will touch on what this bill would do, what it would not do and the implications of some of the misinformation that's around it.

Given that the media landscape has changed, our approach to it must also change to bring things into the 21st century. The online streaming bill does just that. Like we have always done for radio and television, now online streaming companies will be there to support and promote Canadian content. The bill does this by bringing online streaming services under the jurisdiction of the Broadcasting Act. This act has not been amended since 1991, and that was a very different time.

The bill would also do this by requiring online streaming services that serve the Canadian market to contribute to the production of Canadian content. In the same way that they benefit from accessing the Canadian market, they should be there to invest back into it. The bill would also ensure that broadcasters would showcase more Canadian content, as well as prioritizing content from francophone, indigenous, LGBTQ+, racialized and other equity-seeking creators.

We have to ask ourselves why this is important. It is important because we consume media very differently in 2022 from how we did in 1991. If Canadians are anything like me, they do not have ca-

ble. If they have cable, they may use it just to watch sports these days. They probably do not listen to the radio much. They may access music through apps like Spotify, Apple Music and others. They may be watching television or movies through Netflix, Prime, YouTube or many of the other streaming services that have absolutely revolutionized the media landscape over the last two decades. In order to have a level playing field, these platforms need to be treated just the same as television and radio have been treated for decades.

Sometimes the question comes up about why we need Canadian content. Quite simply, it is because we are not American. We feel the impact and dominance of the America media and culture, and that is something that every Canadian is familiar with. We are inundated with American news, TV, movies, music and culture. The American media and entertainment industry is very much a juggernaut, with the ability to promote and broadcast its influence far and wide. In Canada, we see that.

The close and familiar nature of our cultures and histories, as well as the vast funding and institutional entrenchment of American media, have allowed it to flourish in our country, and there is no doubt that there is exceptional content coming from south of the border. However, our Canadian content creators are at a disadvantage without the same levels of inertia, funding and entrenchment that the American media have had for decades.

That is why we need to take action to ensure that Canadian culture and Canadian stories are still promoted and told. I think we would all agree that our own culture and history are distinct from those of the U.S. We have stories, ideas and creative expression that are uniquely Canadian, and it is the shared cultural fabric that helps define our national identity.

That, right there, is what this bill is really about. We have our own cultural fabric and our own Canadian identities, and we must work to protect our heritage from the influence of foreign media. It is unfortunate that this bill, which is aimed at protecting and strengthening our cultural heritage by requiring only web giants to pay into creating Canadian content, has been so mired in controversy and misinformation.

I want to take a moment to try to set the record straight on exactly what this bill does not do. This bill does not impose regulations on content that everyday Canadians post on social media. It does not impose regulations on Canadian digital content, creators, influencers or users. It does not censor or mandate specific algorithms or streaming services on social media platforms. It does not limit Canadians' freedom of expression in any way, shape or form, or create the conditions for Internet censorship.

This bill specifically carves out from the bill content created by users on social media platforms, except where that content is commercial content. That is defined by the regulator, which evaluates based on three elements, whether the content is monetized, whether it exists on another non-social media platform, and whether the content has a unique international standard code.

● (2020)

This measure is designed to standardize treatments of commercial content across all platforms. We have to ask ourselves why such an innocuous bill, which would support our Canadian cultural producers, would become so controversial. Who can argue with bringing our regulation into the 21st century? The answer is actually quite simple. It has been a coordinated campaign of misinformation and disinformation.

Members opposite and their party's communication apparatus have peddled misinformation claiming that the bill would silence Canadian online content creators, despite the fact that the bill explicitly excludes content creators. They have claimed that the bill would violate charter rights and limit free speech, despite its direct predecessor's having been through multiple reviews for charter compliance and the fact that the Department of Justice has found it fully compliant. Members claim that the bill would control what people can post on Facebook and Twitter, despite the fact that the bill has absolutely nothing to do with regulating online speech.

The scale of misinformation and disinformation around the bill has been so extreme that one would be hard pressed to believe that it came about organically. If we think that there is no way that this misinformed outrage is organic, we would be right. Rather, far-right organizations like Canada Proud have been working overtime, pushing falsehoods about the bill on Canadians. This of course is the same Canada Proud that was founded by Jeff Ballingall, also known as the digital campaign director of the former leader of the official opposition in the last election, as well as that of the likely future leader of the official opposition.

It is disappointing that the official opposition works with groups such as these, which employ tactics of misinformation and in this case, clear disinformation. In doing so, it actually undermines and compromises the fabric of legitimate political discourse in Canada, while also sowing division for political gain. In this case, it means siding with foreign web giants over the Canadian cultural sector, which is resulting in that sector's being left behind, especially in light of the serious impacts the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the sector. It is bad enough that these tactics are poisoning debate in the House and on topics at the national level, but we know this is not an isolated example.

In the last election, in fact, the Conservative candidate in my riding did a mail drop a couple of days before the election, with a nefarious-looking picture of the Prime Minister saying that we were going to remove the exemption on capital gains for principal residences. I am sure many other folks in the House could give us many other examples.

Unfortunately, I have little confidence that the official opposition is going to cease with these disingenuous tactics. It is their MO, after all, but these insidious approaches are now poisoning debate all the way down to the local level. I bring the example of Squamish

Government Orders

Voices. Squamish Voices began as a social media Facebook page and built up a following as a faux community group by promoting themselves on Facebook and asking very innocuous questions like what someone's favourite ice cream was. Having built up a very large following, they switched into launching a very dedicated campaign of attacks and character assassination on progressive elected officials by spreading misinformation. They spent over \$25,000—

The Deputy Speaker: There is a point of order from the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I would simply observe, note and call upon the constitutional requirement of quorum and question as to whether or not there is quorum in this place.

The Deputy Speaker: Let me consult with the Table. I understood that Motion No. 11 did not have a quorum requirement.

I appreciate the point of order, but the order is specific that at 6:30, there is no quorum required.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, further to that point of order, on page 186 of Joseph Maingot's second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, there is a claim that I will quote, that “the courts might be effective in ensuring the observance of procedural requirements imposed by the constitution with respect to the enactment of legislation.”

Since Bill C-11 is currently being considered without quorum and quorum is a requirement of the Constitution, I trust the courts will take note of my interjection today in the event that Bill C-11 is challenged in a court in our country at some point.

● (2025)

The Deputy Speaker: As the hon. member knows, I have to follow the points of procedure, the orders that are set before us. Motion No. 11 specified that there were no quorum calls after 6:30, but I thank the member for his intervention.

The hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country has one minute and 35 seconds left.

We have another point of order from the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I believe it is a rule of the House that members are not to be eating in the chamber, and I saw the member for Kingston and the Islands stuffing his mouth in between chortling to the people on this side of the House. I would like clarification on whether we are now allowed to eat in here.

The Deputy Speaker: The rule is still there is no eating in here.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I do want to apologize to the House. I was eating a Fig Newton when I walked in the doors, and I apologize for that. It has since been disposed of, so I cannot take it back.

Government Orders

The Deputy Speaker: There are rules we need to follow. Unfortunately quorum is not one of them in this particular case, but not eating in the House is still a rule we should follow.

The hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, I promise I will get to the end of this speech.

I was talking about the example of Squamish Voices. Having built up a large following, it switched from this innocuous community group to launching personal attacks and character assassinations on progressive councillors. In fact, over \$25,000 was spent on advertising to do this. Notably, its members do this behind a shroud of secrecy, by obscuring who they are and the real truth. They cannot be reached through their phone number; they cannot be reached through their email, and their web page URL does not work.

In fact, through investigative reporting and following the dots, the National Observer has found the group that is behind it. Of course, it is Canada Proud. This is not just a problem in my riding of West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country. It is a problem right across the country. The network is making forays into municipal politics with anonymous pages in Vancouver, Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Brampton, Georgian Bay and Terrebonne.

I feel compelled to bring this up because it is exactly what is happening in this circumstance in this House, and it needs to be called out. Unfortunately, the victims in this case happen to be Canadian cultural producers who are, of course, receiving less income because of the impact of the pandemic and because Canadians are consuming media in a different fashion. This bill needs to pass. We need to find ways to support our Canadian content creators.

I just want to mention that this year is actually the 50th anniversary of *The Beachcombers*, which is one of the most popular Canadian shows of all time. It included one of the first indigenous actors to be recognized in a national-level program. We need legislation like this to be able to support the future *Beachcombers*, which are so important for Canadian culture and which have also provided, like *The Beachcombers*, entertainment for communities all across the world.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite in one breath said there would not be any censorship, but in the next breath went on talking about True North and Canada Proud, and how they are speaking ill of his party or his set of Liberal values. That is quite a contradiction.

More to the point on censorship, there will be smaller, non-English, foreign-language sites and stations that stream online and do not have the subscription breadth of Netflix or other major streaming companies. They do not have the subscriptions and they do not have the money, so by virtue of not being able to afford the CanCon fees, they will no longer be available to Canadians who speak those languages.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, in fact, when I am talking about some of the very shady things that we are seeing happen that are poisoning discourse, I am not talking about censorship. In fact, I

am talking about the exact opposite. We need to have transparency on that, on who is behind these things and why they are doing the things that they are. When we have these types of groups that are leading organized campaigns of misinformation and disinformation, it is something we should all be very concerned about. That is exactly what has been happening in Bill C-11, and that is why we need to keep calling it out.

● (2030)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear a little more from my colleague on the benefits that Bill C-11 will have for our artists, musicians, and people who work in television and on our miniseries, which are of exceptional quality, not only in Quebec but also in Canada.

What positive effects or outcomes can we expect? Will our creators benefit in any way?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question.

This bill has several advantages. Creators will be supported by the web giants, and it will be easier for people to access what creators are producing. This is very important for Quebec and for the whole country, because we are very unique and we have to do what we can to promote the full diversity of this country.

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for following up on the idea of supporting Canadian content. I am glad he mentioned *The Beachcombers*.

I was disappointed when his colleague from Kingston and the Islands mentioned MC Hammer, because if one googles “MC Hammer Canada 1991”, the year we are talking about, all we will find is the fact that there was a big riot in my hometown of Penticton in 1991, after an MC Hammer concert, when the iconic peach concession stand was rolled into Okanagan Lake.

I am sure he was not trying to draw us down that line, but I just wanted to use this opportunity to let the member from West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country expand on the idea of supporting Canadian content and how important that is.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, absolutely, this bill is very, very important for doing just that: being able to support Canadian content.

That was a really unfortunate connection with the example that was given earlier, but whether it is Canadian TV like *The Beachcombers*, whether it is Canadian film or whether it is making sure that we are able to access Canadian music online, this is really, really important, just to make sure that, as we are a small country, we are able to support our artists and creators to give them that start, to allow them to have that runway to make it big. Otherwise, we are at risk of being completely dominated by a much larger media landscape in the United States. Therefore, it is very important that we support them and it is very important, given the impact of the pandemic and the change in the way that all people around the world are consuming media.

The Deputy Speaker: I cannot believe that we are talking about MC Hammer's *U Can't Touch This* and Molly's Reach in the same discussion.

The hon. member for Tobique—Mactaquac.

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is never a dull moment in this House. Even if we are close to quorum or not, it seems like things just continue to roll along in this House with the diversity of opinions. In fact, we as Conservatives value a diversity of opinions on a variety of subjects and welcome people to have different thoughts and views. In fact, we see that as a strength of our Confederation and not a weakness.

There are concerns many Canadians raise during these times and even during this debate. The concern that is elevating to the forefront is they feel there is a stifling of free expression, of free speech and even of thought, such that if they happen to think contrary to whatever the supposed latest whimsical fad of fanciful groupthink is, they can be labelled and therefore marginalized, called names and pushed out of the public discourse with ridicule and laughter.

However, in a healthy democracy, diverse opinions and differing points of view are welcome, and we ask them to come to the table and challenge us. An old expression says that iron sharpens iron. I think sometimes when we have differing points of view, it is a strength to the debate in this House and we can, in fact, come to better legislation. We can come to better bills that will get through and get passed and hopefully help all Canadians, as we learn to balance the differing perspectives that are in this House that reflect the viewpoints of all Canadians.

I think the content that is available to Canadians should be as diverse as Canada is. So should be the things they are allowed to view, and so should be the things they are allowed to listen to, produce or create. That is the strength of our democracy and, in fact, a hallmark of it is freedom of speech.

What I find quite contradictory is that during this time when we are talking about Canadian creativity and Canadian content, there is a distinct effort to shut down debate and bring closure. At a time when the Liberals extended the hours of sitting so we could have more transparency, more accountable government, more debate and welcome diverse points of view, they are now expediting the process on a bill that has raised concerns with many Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

This House would be a better reflection of the concerns of Canadians by allowing those concerns to be fully vetted in this the people's House. That diversity of opinions could be welcomed on the floor of this House, but not only on the floor of this House; may it continue to be allowed, or even further allowed, to be expressed across the airwaves, online and through broadcasting.

I think what is happening is that many Canadians feel as though they are not free to express their points of view. They are feeling somewhat suppressed. They feel if they have a certain viewpoint or if they have a certain opinion, they are going to be labelled, disqualified or cancelled. I think it is a slippery slope.

This House needs to think very soberly and take its time in deliberating this piece of legislation. I think Canadians are raising right-

Government Orders

ful concerns about the fact that, while the Liberals say to trust them and that they are going to make sure it is done right and properly, the government has not instilled the confidence in people to just trust it with these types of matters.

We have seen how the Prime Minister has treated those with whom he disagrees. We have seen the efforts to continually divide, demonize and stigmatize those with whom he does not agree. When they go to express it, he gets angry, petulant and frustrated and then decides to throw the full force and weight of government and the law against those with whom he disagrees, even now as we learned today that at no point did the RCMP ever request or require such drastic measures as the Emergencies Act.

I believe the people of Canada have huge concerns in trusting the government with even more power to regulate what they can post and what they can view. Some would even go so far as to call it censorship of those who would detract from the government message of the day. Whether it is censorship indirect, it could be the back door to censorship, and I think what we need to do is be very careful and cautious.

We all love Canadian content. We want Canadian producers to do well. We, as Conservatives, believe in that.

● (2035)

My family is a big fan of the series *Heartland*. I must say that my daughters love watching it. It is a beautiful show made here in Canada. I enjoy *Hockey Night in Canada*. I enjoy Canadian content. I think it is wonderful. We have a great Canadian story to tell and there is nothing that gets any more intense than Canadians watching hockey or watching some of the shows they have come to adore and admire. That is great. However, we do not need some government czar censoring through the back door what content Canadians can produce, put online, listen to or view: "How terrible that someone has a different point of view than the latest fad of the whimsical groupthink, so let us ban that." Canadians are genuinely concerned with this rabid push for cancel culture.

What we need to do is allow Canadians the chance to weigh this bill carefully. Let us have the debate. Let us improve the bill. Let us have all viewpoints welcome at the table. Let us stop the stereotyping, stigmatizing and demonizing of Canadians who happen to not share perhaps the priorities of the government of the day.

If it was the reverse situation and this party was on the other side of the House, I guarantee the uproar would be boisterous, loud and overwhelming. The Liberals would be saying that we are stifling debate, ramming through bills, and asking how we could be so draconian. We would hear it day in and day out.

The Liberals want longer hours in the House for debate and then they shut down debate. Why do we not allow the debate to continue? Canadians are not afraid of opposing points of view. They are not afraid of diverse opinions; in fact, they welcome them. That is our strength.

Government Orders

I think it is a great opportunity for us to hear the concerns of our digital producers, those who are making great Canadian content that is original and are doing it well. They have raised very legitimate concerns about this bill. Let us make sure those concerns are heard and addressed. Let us make sure that Canadian content is protected, is welcome and amplified, but at the same time that great Canadian producers can compete, do well and succeed. Canadians are right to have a bit of caution when it comes to entrusting the current government with even more unabated power.

I want to conclude with a quote from a former prime minister of old who was the architect of the Canadian Bill of Rights. The Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker so adequately expressed it this way, and I hope his words echo in this House yet once again and resonate within each of our hearts and minds as we reflect on this bill.

He stated:

I am Canadian, a free Canadian, free to speak without fear, free to worship God in my own way, free to stand for what I think right, free to oppose what I believe wrong, free to choose those who govern my country. This heritage of freedom I pledge to uphold for myself and all mankind.

When it comes to Bill C-11, let us uphold the principles of freedom of thought, expression and belief, first and foremost, and make sure that adequate safeguards are put in place to ensure that protection and to hear the concerns of Canadians from coast to coast.

● (2040)

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe the member opposite used the old slippery slope argument. I think it is certainly the simplest of logical arguments, as one thing leads to another, which leads to another, and so on.

The member also spoke to promoting diversity of opinion. What about artistic expression and Canadian content? The bill explicitly tries to amplify content creators from diverse backgrounds. Does this not promote the diversity of opinion that the member said this bill is trying to squash?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Mr. Speaker, the concerns I raise by no means take away from the beauty of artistic expression of Canadian producers. In fact, ensuring the protection of freedom of expression, freedoms of belief and conscience, freedom of artistic expression or freedom of thought is a worthwhile cause and should be debated thoroughly in the House, for whatever amount of time it takes, to make sure that the concerns of Canadians are being heard. It should not be rammed through by a government that shuts down debate at will.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my Conservative colleague on his very passionate speech. He mentioned that we can have a debate. It would indeed be very interesting to have a debate, if only our Conservative colleagues would drop the ridiculous rhetoric of censorship.

Our colleague spoke earlier about the diversity of cultural expression that we have here, in Quebec and in Canada, and the importance of showcasing that and making room for that diversity. I would like to echo the comments made by my colleague opposite, who said that the purpose of this bill is precisely to create space for

Quebec and Canadian creators in a world that is increasingly competitive and increasingly dominated by foreign powers.

My question is this. Do we want to make room for Canadian and Quebec creators or do we want to allow a free market where we will be completely invaded by big foreign players, such as GAFAM, and where we will see our Quebec and Canadian culture and our cultural identity disappear completely because of their arrival? Is that what we want?

What Bill C-11 seeks to do is protect the cultural environment of Quebecers and Canadians so that we can survive, change with the times, make progress and prosper in this increasingly competitive world.

● (2045)

[English]

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Mr. Speaker, I actually believe that Canadian producers of digital content and otherwise are raising legitimate concerns that need to be addressed. I believe Canadian artists and producers can compete with anyone. We have great content, and that content is strengthened by competition and not weakened by it. We can stand on our own merits.

Yes, we should take the measures we can to protect cultural heritage and ensure it is upheld. However, Canada has survived to this point, and we will continue to survive, with a rich heritage and rich culture without draconian measures that open the back door to censorship.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy hearing my colleague, though I must say he was so far removed from the actual bill we are supposed to be discussing tonight that it was unbelievable. Conservatives, for weeks and weeks, have been blocking every single piece of legislation. They have been gumming up the works for Routine Proceedings, stopping members of Parliament from presenting petitions and stopping private members' legislation. The Conservatives have basically tried to shut down the House of Commons.

We are having an evening debate. We are discussing Bill C-11, and the member talks about something crazy that has nothing to do with the bill. If Conservatives do not actually read the legislation before they speak on it, why do they not take the time to read the legislation and address it? It is legislation that I believe needs some improvements, and we are hoping it will get to committee so we can make those improvements. For goodness' sake, speakers in the House should actually address the legislation that is before the House. Why did the member not do that?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Mr. Speaker, the incredible blooming and blossoming relationship between the coalition partners is quite a thing to witness. I am glad to see members complement one another in the House so incredibly well.

I can assure members that the role of Her Majesty's loyal opposition is to make sure the legitimate concerns that millions of Canadians have are brought to the floor of the House and discussed thoroughly. Many millions of Canadians have expressed their concerns about this bill's predecessor, Bill C-10, and the current bill, Bill C-11. We will continue to stand up for those Canadians.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I happily rise to speak to Bill C-11, especially after that display of political theatre that we saw on the other side. It was very entertaining for some but quite frustrating for others, I am sure. Certainly, onlookers in the Canadian public who are watching tonight are probably quite concerned that the Conservative Party of Canada is not even really reading the bills that the government puts forward, and on such a topic that is so important to Canadian creators right across this country.

Despite the Conservative Party of Canada and its members propagating inaccuracies in relation to this bill and trying to make Canadians believe that this is somehow about censoring user-generated content, it clearly is not. That is explicitly stated by the government in many places. I am happy to rise to speak to the merits of this bill and its true intention, which is really to level the playing field and ensure that online streaming platforms are subject to the same rules and regulations as other broadcasters are.

It is about time that we did that because, as members have said, the Broadcasting Act has not been amended in over 30 years. Just for fun, before my speech today, I looked up the hits in 1991. Some of the Canadian hits on the charts were Bryan Adams' (*Everything I Do*) *I Do It for You* and Tom Cochrane's *Life is a Highway*. It was a banner year for Canadian content. Not only that, but there was Glass Tiger, Alanis Morissette, Sarah McLachlan, Crash Test Dummies, Blue Rodeo, and none other than Kingston's The Tragically Hip with *Little Bones*. What a great tune.

Honestly, the content creators who are musicians that we have had in this country are incredible. There is no doubt we can be very proud.

The overarching goal of the bill is to ensure that online streamers contribute in an equitable but flexible way to the creation of Canadian content, just as our broadcasting system has done for decades. I want to talk about why this bill is fundamentally important when it comes to our music sector. Online streaming services, such as Spotify and Apple Music, have dramatically changed how we listen to music. Today, most Canadians use YouTube as their primary music streaming service: I know I do. I use it all the time for that purpose.

However, these online streamers are not subject to the same rules as traditional broadcasting services, like over-the-air television, cable and radio. Right now, our system is not supporting Canadian musicians and creators the way it really should. If online streaming services are, more and more, the way music lovers like me are accessing music, should they not be subject to the same rules as other broadcasters? That just seems like common sense to me.

The music sector is important to Canadian society. It includes a wide array of artists, including songwriters, composers, performers and arrangers. Let us not forget the people who support them: the agents, producers, record labels and many others. The music pro-

Government Orders

duction and sound recording industry accounts for over \$625 million of Canada's GDP and almost 10,000 jobs. Through their music and lyrics, Canada's musicians help create relationships and memories, initiate important social discussions, forge a collective national identity and promote Canadian values.

Music allows us to share our country, our culture and our ideas throughout the world. The best of what Canada has to offer, I would say, is on stage when our musicians, content creators and artists are successful.

For decades, Canadian broadcasters have given us incredible Canadian content on our televisions and radios, and this is no accident. We choose to be different from the cultural juggernaut of the United States, and we care about our cultural sovereignty. We believe our diversity should be celebrated. Our culture is who we are as Canadians. It is our past, our present and our future. It is how we tell our stories to each other.

As a condition of their licences, radio broadcasters have had to invest in our culture, our artists and musicians. It is why we have all the Canadian content that we love today. Whenever we hear Charlotte Cardin, Joni Mitchell, Drake, Justin Bieber, Shawn Mendes, Great Big Sea and the Arkells, it makes us proud to be Canadian.

• (2050)

There has been a digital disruption. Since the early 2000s, the music industry has navigated a landscape that has been profoundly changed by new distribution models offered by online platforms.

We have also seen the music industry evolve from selling music on physical media to selling digitally and selling downloads. Most recently, there is the increasing popularity of online streaming.

Online streaming has had positive impacts for Canadian consumers and certainly for artists. Online broadcasters make music readily accessible to Canadians wherever they have an Internet connection available. They can access a variety of music and playlists tailored to their tastes and interests. Streaming has also allowed a number of artists to be discovered, and their careers have been bolstered in other countries as a result.

Government Orders

Ruth B. is just one notable example of a Canadian artist who has achieved great international success after being discovered online. However, the upheaval caused by digital platforms has also had significant consequences for our broadcasters and our musical artists. Currently, online platforms have no regulatory requirements to support Canadian music. As more and more Canadians listen to online platforms and the revenues of traditional broadcasters drop, so does funding and support for Canadian musical artists.

We need to fix this now. That is what this debate is about, and that is what this bill is about: It is about how we fix this problem. The problem is that our online streaming platforms are not contributing to supporting our Canadian artists, musicians and content creators here in Canada. This bill is really about that.

We have heard, loud and clear, from Canadian music producers that passing Bill C-11 is critical to the industry. I want to share a quote from SOCAN, the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada:

Canadian creators need support to continue to develop Canadian music in the world of streaming, and Canada must be a place for emerging music creators, where songwriters and composers can create, grow and thrive.... The tabling of the Online Streaming Act on February 2, 2022, is an important first step to make it easier for Canadian audiences to find and engage with Canadian creators, giving our music a place in the world of streaming.

The chair of the board of the Canadian Independent Music Association also told us that:

The most tangible way to get our artists heard in Canada and around the world is to ensure that we have awesome Canadian artists, supported by strong Canadian owned independent music companies that can compete in the global music market....I welcome all initiatives that help make our companies stronger and our artists thrive.

This is why we are here. On this side of the House, we want to see our artists thrive.

The time to act is now. Bill C-11 seeks to update our broadcasting framework so that the online platforms would be required to support Canadian music and artists, just as traditional broadcasters currently do. Why would anyone not want to support our artists and musicians in Canada?

Bill C-11 would ensure that our musical artists would continue to contribute to Canadian culture and be able to make a living from their music. The bill is part of our wider commitment as a government to support artists in Canada, and is part of the strengthening of our arts and culture sector.

In conclusion, this bill realizes the importance of investing in Canadian music. Bill C-11 creates a competitive and sustainable broadcasting system while supporting Canadian music. The modernizing and fair regulatory framework that the bill proposes would support Canadian artists and broadcasters.

I ask the hon. members of the House to support this bill. We owe it to the next generation of musical talent, the Tragically Hips and the Alanis Morissettes of the future. We certainly need to support them now. This bill, I think, has really got intentions built into it that are very promising for the future of our cultural sector here in Canada.

• (2055)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the Liberals really wanted to drive this bill all night long, they would not have called closure on it. More to the point, they were talking about this bill applying to broadcasters. Our concern is the definition of “broadcaster”. What we find with the Liberal government is that the definitions expand, and we are concerned that the broadcasters will now be the people who are broadcasting their own news stations.

We had Canada Proud and True North slagged as broadcasters. Are they now going to have to pay into CanCon as well?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, the bill is actually very clear on this in terms of defining the terms of broadcaster and what counts as commercial content that would be subject to the regulations within the bill. To me it is actually quite clear. There is no slippery slope here. There is no backdoor attempt at trying to censor user content. The member opposite should not be concerned about her nightly news channel being censored.

Certainly, the very large streamers that are streaming content are making money doing that and they clearly should be subject to the same rules that other broadcasters are subject to. That is the intent of the bill. It is very clear.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have repeatedly said that the bill regulates the platform, not content or users. However, proposed section 4.2 says that the CRTC can create regulations that treat content uploaded to social media services as programs to be regulated by considering three factors: one, whether the program that is uploaded might cause direct or indirect revenue generation; two, if the program has been broadcast by an undertaking that is either licensed or registered with the CRTC; and three, if the program has been assigned a unique identifier under a standard system.

The law does not tell the CRTC how to weigh those factors, but the bottom line is that this might apply. Michael Geist has said, “TikTok videos that are uploaded to the service may generate indirect revenue. That content is available on licensed services and the music has a unique identifier. The same is true for many YouTube or Instagram videos.”

What is my hon. colleague's response to that concern that proposed section 4.2 does permit in at least certain circumstances the regulation of content?

• (2100)

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, my thanks to the hon. member for a good faith question. I appreciate it.

The way I read the bill, and I have the section in front of me, is that this is how the bill defines commercial content and commercial content is part of how we define whether someone is broadcasting or not using a streaming service. In many ways, this is part of the definition of being able to determine whether Canadian content should be promoted. I think that is the intention of the bill, that broadcasters that are already promoting commercial content and distributing that are subject to the same regulations that other broadcasters are.

That intention is very clearly laid out in the bill. It is very specifically and clearly not to regulate the user-generated content.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The member for Drummond, on a point of order.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I am sure this may be just an oversight on the part of my colleague from Peace River—Westlock, but I think it has already been made clear that wearing buttons in the House of Commons is not allowed.

[English]

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the most fundamental piece for me on Bill C-11 is around this whole idea of levelling the playing field. People can post a podcast in about 30 minutes or less; however, if they want to start a radio channel, as several people in my riding would like to do, it typically takes three years. It seems to me that rather than trying to get podcasts to operate like radio channels, how about we try to get radio channels to operate more like podcasts?

In my opinion, if we could get a radio station signed up in about a day, that would be great. Why does all the content the CRTC requires on a radio station have to be a thing? Rather than that, just say, “As long as you are not blowing other people off the air by interfering with the channels, here is your radio station.” That would be a levelling of the playing field.

I am wondering what the member has to say about that.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I think the member misinterprets the intention of the bill. When we say level the playing field, we are talking about the very traditional broadcasters that would be subject to the Broadcasting Act versus the very big, successful online streamers that are running platforms that are streaming content for commercial gain currently.

The playing field is not level because the one that is now successful in today's society is not contributing to Canadian artists and musicians and content creators. We want to make sure that they do so.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-11, the Liberals' Internet regulation bill. This is an important bill, because it could have everlasting impacts on how every Canadian experiences the Internet.

Before we fully examine the details, it is critical to state why we are debating this legislation today. The reality is that I would not be standing here today to debate Bill C-11 if it were not for Bill C-10 in the 43rd Parliament. Canadians may recall that it was just last year when Parliament witnessed one of the most alarming pieces of

Government Orders

legislation the Liberals had ever introduced since their election in 2015. Many Canadians viewed Bill C-10 as an attack on our freedom of speech, a measure of government overreach and a new means of censorship. I shared these valid concerns and strongly opposed Bill C-10 until the final hour on the final day.

Michael Geist, a University of Ottawa professor and expert in Internet policy, was one of the most outspoken opponents of Bill C-10. Parliament needs to remember his criticism of the previous legislation. He stated, in referring to Bill C-10, “No one – literally no other country – uses broadcast regulation to regulate user generated content in this way.”

Many members of this House voted against Bill C-10 at one o'clock in the morning, as the Liberals tried to ram it through Parliament with as little debate as possible. This is déjà vu. I was one of them. Thankfully, because of the hard work of Conservatives and Canadians, we defeated Bill C-10, so that it never had a chance to become law.

Bill C-10 died, but it has re-emerged as Bill C-11. When the Liberals introduced Bill C-11, the minister responsible for the legislation stated, “This is about making the Internet a better place for all Canadians.” It sounds grand. That statement should have been a red flag for every Canadian. We have heard this kind of language from the Liberal government before. The Liberals say, “Trust us. Everything will be okay.”

It was former president Ronald Reagan who famously said, “The nine most terrifying words in the English language are ‘I’m from the government, and I’m here to help.’” It would be unwise for any member of this House to trust that the government has the best interests of Canadians top of mind, particularly on the issue of Internet regulation.

Bill C-11 is legislation that proposes to regulate the Internet. The government wants to influence what you see while browsing the web. It wants to push specific content to the top of our screens so we see it first. Consequently, this would move content down our screens, so we would see less of it. This is what the government really means when it says it wants to make content more discoverable.

The details of what content and how much the government will promote are unknown. This is because Bill C-11 would hand over this decision-making power to the government-appointed body called the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or as most Canadians know it, the CRTC. The government claims that this is a way of promoting Canadian content, but I believe that if Canadians want to watch Canadian content, nothing is stopping them from doing so.

Government Orders

Why does the government need to reach into the Internet to pick and choose what Canadians discover? Canadians do not need assistance from the government in discovering what they see on the Internet. They are totally capable and free to discover the content they want to see.

The Internet is exceptionally vast in content. An immense amount of content is uploaded on the Internet daily. YouTubers alone upload over 700,000 hours of content every single day. I cannot stress how much content and how many content providers exist in Canada. How can a government body like the CRTC monitor all this content to determine if it meets the Liberal government's standards? It is impossible.

I want to discuss some of the technicalities of the legislation. Although clause 2 of the bill mentions who is not subject to the regulation, it does not address what content is subject to the regulation.

• (2105)

The government claims that user-generated content is exempted from this bill through proposed subsection 4.1(1). However, proposed subsection 4.1(2) creates an exemption for the previous exemption in proposed subsection 4.1(1) and allows the CRTC to determine who is subject to these exemptions. The bill is confusing, to say the least, and I sincerely question whether it was intentionally done this way.

OpenMedia, an organization that works to keep the Internet open and free, and an organization that I had the pleasure to work with on my private member's bill in the previous Parliament, has also raised many valid concerns. The bottom line is, as Michael Geist said, "The CRTC is empowered to create regulations applicable to user content uploaded to social media services as programs."

Canadians will not fully know who or what is exempted from this bill because the Liberals have yet to announce their policy directive for the CRTC. The Liberals have told Canadians that this policy directive will be given to the CRTC after the bill becomes law, not before, which is suspicious. I think that parliamentarians and all Canadians deserve to know what the government is planning to direct the CRTC to regulate before Bill C-11 can become law.

I want to quote Dr. Irene Berkowitz, a senior policy fellow from Ryerson University. She stated:

The idea that the CRTC can – or should – regulate the global internet, in an age when market intervention should be sharply decreasing, is unworkable and counter-productive, falsely pitting the industry against itself.

I agree with her. Canadians do not want their government regulating the Internet. The government regulates and restricts enough as it is, especially the Liberal government.

Bill C-11 is a very concerning piece of legislation that opens the doors to government overreach. It will impact every Canadian who uses the Internet. Canadians expect their elected officials to study it carefully and debate it thoroughly. However, the Liberals are playing the same political games that they did with Bill C-10. They are limiting the time we can spend debating this important bill. Instead of debating this legislation through the standard parliamentary procedure, the Liberals are supporting a procedure called time allocation to stop debate. The fact that the Liberals would move time al-

location while dozens of members of Parliament wish to speak on behalf of their constituents is simply unacceptable. How ironic: government overreach on a government overreach bill. It is sad.

Canadians are concerned any time the government wants to create more regulation. Any time the government wants to regulate what Canadians see or hear is even more concerning. The idea that the Liberals want to promote certain content to Canadians who use the Internet is disturbing. My constituents believe in less government, not more.

As I said earlier, Canadians do not need assistance from the government in discovering what they see on the Internet. They are capable and free to do so themselves. I will be opposing Bill C-11, just as I opposed Bill C-10.

• (2110)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot to unpack there, but perhaps I will just stick to one point. At the beginning of his speech, the member talked about Bill C-10, and if I heard him correctly, he said, "Thankfully, Conservative MPs defeated the bill." That is not what happened to Bill C-10. Bill C-10 actually passed this House and went to the Senate.

Is the member trying to take credit for the fact that it did not pass through Parliament? That is what he is trying to say. It just goes to the continued manufactured outrage that comes from Conservatives as though they have somehow saved Canadians from the injustices that the Liberal Party is trying to impose upon them just because of some grandiose thinking. The member is trying to take credit for the fact that the Senate was not able to deal with Bill C-10. It is remarkable.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, I think that was more of a comment than a question. Here is my quote, "Thankfully, because of the hard work of Conservatives and Canadians, we defeated Bill C-10, so that it never had a chance to become law."

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: That's not what happened.

Mr. Peter Julian: You're making it up. That's not what happened.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, what happened? There was an election called, so the bill got done. There we go, by their own Prime Minister. That is what happened. They killed their own bill. That is even better.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think my Conservative friends hate culture.

I think they do not like culture; they do not like our artists. It is true. At the ADISQ gala two years ago, Pierre Lapointe revealed something that drew a lot of attention. He said that he had been paid \$500 for the song *Je déteste ma vie*, which got a million plays on Spotify. Pierre Lapointe is a huge artist. We have plenty of artists in Quebec, including Ariane Moffatt, les Cowboys fringants, and Coeur de pirate, who make videos, broadcast songs on Spotify and do very well. Our Conservative friends think that this bill is just for losers, but that is not true. It is there to fund Quebec's great artists who cannot get paid in the system the way it is set up right now.

When will our Conservative friends understand that?

● (2115)

[English]

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, I think we understand that we look far beyond Quebec. I think we have to remember that this is a bill for all of Canada.

I would ask the member to consider this for a minute. Can he imagine if Quebec artists said they had great songs or great movies and the CRTC said they do not quite meet the Canadian content? How would he feel about that? We do not know. That is the problem. The government has not supplied the directive to the CRTC yet, and that is the biggest problem with this bill.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqagtittiji*, I was struck by a question the member asked, and here is my question for him: What is stopping Canadians from watching indigenous online streaming services like IsumaTV? The answer is, American streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime and Disney+. Does the member truly believe that without this bill Isuma will ever achieve the fair Canadian audiences it deserves?

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, it is questions like this that we need to debate more to have a clear understanding of what this bill is going to do to the future of the Internet, and introducing closure does not help that situation.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had a few questions for my colleague, and I even had the lyrics of the Pierre Lapointe song, *Je déteste ma vie*, running through my head, although I do not hate my life today, since we are talking about this bill. It is an honour to talk about it.

Having been a musician, creator and singer myself, I would like to inform my colleague opposite that I have had the opportunity to perform on the Internet without having to pay anything, since anyone can post a video on YouTube, for example. This is not included in the bill, and it allows everyone these days to be creative and share our amateur talents without being mortgaged to the hilt, without having to pay anything.

It is important for me to discuss Bill C-11 and how best to support original French-language content and production.

I respectfully acknowledge the Anishinabe people as I join my colleagues in the national capital region, which is located on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin nation. I realize that

Government Orders

we all work in different places and that some people, including those who are watching at home, might therefore be joining us today from the traditional territory of another nation.

As we all know, this bill responds to the urgent need for legislation that updates the Canadian broadcasting system for the era of online streaming. The last major reform of the Broadcasting Act was over three decades ago, which is more than one generation. Simply put, our legislative framework needs to be reviewed because it does not reflect new technologies and the realities of today's digital world.

For decades, only traditional broadcasting services such as radio, television and cable had requirements to meet under our system. We are a far cry from the days of the old CDs and cassettes we listened to in the car. We bought CDs and recorded off them at home, but we paid royalties every time we went to the record store, which meant we were supporting our artists.

In those days, our artists were paid every time we purchased content. Nowadays, they alone are funding Canadian content, even though the world has changed and the industry has evolved a great deal in terms of its product offering and capabilities. We can no longer ignore the reality, and the government cannot sit idly by in this situation.

Our bill will ensure that all broadcasting services, including both the traditional ones and the online ones like Netflix, Crave and Spotify, contribute appropriately to Canada's creative industries. We believe and recognize that the contributions made by these online services will be important for supporting a large number of Canadian creators and artists. Francophones, Canadians from francophone communities and anglophone minority communities will benefit.

This bill is proof of our government's commitment to and support for francophone communities, and this bill's impact will be felt in the arts, culture and innovation sectors. The government plans to continue bolstering French-language productions. The CRTC already has a very strong regulatory framework in place for traditional broadcasters, requiring them to contribute to and promote francophone creators and French-language content.

The government expects online broadcasters to abide by these same requirements, which is what this bill would do. The online streaming act would give the CRTC new powers to more effectively oversee French-language content production and to protect the promotion and availability of this content on these platforms.

In spite of existing safeguards, there is not enough access to content in French through dubbing and subtitles. The content that does exist does not fully meet the needs of francophones who want to see their history, their culture and their identities on the screen. We have francophone talent in Canada and it must be showcased. Producing original French-language content that reflects the realities and needs of francophones should be a priority for all broadcasters, and that applies to online broadcasters as well.

Government Orders

• (2120)

These days, we listen to music using very different platforms from those that existed back when the Broadcasting Act was passed, and then updated in 1991, which is when I got my first car. It had a tape deck.

With the emergence of online streaming services such as Apple Music and Amazon Prime, French-language content is now in a worrisome situation considering the competition from foreign offerings, which are mostly in English. The car I just bought has an interactive display, but nowhere to insert a CD or a cassette. The music I play in my car is provided by network programming. However, francophone Canadian artists are not well represented among the most popular artists in Canada on digital music platforms.

Another reality that should not be ignored is the fact that investments in and budgets for English-language film and video productions have continued to rise in recent years. It is estimated that this year, streaming giants will invest \$125 billion in films, series, and dramas worldwide. We must ensure that an appropriate proportion of this spending is allocated to original French-language productions. We must act quickly.

To resolve the problem, we added significant objectives for producing and broadcasting original French-language programming, not just translated content. They must work in French, produce in French and broadcast in French. We also strengthened the mandate of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, to recognize all the needs of Canada's francophone community.

Bill C-11 expressly states that our broadcasting system must support the production and broadcasting of original programs in French. It also requires the CRTC to facilitate the provision of programs created and produced in French. That will make it clear to all broadcasters operating in Canada that the needs and interests of francophones are of paramount importance in this bill.

To make it even clearer, the bill gives the CRTC the power to impose conditions of service, including conditions respecting the proportion of original French-language programs, especially first-run programs. In addition, the CRTC will have the power to make regulations on expenditures to be made by broadcasters, including on-line services. In the specific case of broadcasters that offer programs in both French and English, such as Netflix or Crave, the CRTC will be able to prescribe the minimum share of expenditures that are to be allocated to Canadian original French-language programming.

By including these flexible mechanisms in the act, we are ensuring that programming and spending proportions can adjust to a changing society and the needs of francophones now and in the future. This way, we avoid forcing lawmakers to amend a number in the act as well as the possibility that the proportion could soon become a ceiling. In short, the government is taking the initiative to protect original French-language content and production for years to come. With input from public consultations, the CRTC has the resources and expertise to examine and be informed by the research and diverse stakeholder perspectives as it strives to ensure the regulations remain effective and relevant.

In conclusion, hon. colleagues, we all know it is time to restore balance to the broadcasting sector and implement the regulatory mechanisms that will ensure a flexible, diverse and inclusive broadcasting system.

Let us go ahead with Bill C-11.

• (2125)

[*English*]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the fact that we are engaged in time allocation on what is a very important bill on censorship, the irony is not lost on me that the government is censoring members of Parliament from speaking to this bill.

I look forward to this going to committee, because the witnesses we are going to get, I suspect, will speak mainly against this bill, including Dr. Michael Geist, who is the Canada research chair in Internet and e-commerce law at the University of Ottawa. He said:

Indeed, for all the talk that user generated content is out, the truth is that everything from podcasts to TikTok videos fit neatly into the new exception that gives the CRTC the power to regulate such content as a "program".

I know the member for Perth—Wellington spoke about what guidelines the CRTC is going to receive. Why is the government not tabling those guidelines to Parliament so that we can understand and, in fact, Canadians can understand better what the direction of the CRTC will be from the government after this bill is passed, which is ridiculous?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

The Conservatives are using this bill as a bit of an opportunity to spread misinformation. What they are saying is false. People will still be able to post their content on social media.

They will be able to do what I did during the pandemic. I created a YouTube channel to sing to isolated seniors. On Monday and Wednesday evenings, I sang to entertain them. Seniors could choose songs from my repertoire, which I would then practise and sing to them. Nothing can stop me from continuing this. I was free to do that, and everyone will continue to be free to do that kind of thing. What the Conservatives are saying is misinformation.

We want to take on the web giants to give back to artists. The Conservatives do not agree with that, because they want to support the web giants and give them free rein on the Internet.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation on his speech.

It was a great pleasure to listen to him talk about improvements that have been made to Bill C-10, including on the discoverability of content and on developing francophone content. I heard him talk more about francophone, Quebec and Canadian content also. Of course, it was the Bloc Québécois that really pushed for these improvements.

He also talked about another very interesting fact: the specific requirement to create original French-language content, in other words content produced in French, not translated content.

I was listening to my colleague's speech and I wanted to know whether he realizes that he could almost be a Bloc member. He would just have to change his repertoire on Wednesday afternoons and I think we could get him to cross the floor.

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: Mr. Speaker, I thank my opposition colleague for his question.

I can assure him that there is no one more Liberal than I am, but there is no one more Québécois than I am either. I am an ardent defender of French. I have many friends in my riding who are Bloc supporters. I am very comfortable in this seat.

When I read this bill and I saw that a francophone could create francophone content, deliver francophone content and be paid for francophone content, I thought to myself that we could not ask for better for a Quebecker.

• (2130)

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first off, I would like to wish the House leader of the official opposition a very happy birthday. We are glad he is with us today in this debate right until midnight. That is quite a way to celebrate a birthday.

[Translation]

I wanted to ask my colleague a question.

The web giants are making record profits, crazy profits even. Musicians, however, lost \$3 billion during the pandemic. In general, Canadian musicians lost almost 80% of their income. On the one hand, we have web giants making huge profits, and, on the other, we have musicians and other Canadian artists who create content getting peanuts.

What does this bill do to balance out the situation?

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: Mr. Speaker, I am going to repeat some of what I said in my speech.

Back when I was a saxophone player and we were recording music, the money went to the orchestras, creators and musicians. Whether the music was recorded on an eight-track tape, a four-track tape or vinyl, we had a basic income.

What we want to do is revise this act, which has not been updated since 1991, by adapting to the new formula. This means taking the money that web giants earn through social media, without touching the content of ordinary Canadians, and using it to give artists their due and to ensure that Canadian francophone and an-

glophone artists are treated equitably. We want to give the music, arts and cultural community what it is owed.

[English]

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously Bill C-11, the online streaming act, is a very important issue to talk about today, and I look forward to outlining my thoughts about the bill, and more specifically, some of the concerns I personally have with this particular piece of legislation.

However, if the Speaker will permit me, I want to first begin my remarks by addressing a very urgent and rapidly evolving situation in the Kenora riding. There are many floods across the Kenora riding right now. In fact, Highway 105 and Highway 599 are completely closed off, meaning residents of multiple communities have no way of leaving the community for perhaps urgent medical appointments or other essential trips.

There have been multiple states of emergency called by municipalities across my riding, and the Trans-Canada Highway itself, the only corridor east to west through the country, is actually now at risk of being completely blocked. It is “passable” right now, according to the Ministry of Transportation. However, the actual current detour is going over a Bailey bridge, which cannot support the weight of a transport truck. There is certainly a very urgent situation evolving there.

I am pleased to say I did speak with the Minister of Emergency Preparedness today. He is well briefed on the situation and standing by to provide assistance should it be called upon. I want to assure all members of the House and all my constituents back home in the Kenora riding that this is a top priority, and I will continue to stay in touch with the minister on this to ensure the proper supports are in place. I want to thank the Minister of Emergency Preparedness for his work so far. I appreciate the opportunity to make note of that here this evening.

I will get back to the debate we are having on Bill C-11. In general, I certainly would support creating a more even playing field for Canadian content creators, especially up against many large foreign streaming services. However, this bill, as I am sure has been alluded to by many of my colleagues tonight, is almost an exact replica of the previous parliament's Bill C-10.

I am sure the Speaker will remember Bill C-10, and I can see she does remember it quite well. Obviously there has been a lot of criticism, and not only from members of the opposition here in the chamber but also from folks outside of the chamber, such as experts and Canadians from coast to coast to coast. They raised concerns about that bill and are now raising those same concerns about this bill.

I am hearing that at home in the Kenora riding. Given the current situation, it is not necessarily a top-of-mind issue at this very moment, but it is something many people had been raising to me over the last year, particularly since Bill C-11 was brought back in this new Parliament. I share a lot of the concerns my constituents have brought forward, and that is what I would like to outline in my comments today.

Government Orders

As my esteemed colleague from Barrie—Innisfil, who is here on his birthday, noted not too long ago, through the bill, the government would be giving the CRTC more power without telling Canadians exactly what it plans to do with that power. The minister noted he plans to issue a policy directive after the bill becomes law. That is problematic because in the chamber, we need to know what we are voting on. Canadians need to know what this bill is going to be ahead of time. The lack of transparency is certainly a cause for concern for many of us, myself included.

The bill would also give the CRTC the power to regulate any content that generates revenue “directly or indirectly”, which means virtually any content on the Internet could be regulated, despite the government members claiming that the bill would exempt user-generated content.

If we look back to Bill C-10 and the new iteration, Bill C-11, something that is a major cause for concern for a lot of people is that government overreach and the potential censorship that would come into play when the government would potentially be regulating all of that content. We need some transparency from the government on that.

● (2135)

Through this bill, the government would also get the power, if it becomes law, to boost the content it wants Canadians to see. Again, this is a very dangerous precedent to set in government overreach over what Canadians see privately on their social media and on other sites.

Unfortunately, I have a long list of concerns with this bill, but I would like to take a step back and talk about the scope of this bill. The government is talking about supporting Canadian content creators and promoting Canadian culture and heritage, and that is great, but what we are seeing in the bill is a number of measures that seem to be targeted at specific Canadians, and the regulation of what Canadians see and post on social media.

I can assure members that, if it were a Conservative government proposing a bill such as this, the Liberals would have a very different take on this legislation. Frankly, I am sure we would hear some very strong language coming from Liberal members. However, when they are doing it themselves, of course they do not see a problem.

Another question raised to me by many in my riding is, “What is Canadian content?” There is certainly a very important discussion around that, but not a lot of clarity. There are questions of whether it is Canadian content if something is made in Canada, if a Canadian contributed to it, or if a Canadian wrote something but was not actually a part of it after that. There are a lot of questions as to what Canadian content is. The government is planning to put a commission in place to determine that, but without proper debate and discussion around that beforehand, it does remain a major question mark.

Experts have said that this bill has “limitless jurisdictional, overbroad scope, and harmful discoverability provisions.” When we are hearing this type of language, and not from parliamentarians but from experts in the field, it is really important that we pause and take a step back to reflect on that. Above all else, when we are talk-

ing about Bill C-11, it is important that we have a wholesome debate on that.

I know we are doing our due diligence as the official opposition to review the bill. Obviously we have some concerns with it. We want to review the bill, and hopefully bring forward some reasonable amendments to improve it. However, my concern is that we saw the government move closure on this legislation, which is quite detrimental to the debate. There are a lot of members who want to be able to speak on this and share their concerns and ideas. Having a limit on debate, moving closure and not allowing members to speak to this does a disservice to all Canadians because their views are not being properly represented in this place.

The member for Barrie—Innisfil, and once again he is being featured in my speech today, noted that this is a bill that has many concerns around the potential censorship of Canadians on social media. Now we have a Liberal government that is actually moving closure and limiting debate on this censorship bill. It cannot get more hypocritical than that.

The last thought I want to leave the House with today is that there are certainly some important measures or goals set out in this bill. There is no doubt that promoting Canadian content and ensuring Canadian communities are represented in our content is important, but Bill C-11, just like the previous Parliament's Bill C-10 does not appear to be much more than the Liberal government single-handedly deciding which content Canadians should or should not see. That is a cause of concern for me and for many in the Kenora riding, and I believe for all Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

● (2140)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague said that what scares him about this bill is the CRTC's new powers.

The Conservatives quoted experts who think there might actually be no need for legislation to accomplish the goal of boosting the discoverability of francophone and Canadian content.

I would like my colleague to help me understand exactly which of the CRTC's new powers are a problem for the Conservatives.

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Melillo: Madam Speaker, the question gives me the opportunity to reiterate what I said in my comments. Giving sweeping new powers to the CRTC without any indication of what those powers will be and how they will be used is a cause for concern. The hon. member mentioned the experts. The experts have said that this bill has “limitless jurisdictional, overbroad scope”. I cannot say it any better than that.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I know that the member for Kenora has a huge indigenous population in his riding.

I would like to ask about the sections of this bill regarding indigenous people. One says, for example, “provide opportunities to Indigenous persons to produce programming in Indigenous languages, English or French, or in any combination of them, and to carry on broadcasting undertakings”. Does the member consider sections such as these censorship?

Mr. Eric Melillo: Madam Speaker, the short answer is that I certainly would not consider that censorship. As I mentioned off the top, there are some very important goals set out in Bill C-11 and some important aspects of it in terms of promoting Canadian content. I know from my constituents, particularly those in the remote northern first nations of my riding, which I know are still further south than the member's, but northern as far as Ontario goes, that culture is so important, especially in the remote, isolated communities, and anything we can do to promote that and to ensure that traditional languages and practices are preserved is definitely very important.

● (2145)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Kenora for his measured tone. I may not have agreed with everything he shared, but I do appreciate the tone he shared it in.

My question is with respect to making sense of the user-generated content provisions of the bill. My understanding of proposed subsection 4.2(2) is that it is limited to that which is revenue-generating, which would ideally cut out concerns with respect to a parent who might be posting videos on Facebook, for example.

I am looking to better understand the member's concern with respect to user-generated content. He used the term “censorship”. If it is limited to that which is revenue-generating, does that not address the concern?

Mr. Eric Melillo: Madam Speaker, as my colleague mentioned, we do not always agree on everything, but I have always found that his interventions in this place are very balanced and positive, and I appreciate his contribution to this chamber.

From my point of view, to the member's point, the issue I take is with the wording “directly or indirectly generates revenues”. That opens up the door and makes it a bit more of a grey area in terms of what could possibly fall under this category. That is why I think we need to have more debate on this and more discussion. I suspect, based on some of the comments I am hearing today, that this will end up in committee. I am hoping that all parties at committee will be able to work together in order to clear some of this up and make sure we bring forward a better bill for Canadians than the one we currently see.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, let me begin by sharing my concern for the residents of the hon. member's riding. I know they are in good hands and he is going to work extremely hard on their behalf to ensure that the situation is rectified for the safety of all the residents he represents.

This was once a place of informed debate. The concern with this bill, specifically as it relates to the CRTC and the policy directive to the CRTC happening after the bill is passed, causes me and, I am sure, many Canadians great concern. I am wondering if the hon.

member can reflect on what the consequences of that may be as it relates to the online content of Canadians.

Mr. Eric Melillo: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Barrie—Innisfil for his kind comments.

I would simply say that the lack of clarity, the fact that there is no transparency on what that directive will look like, really leaves it open to interpretation. It leaves it open to the fact that any Canadian content could fall under this.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, good evening to all my hon. colleagues this evening as we continue to debate Bill C-11, the online streaming act, which is very important to the modernization and amending of the Broadcasting Act. This evening, I would like to focus my remarks on the bill and what it means for the disability community and accessibility in particular.

[Translation]

So far, our debate on the online streaming act has largely focused on how the bill seeks to expand the legislative and regulatory broadcasting framework to include online broadcasters.

However, we must not forget that it is also about making the broadcasting system more inclusive. Ensuring that the Canadian broadcasting system serves all Canadians is an important goal.

[English]

In 2019, our government passed the Accessible Canada Act to make Canada barrier-free by January 1, 2040. This historic legislation allows the Government of Canada to take a proactive approach to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to accessibility in sectors under federal jurisdiction across Canada, which includes broadcasting. Accessibility is part of our government's progressive digital policy agenda, which aims to create a fairer, safer and more inclusive Internet for all Canadians, including disabled Canadians.

● (2150)

[Translation]

Both the Accessible Canada Act and the Broadcasting Act have a role to play in eliminating barriers to accessibility in the broadcasting sector. They work together to remove the barriers to accessibility that people with disabilities continue to face in society on a daily basis.

With respect to the online streaming act, Bill C-11 helps make Canada barrier-free by strengthening certain provisions of the Broadcasting Act that are designed to provide rights and protections to people with disabilities.

Government Orders

[English]

In this regard, the CRTC already has the power to impose accessibility requirements on traditional broadcasting services. To meet the needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing consumers, broadcasters generally need to caption 100% of their programs and meet various quality standards for captioning, including accuracy. To meet the needs of blind or partially sighted consumers, certain broadcasters are required to provide described video for appropriate programming in prime time.

[Translation]

The CRTC also requires cable companies and satellite services to offer persons with disabilities a trial period of at least 30 days so that they can see if the service and equipment meet their needs.

Lastly, the CRTC requires these same companies to supply their subscribers with set-top boxes and accessible remote controls when available.

[English]

The online streaming act updates the key tenets of the Broadcasting Act to strengthen the accessibility of the Canadian broadcasting system. First, it states that the system should include all Canadians, including persons with disabilities.

[Translation]

Second, it states that the Canadian broadcasting system must offer programming that is accessible without barriers to persons with disabilities. I want to make it clear that our bill strengthens this objective by striking “as resources become available” from the Broadcasting Act.

This is so that the availability of financial resources specifically can no longer be used to justify the existence of barriers that prevent the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

[English]

Finally, the online streaming act amends the Broadcasting Act to clarify that the CRTC should regulate the Canadian broadcasting system in a manner that “facilitates the provision of programs that are accessible without barriers to persons with disabilities”. The policy direction to the CRTC will reinforce this objective.

[Translation]

In addition to these key principles, our bill gives the CRTC the power to impose conditions of service on traditional broadcasters, such as TVA and CTV, and online broadcasters, such as Netflix and Illico, as well as cable broadcasters, such as Videotron and Rogers, to ensure programming accessibility. The CRTC will have the power to impose conditions of service that relate to the identification, prevention and removal of barriers to programming access.

[English]

The bill would also give the CRTC the power to impose monetary penalties on broadcasting services that do not comply with the regulations or orders. Conditions of service would therefore be linked to monetary penalties. As such, the CRTC would be able to impose monetary penalties on broadcasting services that do not

comply with the requirement to provide closed captioning or described video.

[Translation]

I said earlier that the Broadcasting Act works hand in hand with the Accessible Canada Act to remove barriers to accessibility in the broadcasting sector.

[English]

Under the Accessible Canada Act, broadcasting undertakings would be required to comply with accessibility regulations and prepare and publish accessibility plans describing how they will identify, remove and prevent barriers in their operations. They would also need to prepare and publish progress reports on these plans and establish ongoing feedback processes.

• (2155)

[Translation]

The CRTC and the accessibility commissioner share responsibility for ensuring compliance with and enforcing the Accessible Canada Act in the broadcasting sector. Both bodies can impose financial penalties on broadcasting companies that do not comply with the various provisions of the law.

[English]

With the passing of the online streaming act, we have an opportunity to make the Canadian broadcasting system more accessible and inclusive and to better support Canadians who, for too long, have been marginalized because of barriers to accessibility.

[Translation]

To achieve this, our bill will ensure that the Canadian broadcasting system, through its programming and employment opportunities, meets the needs and interests of all Canadians, including those living with disabilities.

[English]

I thank my colleagues for their time this evening and for listening to my remarks on Bill C-11. I look forward to questions and comments.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is great to be here tonight, late in the night, debating Bill C-11. I asked the member's colleague this question before, and I am going to ask him as well—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Madam Speaker, I believe the member is wearing a button he was asked to remove.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: I am sorry.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Thank you.

The hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

Government Orders

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, one of the things the Liberals talk about incessantly with this bill is levelling the playing field. As I iterated to the member's colleague just prior to this speech, a couple of organizations in my riding are trying to get a radio station started, and it takes, on average, three years to get approval from the CRTC to get a radio station. It seems to me that one of the things that would level the playing field would be to make it so that someone could sign up for a radio station in about the same amount of time it takes to sign up for a podcast, which is about 45 minutes, maybe less.

Would the member not agree that in levelling the playing field between heritage media forms and new media forms, we should be trying to reduce the barriers for all of them? On the Internet there is unlimited freedom. One can reach a large network. People living in northern Canada often do not have good Internet access or the capacity to get podcasts, but if we could get local radio stations fired up in about the same time it would take a podcast—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will give the hon. member an opportunity to answer.

The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I will try my best to answer the query from the hon. member, if I understood it correctly.

I grew up in northern British Columbia at a time when there was no Internet, and we listened to CHTK, which was a local radio station, and a local TV station, so I know how important local radio and local TV are to rural communities from coast to coast to coast. What I will say is that it is comparing apples to oranges when we compare the Internet to radio and the transmission of radio waves in the process.

The bill we are debating tonight is a modernization of part of the Broadcasting Act. It is well needed. It would level the playing field, in terms of bringing the online streamers into the act and under regulation.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limouilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, before I ask my question, I want to congratulate my colleague on how much his French has improved. He has made great strides in just a few months.

My question has to do with discoverability, the importance of being able to access Canadian content, francophone content. At this time, pretty much all we get on these platforms is American content.

I would like to hear my colleague's opinion on the importance of discoverability when it comes to showcasing our culture.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beauport—Limouilou for the question.

[English]

Discoverability in reference to language minorities across Canada, and how that situation may prevail, is something that I find very important. Enhancing accessibility to French-speaking programs across the country is also very important, in my humble opinion.

• (2200)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to ask my colleague for his comments on what the Conservative strategy has been over the last six months. Basically, since the ban on conversion therapy got through the House, the Conservatives have refused to let any legislation through. However, as we have this debate tonight on Bill C-11, we know we have a situation where the web giants have created billions of dollars through record profiteering during the pandemic, and Canadian musicians, artists and actors are finding themselves, particularly in the case of musicians, losing 80% of their income. We have many examples of the web giants using the production and creative knowledge of Canadians to make enormous profits, but they are paying just pennies, just scraps, to Canadian artists.

Why does the member think the Conservatives are objecting so strenuously to having in place a situation where Canadian artists are actually remunerated effectively for their creations? Why are the Conservatives blocking this bill and so many other bills?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, Canadians from coast to coast to coast sent us here to get work done for their benefit and to move legislation forward. I am very happy to see that the NDP is working constructively with us to do that, whether it is on this bill, Bill C-19 or other pieces of legislation.

We need to bring online streamers within the system. They benefit from access to the Canadian market, but they do not contribute to the creation of Canadian content. We need to change that, and part of Bill C-11 would do that. We also need to level the playing field, which Bill C-11 would do as well.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is with great interest that I rise today to speak to Bill C-11, the online streaming act, which follows on Bill C-10, an act to amend the Broadcasting Act.

First, as a student of journalism, media arts and technology at the Cégep de Jonquière, which I would like to give a shout-out to, then as a politics and communications student at Université de Sherbrooke and even recently as the critic for seniors, I have heard a lot about what is happening to the media and web giants like GAFAM. That is what my speech will focus on today, because my other colleagues, including the member for Drummond, have spoken at length about the importance of Bill C-11. In my speech, I will address three points: the link between this bill and local news, the importance to seniors of protecting regional media, and the Bloc's gains in this bill.

The first part of my speech will be a plea to save regional news. For that, I will cite excerpts from *Extinction de voix: plaidoyer pour la sauvegarde de l'information régionale*, a book on this very subject that was written by a journalist and author from back home, Marie-Ève Martel.

Government Orders

First, by not requiring enough of a contribution from GAFAM and their ilk, we are helping erode regional news content. We can rail against the unfair tax treatment between the news media and the web giants and the federal government's inaction when it comes to remedying the situation. Local news outlets have been part of the socio-cultural landscape in Quebec communities for decades. Many of these outlets played an essential role in their community for years and years before closing up shop.

The uncertain economic outlook for regional news businesses dictates the rules of the game. Economic stability seems unattainable for some. There is a high price to be paid for the dwindling number of journalistic voices out there. It is not uncommon for several small media outlets to be served by a single journalist or a barebones staff. They sometimes get content from national news outlets or other group members to pad the web edition. Televised newscasts are cut down or fleshed out with national news reports on more general topics. In some cases, any white space on the platforms is simply filled with press releases, which means that the message is not subject to a journalist's scrutiny. By using such practices, news outlets can hide the fact that they are producing increasingly less local content, as a result of having insufficient resources to produce as much coverage as they used to.

Journalism is often called the fourth estate, because it is in charge of monitoring the other three, namely the legislative branch, the executive branch and the judiciary, and reminding us of their purpose. We are governed by elected members who advocate for transparency on all fronts, at least in their speeches. In the digital age, they can now communicate with their constituents without an intermediary. Their policies should be available online with just a few clicks. Despite this so-called transparency, the information is not necessarily more accessible than it was before. There are still many obstacles that will need to disappear before we can be said to have full access to this information.

We have to acknowledge the many barriers making regional journalists' work harder. Although these limitations and barriers are not directly contributing to the disappearance of the media, they prevent the media from fulfilling their mission, so in that sense, they are a threat on the same level as economic uncertainty.

Another equally important role the media plays, regardless of location, is oversight of political power. Elected representatives represent their constituents, so, as officers and administrators of public funds and municipal government, they are accountable for managing them. That watchdog role is one of the main reasons media outlets do what they do. Need I point out that the media took shape as political instruments centuries ago? On behalf of the people, journalists keep representatives accountable and ensure the proper functioning of local governments. That is why they are known as the fourth estate, which some elected representatives sometimes dislike.

Nevertheless, as much as journalists keep an eye on politicians, they also serve them, if only by enabling them to take the pulse of the populace. Many elected representatives rely on local news for information about problems and issues of concern to the people. The media essentially helps build local identities, serves as a catalyst for local unity, and provides a public forum for the exchange of ideas.

Regional media outlets serve as an advertising platform that gives businesses consumer visibility and, as a service, they are a powerful showcase for small and medium-sized businesses.

An American study published in May 2018 found that when local media shuts down, this has a profound impact on the local economy. The study looked at a total of 1,266 counties in the U.S. served by more than 1,500 newspapers, 291 of which disappeared between 1996 and 2015. The authors found that, since the media monitors how contracts are awarded, including by various levels of government, when the media disappears, this has a direct impact. Public spending tends to increase within a three-year period, particularly in the area of long-term borrowing for infrastructure projects.

• (2205)

In the communities that were studied, borrowing costs were on average 0.55% to 1.1% higher in places where there was no longer a newspaper to keep an eye on public spending.

These are just a few examples from the book to illustrate the importance of better protection.

Ms. Martel has recently written another book, *Privé de sens: plaidoyer pour un meilleur accès à l'information*. It is a plea for better access to information. In it, she explores Quebec's access to information system, which was set up 40 years ago and allows anyone to obtain most documents produced by public organizations. These days, the mechanisms underpinning the system are often outdated. Long wait times, astronomical fees, conflicts of interest, blatant misunderstandings, insufficient resources and redacted documents are some of the numerous and overlapping reasons given for refusing or delaying the provision of information. The book also explores the connection between access to information requests and the democratic foundations of our societies.

We must now remember that in the 20th century, Quebec's and Canada's local broadcasters had two advantages that enabled them to provide free local journalism and increased their revenues.

First, the media could offer a package of products, or a combination of genres and categories, with the profitable parts of the package subsidizing the unprofitable parts, thus ensuring the overall viability of the platform. For example, television stations used to offer all types of programs, including news, sports and others, and they used the profits to subsidize less profitable genres.

Second, radio and television stations and newspapers served as gatekeepers. They provided news that listeners, viewers and readers could not officially or easily have obtained otherwise.

The Internet changed everything. Websites and platforms took off, starting with the classified ads on Craigslist and moving on to international digital platforms, such as Google and Facebook ads, and they were soon able to compete with local media for profits. With targeted print, audio and video media being delivered digitally, the Internet enabled more competition for advertising dollars and for consumers' time and attention, including international competition for these three elements. The competition, especially from global Internet conglomerates, devastated local Canadian media.

The Quebec and Canadian radio and television broadcasting sector is in crisis. An article published by the Canadian Press on August 27, 2020, reported that the short- and medium-term outlook for private radio and television broadcasting in Canada is very bleak. It is high time to subject web giants to the Broadcasting Act by forcing them to contribute financially.

Second, the survival of local media is extremely important for seniors, as this is how they stay connected to their communities. They are worried that the web giants are not paying their fair share, which is jeopardizing the survival of local media. I got a question about this at a debate during the 2019 election campaign. I have also heard from organizations on this issue recently because of my position as critic for seniors.

Third, I have to mention that the Bloc Québécois contributed significantly to the previous version of the bill, the infamous Bill C-10, and was able to secure the following gains: the protection and promotion of original French-language programs; the discoverability of Canadian programming services and original Canadian content, including French-language original content, in an equitable proportion; the promotion of original Canadian content in both official languages and in indigenous languages; a mandatory contribution to Canada's broadcasting system if a company is unable to make use of Canadian resources as part of its programming; the requirement for first-run French-language content, in order to ensure there are new French-language shows on Netflix, for example, and not old ones; and a sunset clause that would provide for a comprehensive review of the act every five years.

I would like to mention that the Haute-Yamaska chamber of commerce held its 35th awards gala last weekend, and the daily newspaper *La Voix de l'Est* won in the category "retail business and services with more than 15 employees", demonstrating that our local news outlets are an integral part of our economy. Mario Gariépy received the community builder award, notably for his involvement with the committee that turned *La Voix de l'Est* into a co-operative.

To conclude, this bill is very important to us, because Quebec culture is at the heart of the Bloc Québécois's mission. Broadcasting is undoubtedly the most effective tool for disseminating our culture, and it helps define our national identity. Local artists regularly remind us of this. The Bloc Québécois is obviously in favour of modernizing the Broadcasting Act. We must keep pace, stop the misinformation and move forward. I was barely 10 years old in 1991, the last time this legislation was reviewed.

• (2210)

[English]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the most concerning parts about Bill C-11 is that the govern-

Government Orders

ment does not have to release the policy directive to the CRTC on user-generated content, and it does not have to do it while we are debating the bill.

In fact, the expectation is that, once the bill is passed, the policy directive will be shared with the CRTC. In the absence of any knowledge of what that directive may look like, does it not concern the Bloc that this bill does not reflect what that policy directive is as we debate the bill?

We are effectively debating something that we are not sure of, in terms of what is going to happen. Is that not a concern to my hon. colleague?

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I hear so many things from the Conservatives.

I have to believe we will achieve something with this, especially if it is enshrined in law. I am not concerned.

I think we have proven that the bill must go ahead. The last time the Broadcasting Act was reviewed was in 1991. It is high time that we moved forward on this. In any case, all of these issues will be resolved. There has been too much misinformation. Various legal analyses have shown that the Conservatives were spreading misinformation on this issue. Enough is enough. Let us move forward.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her speech. I know the riding of Shefford very well. I want to congratulate *La Voix de l'Est* on the award it won, which is a well-deserved honour.

My colleague raised some good points about the bill, including the importance of supporting artists.

It is important that the bill be sent to committee so that we can ask questions and get answers. For instance, we could ask the CRTC to clarify its interpretation of the rules. All this should be done in committee, but the Conservatives consistently refuse to refer the bill to committee.

What does my colleague think of this systematic obstruction by the Conservatives, who refuse to allow us to seek answers in committee?

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I began addressing this when I answered the previous question from my Conservative colleague.

Government Orders

I find it hard to understand. There is a lot of disinformation. Legal opinions have shown that the Conservatives' arguments are unfounded. The committee's study will address that. Furthermore, I do not understand the attacks on artists. It is said that the bill responds to the representations from artists, who have not been able to adapt and modernize. Our artists are being attacked. As I mentioned, there is also the issue of enshrinement, which would make the CRTC rules much more rigid. There are different aspects to be addressed. If we want the bill to move forward, it must be referred to a committee.

I do not understand the Conservatives' obstruction. I also do not understand why gratuitous accusations are being made against Quebec's artists.

• (2215)

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Shefford on her speech.

I know she is passionate about journalism, the arts and culture, and I know how important this bill is to her. The previous version of the bill, Bill C-10 was very important to her. This year's bill is all the more important because it is urgent.

Lately we have been talking a lot about the place of indigenous cultures, of first nations. People want to reinstate the space they deserve, to hear their cultures, to hear their voices. Today, I had a conversation with a representative of an Innu community who is also an artist. He said that nobody listened to them, nobody made space for them, nobody gave them ice time in the broadcasting landscape, and it is the same for digital platforms.

Does my colleague think that, without this bill, indigenous cultures, first nations cultures—which some people righteously say should be put front and centre and should take up more space—would be out of luck and forgotten no matter how many nice things we say?

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, discoverability applies to French-language content. My colleague from Beauport—Limoilou pointed out in her speech that she has a hard time finding French-language content on these platforms.

This also applies to our indigenous peoples, who need visibility. Last week we had a debate on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. There are all kinds of stories in the news that show how important it is to be in touch with indigenous peoples and show that they also need to be discovered.

Discoverability is not just for francophones. It is also for indigenous people and many others as well, thanks to Bill C-11.

[English]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise to speak to this bill, the online streaming act, which we know amends the Broadcasting Act and makes consequential amendments to other acts.

At the outset, I want to state, as my colleague, the member for Perth—Wellington, did in his excellent remarks on this bill, my support for those sections of it that would see major international companies pay their share and invest in Canadian content. However,

my remarks will focus on the impact this bill would have on the rights of all Canadians.

First, I will give a recap. When the first iteration of this bill was introduced in the last Parliament, it did not capture the attention of many Canadians. In fact, at second reading the bill was simply passed on division and referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage for review. Then, during the clause-by-clause deliberations, the Liberal members of the committee voted to remove an important safeguard of Canadians' freedom of speech. Canadians began to take notice, and started to loudly voice their opposition to this amendment and, by extension, to the bill's passage.

It bears repeating that the clause the heritage committee removed was a substantial clause that the justice department, in its opinion of the bill, made specific reference to as being necessary for the protection of the rights of Canadians.

It is baffling to me that the government, in particular the Minister of Canadian Heritage, along with his allies in the NDP and the Bloc party, could not see why millions of Canadians became opponents of this bill overnight. I believe that Canadians rightly suspected that this was not a case of the Liberals, together with the Bloc and NDP, just having a difference of opinion, but rather knowing that Bill C-10 infringed on their fundamental rights. They did not care that it did so.

Equally troubling was how the Liberals rammed Bill C-10 through the House without allowing a full debate at the heritage committee. The many outstanding concerns that had been expressed by experts, parliamentarians and Canadians went unaddressed. In fact, the shadow minister at the time, the member for Richmond—Arthabaska, made the following observation: "Weeks ago, the Trudeau Liberals secretly withdrew the section of their own bill that protects individual users' content."

• (2220)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mend  s): The hon. secretary to the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, although the member was quoting, she used the Prime Minister's last name and was referring to this Prime Minister, not a former prime minister with the same last name. Perhaps she would like to rephrase it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mend  s): Duly noted. The hon. member knows better.

The hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, my apologies. "Weeks ago, the Liberals secretly withdrew the section of their own bill that protects individual users' content, resulting in Canadians being subject to broad government powers to regulate their use of social media. The government went even further when it used extreme tactics that have not been used in decades to silence the opposition, keeping Canadians in the dark about their infringement on freedom of speech and ramming the bill through without proper debate."

At this time, I need to point out the complete hypocrisy of the Liberals and NDP as we are discussing this bill late in the evening, but under time allocation. When the Liberals introduced Motion No. 11, we were told that one of the reasons they were doing so was so that more members could participate in debate on legislation. Why then did the government, with the help of the NDP, pass the time allocation motion on this important bill at second reading, limiting debate and the ability for the remaining opposition parties to hold the government to account? The answer is that this is part of a pattern of behaviour where the Prime Minister and his government run from transparency and accountability.

Here we are: We are debating Bill C-11, which is another encroachment by the Liberals on the fundamental rights of Canadians. It is under time constraints when clearly opposition to the former bill, now packaged as Bill C-11, and its encroachment on freedom of speech, are not partisan matters. It is not just the Conservative Party and its strongest supporters who are opposed to what the Liberals are attempting. Bill C-11 is a mere copy of the Liberals' deeply flawed Bill C-10, and it fails to address the serious concerns raised by experts and Canadians.

I would like to quote from a piece published by Michael Geist on his website on February 3, and I did that just for the member for Kingston and the Islands. It is entitled, "Not ready for prime time: Why Bill C-11 leaves the door open to CRTC regulation of user-generated content". The opening paragraph reads as follows:

The minister and his department insisted that the new Bill C-11 addressed the concerns raised with Bill C-10 and that Canadians could be assured that regulating user generated content is off the table. Unfortunately, that simply isn't the case. The new bill, now billed the Online Streaming Act, restores one exception but adds a new one, leaving the door open for CRTC regulation. Indeed, for all the talk that user generated content is out, the truth is that everything from podcasts to TikTok videos fit neatly into the new exception that gives the CRTC the power to regulate such content as a "program".

He concludes his article on Bill C-11 with the following:

There was an opportunity to use the re-introduction of the bill to fully exclude user generated content (no other country in the world regulates content this way), limit the scope of the bill to a manageable size, and create more certainty and guidance for the CRTC. Instead, the government has left the prospect of treating Internet content as programs subject to regulation in place, envisioned the entire globe as subject to Canadian broadcast jurisdiction, increased the power of the regulator, and done little to answer many of the previously unanswered questions. The bill is not ready for prime time and still requires extensive review and further reform to get it right.

The former commissioner of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, Peter Menzies, is quoted by Global News as saying the following:

The biggest difference is that it's called Bill C-11 instead of Bill C-10.... I think they deserve a little bit of credit for acknowledging that some of the concerns that many people raised last spring did indeed have merit, but their efforts at resolving those, I think, are weak.

The campaigns director for Open Media said of Bill C-11 the following:

Treating the Internet like cable television was a bad idea last year, and it's a bad idea now. The Online Streaming Act continues to give the CRTC the power to use sorely outdated 1980s ideas about what "Canadian" content is, to control what shows up on our online feeds and what doesn't.

Government Orders

• (2225)

These quotes by experts give voice and detail to the many, many emails that I have received from constituents and from Canadians who oppose this erosion of their freedoms. Canadians are paying attention.

In closing, I do want to remind my colleagues of two very short quotes by a former prime minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who passionately defended individual liberty. He said, "Canada is free and freedom is its nationality" and "Nothing will prevent me from continuing my task of preserving at all cost our civil liberty." I agree with the former Liberal prime minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier. I wish the current Liberal Party did as well.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am sure that Wilfrid Laurier would be very glad to hear that of all countries in the world, Canada is ranked fifth in terms of freedom, as found by Freedom House, which is an organization that has been around since 1941. They have actually rated our political freedom as 40 out of 40, and they have rated our civil liberties freedoms as 58 out of 60. We are ranked the fifth freest country in the world.

Perhaps the member would like to reflect on the fact that maybe there is a little bit of manufactured outrage going on right now with the Conservatives trying to find a wedge issue, trying to find something to try to drum up some fear, and trying to score cheap political points. Maybe that is what is going on here.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, to me what was the most troubling part of the debate which occurred over the predecessor bill to the proposed legislation is what we have now before us. Time and time again we have seen the government's overreach into the lives of Canadians, whether it is through its values test in the Canada summer jobs attestation, its subtle willingness to undermine Canadians' freedoms by failing to adequately protect the conscience rights of medical professionals, or its inexplicable refusal to end the federal mandates.

The government's actions demonstrate to all Canadians that it is out of touch and does not care about our constitutional rights.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I like to start by looking at what we agree on.

I think we can all agree that the Broadcasting Act needs to be amended. It dates back to 1991, the wonderful year I met my spouse.

This legislation needs to be amended, adapted and modernized not only to reflect today's realities, but also to ensure that our artists have their window of opportunity and that this window is not slammed shut by the Americans.

Government Orders

I would like to hear any constructive suggestions that my colleague has for amending the Broadcasting Act, and I would also like to know what she would like to see in the legislation.

● (2230)

[English]

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I support creating a level playing field between large foreign streaming services and Canadian broadcasters, while protecting the individual rights and freedoms of Canadians. I said at the beginning of my remarks that there are parts of this bill that we do agree with. We know that Canada is home to many world-class writers, actors, composers, musicians, artists and creators. Creators need rules which do not hold back their ability to be Canadian and global successes.

As I pointed out, while the government claims there is now an exemption for user-generated content, this legislation allows the CRTC to regulate any content that generates revenue directly or indirectly. We need to make sure that we deal with the clauses in this bill that are deeply flawed.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I appreciate the comments from the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek and her effort in wanting to protect freedom of speech for Canadians.

I am finding her position interesting, though, because as an indigenous person, as a person who has experienced intergenerational trauma, I tend to be quite sensitive to assimilation, direct or indirect. I feel like the member's opposition to this bill is more a way of protecting unfettered foreign assimilation by web giants like Netflix, Amazon and Disney+.

Could you comment on whether this is indeed the fact, that what you are trying to do is protect those rights?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Just a reminder to the hon. member that I am not the one trying to do something.

The hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I do appreciate the question from my colleague.

As I said, Conservatives support the idea that large international corporations like Netflix, Disney+ and others must pay their fair share in Canada and invest in Canadian content. I would remind the members in this place that this was in our election platform.

However, where we have concerns and where we differ drastically from the NDP-Liberal government and their Bloc allies is in regard to the application of this bill to creators of online digital content.

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by saying that the cultural aspect of our lives is extremely important. For years, we have had the means to allow Canadians across the country to hear the voices of other Canadians, to listen to music, to watch movies, to watch television and to experience a Canadian culture that is extremely complex and very diversified.

When I think of Quebec culture, for example, I remember the first time I listened to Robert Charlebois, on a Sunday evening, because we could listen to French radio at home, in New Westminster, British Columbia. He was the first Quebec artist who forged my understanding of the diversity of Quebec's cultural life.

What artists are telling us is that there is currently a real imbalance in the system. Consequently, as talented as they may be, artists cannot fully reap the benefits of all their potential, as artists, to create and to promote our cultural life and to make it so complex and so profound.

[English]

That is really the message tonight. Our artists across the country are saying there is something wrong with the system. We have web giants, these massive companies, that are foreign-owned and the Conservatives support them to the detriment of Canadians and Canadian artists. These companies make these enormous profits while paying scraps to Canadian artists.

As we know, the reality is when we are talking about the word “censorship”, we are throwing it around so loosely when it comes to Bill C-11, and I will come back to that in just a moment. The reality is the censorship that takes place now with the web giants is the algorithms that withhold Canadian content from Canadians. Even Canadians trying to access that content cannot do it because of the algorithms that are not shared or not transparent that censors what Canadians can see and what Canadians can hear. That is the reality.

As members well know, other countries are putting forward legislation so that these web giants, these massive foreign-owned corporations, that pay no taxes in Canada and do not show the responsibility they should be showing in Canada, actually have to be transparent on the algorithms that control what people see, what people watch and what people can hear.

The idea that we put in place an update to the Broadcasting Act makes sense, because it establishes a level playing field so we do not see the situation we are seeing now. We see that Canadians musicians have lost 80% of their income as more and more of their product goes online and they get paid less and less by the massive web giants that are supported, for reasons I do not understand, by some members of this House.

As that happens, it is important for Canadian MPs to step up and try to level the playing field. Musicians losing 80% of their income should be something that all members of Parliament should be concerned about. About \$3 billion has been taken out of musicians' pockets. That should be something that all Canadians are concerned about.

I talked earlier about listening, for the first time, late one evening in New Westminster, British Columbia, to a Quebec artist, Robert Charlebois, and understanding the incredible depth of Québécois culture. When I was growing up, I was able to listen to Rush, Gordon Lightfoot and Bachman-Turner Overdrive and so many other Canadian artists that would not have been able to get into the market if the American record companies and the American broadcasters had told Canadians what they could or could not listen to. That is the reality here.

When we have foreign companies deciding what Canadians can watch and listen to, we need to establish a level playing field so our Canadian artists can shine through.

• (2235)

The Conservatives, who are opposed to this legislation moving forward, even to get answers on it, should understand that not one of them has quoted a Canadian artist or musician tonight. They cannot, because artist associations, everyone from the Canadian Independent Music Association to ACTRA, are all very supportive of the legislation. What, then, should we be doing tonight in this debate?

My Conservative colleagues, and I have respect for them, have said that they simply do not want this legislation to move forward, just as they have been saying for months that they do not want any other legislation to move forward. We have seen it with Bill C-8. Teachers were asking for their tax credit and the Conservatives said they would not pass it. We have seen it with Bill C-19 and dental care, which the NDP pushed forward. For the first time, there was an affordable housing platform, and the Conservatives said they did not want that to move forward either.

On Bill C-11, as we have heard in the debate tonight, the Conservatives have talked about three concerns. First off, they reference a bill that no longer exists and say they did not like it. That is fair enough, but that is not the bill we are debating. Then they talk about a bill that may be coming in a year or so that deals with on-line harms, and they say they do not like that bill either. Well, that debate will be in a year.

Then they say, about this bill, that they believe in a level playing field, but they have some questions. At the same time, however, they do not want this bill to go to committee, where we can get answers to the questions they have asked. Some of the questions they have asked around the CRTC are legitimate. How it defines its powers is a legitimate question, and I have that question too.

We would love to have the bill come to committee, because the committee, as part of our legislative process, is the place where we get answers to questions. We could sit here to midnight every single night, but we are not going to get the ministry and the CRTC to answer our questions until the bill gets to committee.

This is where it becomes passing strange. We have had debate now for a number of days. We should be referring the bill to committee. If Conservative members do not want to vote for the bill they do not have to vote for it. However, for them to say they are going to stop any member of Parliament from getting the answers they are asking around the bill by refusing to have it go to committee does not make any sense at all.

Government Orders

It is also not respectful to the artists from coast to coast to coast who have been asking for years to have a level playing field. They have been asking for years for us, as members of Parliament, to play our role and establish a level playing field to allow them, finally, to have some presence in the online world so that Canadian content can shine and the web giants will not decide what Canadians get to see and hear.

This is really the challenge this evening. We will be sitting until midnight, but the Conservatives will say they want to keep sitting and sitting and will say the same things. As I mentioned earlier, they have debated a past bill that no longer exists and a future bill that may or may not exist, and on this bill, they say they have questions.

We should all agree that the way to get answers to those questions is to refer the bill to committee and allow the heritage committee to sit down and get answers from the minister and the CRTC. In that way, we could respond to our legislative role, which is to make sure that as we pass this legislation, it is done in the most effective way possible and actually does what it purports to do: level the playing field for Canadian artists so that our musicians, actors and all of the Canadian cultural and artistic sphere can shine.

We know that when there is a level playing field, it is not the web giants deciding what Canadians can see and hear. When there is a level playing field, Canadian artists will shine. My message to the Conservatives is to let Canadian artists shine. Let us get answers to the bill. Let us get this bill to committee.

• (2240)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives seem to be having a hard time understanding that those who control the distribution network have the opportunity to promote their own product. They do not understand this concept when we talk about culture, but when we talk about oil and pipelines, they understand the distribution system. That speaks volumes.

Does the member not agree that the only thing Bill C-11 does, in reality, is require online distribution networks to offer a wider range of viewpoints and products and that ultimately, this will improve democracy here in Canada?

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I think this allows for greater balance in the distribution network and more opportunities for Canadians to hear and see Canadian artists. That is why the entire artistic community in Canada says that we must move forward with this bill.

Government Orders

So far, I have received roughly 8,000 letters in favour of this bill and two dozen against. The letters of opposition came from people who were still talking about a future bill, a bit like the Conservatives, who are saying this evening that in a year or two there may be another bill. That will be the time for another debate.

For now, Canadian artists want us to bring in a system that stops disadvantaging them for once. I think we need to listen to them and move forward with this bill by sending it to committee.

• (2245)

[English]

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, the NDP always used to be a party of principle, standing up for Canadians' rights, freedoms and civil liberties. However, since its new common-law relationship with the Liberals, it seems as though it has abandoned some of those principles and is wilfully choosing to overlook the aspects of this bill that would provide undue censorship and give the CRTC power that we are not used to experiencing.

The member has completely mischaracterized the Conservatives. We believe that there should be a level playing field, especially for Canadian artists, and we believe that big web giants should be paying their fair share, absolutely.

We have seen how the Liberals have abused Canadians' civil liberties and violated their constitutional rights and charter rights through the Public Health Agency of Canada by allowing it to track all Canadians and Quebecers on their cellphones. Is the member not concerned that the Liberals will also do that with this bill?

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I have respect for the member for Provencher, but he has just proven my point. The Conservatives are not debating Bill C-11. In fact, many of the Conservatives who have intervened tonight patently have not read the bill. They do not know what is in the bill, so they are debating everything else. They are debating cellphone technology. Are they kidding me? This is exactly the problem. The Conservatives want to sit until midnight, but they want to talk about cellphones. They want to talk about anything but the bill.

On behalf of Canadian artists from coast to coast to coast, I say this to the member for Provencher and all other Conservative MPs: Let us get the bill to committee. Let us get the legitimate questions answered. Let us stop talking about cellphones and all kinds of other things that have nothing to do with Bill C-11.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

[Translation]

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

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that you are doing an excellent job. Respectfully, our colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby just gave a speech and we would have liked to have asked him some questions.

Just two questions were asked. Perhaps the questions and the answers were a bit long, but I would have liked for a third party to at least have the opportunity to ask a question. I wanted to mention this for future consideration.

[English]

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, I think if you sought it, there would be unanimous consent to give the member for Drummond a question. I really want to hear what he has to say.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Apparently, we cannot, even through unanimous consent.

[Translation]

I understand the hon. member's point. I was keeping a close eye on the clock to leave time for a third question, but there just was not enough time. I am very sorry.

[English]

The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to stand in my home to speak tonight to this bill. It pains me to have to do this, as it is another attempt by the Liberals to restrict Canadians' speech.

I would like to reiterate what so many content creators and their stakeholders have expressed in opposition to Bill C-11 and its predecessor, Bill C-10. No matter what the Liberals claim, this bill is a near carbon copy of Bill C-10 and represents a direct assault on the free speech of every Canadian. That simple fact outweighs any supposed benefit of the legislation, which is why I feel it needs to be stopped.

I had previously spoken on Bill C-10 in the last Parliament. That was before the Liberals decided to vote against aspects of their own legislation in order to target the free expression of average Canadian content creators. At the time, I spoke about the shortcomings of the bill and how it does not succeed in making the changes to our broadcasting system that are needed to ensure that who we are, what we say and how we say it within Canada and to the world are available going forward.

The pandemic amplified that need. We have all spent more time indoors during the pandemic, and without a doubt, more time with family in front of a TV and computer screens cemented the fact that our media landscape has changed forever. Canadians have changed how they gather information and find entertainment. They have also come to realize that there are no limits on the opportunities to choose where they go for their content. Looking at this bill in its present form, I think the Liberals fully understand this new reality. That is why they felt the need to take it in the concerning direction that we see today.

As background, Bill C-11 would give sweeping power to the CRTC to regulate the Internet, with no clear guidelines for how that power will be used. That is significant. Despite claims that this bill exempts user-generated content, the Liberals still plan to allow the CRTC to regulate any content that generates revenue “directly or indirectly”. That means virtually all content would still be regulated, including that of independent content creators earning a living on social media platforms like YouTube and Spotify. In fact, YouTube has been critical of attempts to force-feed Canadian content that Canadians might choose not to watch. Ninety per cent of Canadian YouTubers' revenue comes from beyond Canada. A video's poor performance within our borders will translate into reduced distribution around the world, threatening an industry that contributes \$923 million to Canada's GDP.

This is not a surprising element of the bill. In the last Parliament, the Liberals voted against the section of Bill C-10 that would have at least partially exempted individual users who upload videos to social media sites like YouTube and Facebook from CRTC regulation. They have given the CRTC the power to regulate the content Canadians upload on social media and the social media sites that allow them to publish that content, just like the programming on a licensed television station like CTV or Global.

At the time, the minister also mentioned that the CRTC could impose discoverability regulations on individuals who have a large enough following online. This would put Canadian content at even greater risk, especially the content that the minister or the Prime Minister does not like. The government does not like the fact that Canadians have the freedom to create, criticize and comment online free of government censorship.

The government's fear of the average content creator is evident through its past actions to curtail debate in the committee. Our Conservative opposition does not oppose elements of legislation without putting forward common-sense amendments. At the heritage committee, members proposed an amendment to Bill C-10 that would have limited regulation to online undertakings with more than \$50 million a year in revenue and 250,000 subscribers in Canada. In effect, this amendment would have only applied to large streaming services. This approach was rejected outright, so there is a disconnect here.

Then the Liberals went to the unprecedented length to gag our work in committee. In a move not seen in over 20 years, the Prime Minister and his minister placed time allocation on the work of the committee to properly vet each clause of the bill and hear expert testimony on its effect. This is what they are saying they want in committee now.

Sadly, the Liberals have also shown disrespect for the House and for the fundamental rights and freedoms we have all been elected to defend. The latest motion, Motion No. 11, gives the NDP-Liberal government the power to extend debate daily, without notice, until midnight, while giving it a pass on having to participate and giving the Prime Minister the ability to arbitrarily shut down the House until the fall if he feels that his power is being threatened by the truth revealed in this place.

Government Orders

• (2250)

Over and over again, they have come dangerously close to being exposed for using disinformation to convince Canadians that they have their backs and are motivated by concern for the safety of Canadians, so why would Canadians trust them with this latest version of their anti-speech bill?

On this side of the House, we will not permit them to run roughshod over Canadians' rights and freedoms without a challenge. I would like to reiterate the concerns of some of Canada's leading experts on the digital economy and our media landscape, because we want to hear from the people who are the experts.

Michael Geist serves as the Canada research chair in Internet and e-commerce law at the University of Ottawa. He has said that, despite the government's claim, it simply is not the case that Internet regulation is off the table with C-11. According to Geist, “everything from podcasts to TikTok videos fit neatly into the new exception that gives the CRTC the power to regulate such content as a ‘program.’”

He has warned that Bill C-11 actually goes beyond Bill C-10 in empowering the CRTC to control user-generated content.

He says, “As Bill C-10 made its way through the legislative process, new provisions were added to limit the scope of CRTC orders and regulations over online undertakings and user generated content.... Those limits have been removed from Bill C-11, which once again opens the door to a far more aggressive CRTC regulatory approach.”

I would also like to reiterate what Mr. Geist said last year. He said, “We would never dream of saying the CRTC would or should regulate things like our own letters or our blog posts, but this is a core expression for millions of Canadians, and we are saying that it is treated as a program like any other, and subject to regulation.”

To Geist, it is clear that Bill C-11 aims to pick winners and losers in the competitive digital marketplace of ideas. No other country in the world regulates content in the way that this bill is proposing. The government missed a golden opportunity to listen to what Canadians had to say. While they could have fully excluded user-generated content and put strict limits on the CRTC's power, they chose not to, and that is a concern.

Peter Menzies is another expert well known to the government as the former vice-chair of the CRTC. According to Mr. Menzies, the biggest difference between Bill C-11 and last year's Bill C-10 is the bill number. He says that the Liberals “continue to believe that the internet is broadcasting, and I don't think they really understand what it is”.

Government Orders

Well, either they do not understand, or maybe they are so concerned that they are trying to limit that. His input on the debate has justified many of the fears that my colleagues and I have with regard to the practical effect of Bill C-11.

As with so many other bills, and this is important, the Liberals are choosing to throw up their hands and empower the unelected CRTC with defining social media and deciding whether uploaded content passes its smell test. That should not be its job.

Canadians could attempt to hold the CRTC accountable for its decisions if there were public records of its meetings, but according to Menzies, no minutes of their meetings are kept. As a former commissioner, Mr. Menzies knows the mandate of the CRTC better than most anyone. The CRTC does manage speech. In his words:

From the moment the Royal Commission on Broadcasting was established...the regulation and licensing of Canada's publicly-owned radio waves...has been about who owns it and what speech it will approve to be used upon it...

The CRTC governs what type of music is made, and by who, and when it is played, along with how many hours a week must be designated for "spoken word," news, "deejay banter" and advertising. It decides what is and isn't a montage, and it makes sure that if you are a religious broadcaster, you have to give 20 hours per week to people who don't share your faith.

The CRTC is not a transparent body, whose natural instinct is to regulate and shape speech to align with its definition. The CRTC and the Liberals should not be defining what the public wants in this new digital age.

Conservatives support creating a level playing field between large foreign streaming services and Canadian broadcasters and championing Canadian arts and culture. We have made that clear. However, we do so without compromising Canadians' fundamental rights and freedoms. There is a poison pill here.

This bill is flawed in many ways. It is clear that the Liberals are caught between their own hunger to control thought and speech, and their inability to grasp the sheer scope of the media landscape that grows by the day.

Bill C-11 is clearly an effort to stifle inconvenient speech in a digital world that the Liberals do not control. They do not want Canadians to make informed choices for themselves, and they do not want to protect their freedom to create content that showcases the best our amazing country has to offer—

• (2255)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to go to questions and comments.

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, there is almost no part of that speech that is true. It is completely fabricated.

The member spent a lot of time talking about user-generated content, like many members from the Conservative Party have, but there are several sections of the bill that seek to make sure that user-generated content is protected, including proposed subsections 2(2.1), 2(2.2) and 2(2.3); proposed section 3(a); proposed sections 4.1 and 4.2; and proposed subsection 4.3(3).

To the point of the member for Yorkton—Melville, has the member actually read the bill, and is she aware of those sections that attempt to make sure we protect user-generated content?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, the reality is that the government has had to backtrack and then come forward again, and it puts little poison pills into its bills that are not acceptable to Canadians.

Canadians are very aware that the government is afraid of average people expressing their views and sharing their creative work. Controlling speech in the new world of communication is a means to protect the platforms the government currently rewards and communicates its ideology through.

• (2300)

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I give up. I am sick and tired of this. After listening to the Conservatives talk for three hours, I will surrender to their arguments. If Parliament adopts Bill C-11, Canada will become a dictatorship, the thought police will be out, no one will be able to publish anything, no artists will be able to release their music on Spotify, no filmmakers will be able to get views, we will be terrorized into submission, and freedom of expression will disappear. That will be it. Way to go, the Conservatives got me. I am tired of this.

All of that said, we still need to help artists. We need to protect them.

As I mentioned earlier, Pierre Lapointe was paid \$500 for one million plays. That is unacceptable and we must do something about it.

What does my Conservatives colleague suggest we do about this?

[English]

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, I said in my speech, and this is the truth, that I absolutely support creating a level playing field between large foreign streaming services and Canadian broadcasters, and championing Canadian arts and culture. There are multiple ways to do that, and having the CRTC have the authority that it is being given without clarity and without checks and balances is not in favour of our own Canadian arts and culture.

I have children of my own who are very engaged in this field and, believe me, I understand the dynamics. However, this bill has issues and needs to be incredibly improved, if not scrapped and started over. I know there is frustration with the fact that the CRTC has not been improved for many years, but the issue is that this is not the correct bill. That is what happens: The government brings forward a statement that reflects what it wants people to understand it is moving towards, and there are many other elements to the bills it brings forward that end up causing great—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to continue with questions and comments.

The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member talked about average Canadians.

My niece, who is a musician, plays in a band called The County Line with her partner, Hayden. I would not call her average. I would say she is above average. She just posted that her first concert, after two years, is going to be on May 14. For two years, she has not earned revenue as a musician. In the meantime, Netflix's revenue has gone up 22%.

We heard the member's speech, and we heard the member before her trying to say that this was going to help the government track people's cellphones. Clearly, if anyone read the bill, there is no way the government could track people's cellphones. It is not in the bill. I am deeply concerned about the Conservatives not bringing forward real solutions.

If the Conservatives actually support our artists in Canada and want to stop the economic leakage, what is it that they want to see change? Why are they continuing to be the gatekeepers for the big web giants?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, first of all, I do not believe I heard that in my colleague's statements, and I do not believe that is what was being said. It is around the frustrations that Canadians do not have confidence in the government doing things that are actually appropriate in regard to their freedoms.

The second thing is that I totally agree with having the big providers pay their fair share. That needs to be done. I know of young people, as well, who are involved. There are many young people who are finding ways to become very proficient and profitable online. We have to give them those freedoms as well.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I just wanted to apologize to the interpreters. I have done that three times tonight and I know that can create a loud ringing when the headset is too close to the microphone. Through you to the interpretation services, I apologize.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a privilege to speak in the House. I rise today to add my concerns to those of my colleagues around Bill C-11.

For those who have been following the process closely, Bill C-11 has several working titles around Parliament Hill. To some here in the House, it is just a reintroduced Bill C-10 from the last session of Parliament, with one change and one exception making that change irrelevant. To others, this bill is known as “how to save the future of broadcast” despite the fact that broadcasters such as Rogers and Bell, for example, have never publicly mentioned that their future relies on this act. My colleague for Perth—Wellington would call it the “groundhog day act”, because the challenges that existed in this bill when it was introduced as Bill C-10 are here again in Bill C-11. Let me explain.

Bill C-11 aims to regulate online streaming, online news and online safety. Those are admirable goals, but Canadians understand

Government Orders

and expect that large, foreign-owned streamers ought not to be given advantages over the regulated Canadian broadcasting sector. Large foreign streamers should pay their fair share. On the face of it, this bill simply updates regulations in an industry that has moved faster than regulations ever could.

However, if there is one thing that we have learned from the Liberal government, it is that it is never able to resist the allure of power at any cost. It takes power, controls the narrative, silences its opposition and never accounts for its actions. We have seen this before. The Prime Minister just could not resist the urge to silence his opposition, going as far as to use the Emergencies Act, although it was unnecessary, and he and his government are never accountable for their actions. That is why we, as the opposition, need to be extreme in our diligence to ensure that the government cannot be given powers that could be misused.

Why is that necessary? It is because the Liberal government has proved that it has the audacity to use these powers and then not be accountable for their use. With that said, for my colleague across the way, Dr. Michael Geist is a law professor at the University of Ottawa, where he holds the Canada research chair in Internet and e-commerce law and is a member of the Centre for Law, Technology and Society. He is clearly a highly esteemed legal voice on this issue, unlike my colleague across the way, and he has had nothing flattering to say about the government's proposed Bill C-11. As we know, the government does not meet with those who have the courage to hold opposing opinions.

First, there is the question of regulating user-generated content, referred to in this bill as “content uploaded to a social media service”. Have colleagues ever thought about how broad that is: “content uploaded to a social media service”? Based on that definition alone, every member in this House should take pause. By that definition, the Facebook post that I put out this morning puts me within the same regulatory framework as the major players.

The Liberals on the other side have tried to make the argument that there are exclusions in the act, but the devil is always in the details with their legislation, meaning that the exception indicates that users would not be regulated like broadcasters, but their content could be treated as a program subject to CRTC regulation. These regulations include discoverability requirements that would allow the CRTC to require platforms to prioritize certain content and effectively deprioritize other content. The problem is not that they do not have protections looking out for individual users; it is that we know that even in the context that this should protect Canadians, it is not enough to keep the Liberal government from overreaching.

Government Orders

Second, in addition to the continued regulation of some Internet content as programs under CRTC rules, the remarkable scope of the bill also remains unchanged. In fact, there was a 10-page memo that set out what the government could regulate with this new bill: podcasts, audiobooks, sports streaming services and niche video streaming services, just to name a few.

• (2305)

In fact, as Professor Geist explains, and here it comes:

The potential scope for regulation is virtually limitless since any audio-visual service anywhere with Canadian subscribers or users is caught by the rules. Bill C-11 maintains the same approach with no specific thresholds or guidance. In other words, the entire audio-visual world is fair game and it will be up to the CRTC to decide whether to exempt some services from regulation.

Did we just feel a shiver go across this room? Canadians did. Just the thought of having the government-appointed body of Liberal friends in charge of deciding who they want to regulate without legislative guidance, now that is scary.

The uncertainty found in former Bill C-10 is also largely unchanged in Bill C-11. Bill C-11 tries to include some criteria for defining key provisions, such as the user-generated content exception and what constitutes a Canadian creator. How do Canadians feel about vague ways to identify who will be covered under provisions in this bill or what items are left unidentified?

For example, key terms like “social media”, used 12 times in the bill, are undefined. Unfortunately, this is lazy Liberal legislation, or maybe that is what they want us to think. This is their second attempt at this bill and I think they still have it wrong. They have left the door wide open for government regulators to cross lines of government overreach leaving us with only the hope that no government would have the audacity to stoop so low. In thinking that, we are underestimating what the government is willing to do with its power.

When opening the debate on Bill C-11, the minister asked us to “imagine a day without art and culture, no music, no movies, no television or books. It would be really boring.” This bill asks us different questions. It asks us to imagine a day when the Government of Canada decides which music, what television shows or what books are acceptable and how they should be distributed and regulated, with no clear guidelines of what they actually are. It asks us to trust the government by giving them the power to broadly regulate with their word that although they could use it to silence opinions opposed to theirs, they assure us that they would not.

I have considered that world and I have found that the Liberal government needs no extra powers to silence the viewpoints of Canadians.

• (2310)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I just cannot believe that the Conservative member concluded his speech by saying that the Liberal government wants to use this legislation to silence its opposition. That is the most ludicrous thing one could say in the House, that somehow the government is trying to use legislation like this, like we live in some kind of dictatorship—

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Yeah, we do.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, they are saying yes. Maybe I stand corrected and they genuinely think we live in a dictatorship. I guess I have nothing else to say about that.

Mr. Glen Motz: Madam Speaker, I have lots to say about that, because Canadians do feel we have lost our democracy in this country. The bill is just another example of the slide of democracy. What my statement was is that the Liberal government needs no extra powers to silence the viewpoints of Canadians. That is how Canadians feel. We are not the only ones opposed to this. Look around. Look at the people in this country who are media experts who are saying this is a dangerous bill put together by a dangerous government that is drunk on its own power. Let us look at that. That is exactly what the bill is about.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I was quite surprised to hear my colleague, whom I truly respect, say that this is lazy legislation. All of the parties took several months to negotiate, propose and table amendments, both during the previous Parliament and now.

In terms of discoverability and content, yes, the CRTC will have to decide how content is handled, but it will not deal in specifics. It will not tell users what they can do.

Am I to understand that my colleague has no problem with the fact that nearly all the content we see on social media is American?

Does this mean that he believes that English-language Canadian content and American content are the same thing, and that we have no need to see more original Canadian content?

• (2315)

[English]

Mr. Glen Motz: Madam Speaker, the reason I said it is lazy Liberal legislation is because this is the government's second kick at the can. It had serious opposition the first time around. The bill was turfed because of the election, so it had an opportunity to fix what Canadians said needed to be fixed, and it really did not. That is what I mean by lazy legislation.

With respect to content, of course I think Canadians deserve to have a choice in the content we see, which includes Canadian content. I do not see how this bill improves that. We cannot rely on the CRTC to completely regulate everything that is not legislated for it.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, through you, I would like to ask the member this. Bill C-11 states clearly that both the act and the CRTC shall implement the act, “in a manner consistent with the freedom of expression”.

Does the member not agree that section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms provides the necessary guidance to allow for Canadian freedom of expression?

Mr. Glen Motz: Madam Speaker, absolutely, the charter guarantees freedom of expression. While the act states that the CRTC has that opportunity, given the history of the current government and its involvement in trying to regulate what Canadians can say and do, I do not have enough confidence that this bill will improve what is going on online.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, one part of the bill I appreciate is how it can legitimize the role of community broadcasters in media. It is the section that defines a community element. One example in my community is Midtown Radio, whose focus is on supporting KW musicians and audio creators. I am hopeful that in committee this language can be improved, and I am curious. What does the member think about this?

Mr. Glen Motz: Madam Speaker, I agree that the language is inadequate currently. I am not on the heritage committee and do not propose to understand exactly what the right language would be, but it is certainly something that we would be looking at improving to ensure that the language is adjusted to reflect that issue.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-11, the online streaming act. This bill seeks to awkwardly apply the same content regulation framework we see for radio and television onto online streaming and video platforms. Last year, the Liberals passed Bill C-10 in the House of Commons without allowing a full debate at the heritage committee to address many outstanding concerns from experts and parliamentarians over how this legislation affects Canadians' rights and freedoms on the Internet.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage claims that the bill's purpose is to target only large online streamers. The problem is this is not what the bill says. In fact, proposed subsection 4.2(2) says that in making regulations, the commission shall consider:

- (a) the extent to which a program, uploaded to an online undertaking that provides a social media service, directly or indirectly generates revenues;

To be clear, any content that generates any revenue could be regulated. On this point, Michael Geist said:

The tone for the government's communication on Bill C-11 was established from the very beginning. In the very first speech from [the minister] in the House of Commons, he stated "the proposed amendments in the online streaming act regarding social media would not apply to content uploaded by users or to the users themselves."

This is not completely true, though, as content uploaded by users who may benefit commercially from their uploads can be regulated under proposed section 4.2.

Mr. Geist said:

Not only does the law have few limits with respect to which services are regulated, it is similarly over-broad with respect to what is regulated, featuring definitions that loop all audio-visual content into the law by treating all audio-visual content as a "program" subject to potential regulation.

Bill C-11 essentially defines broadcasting as any transmission of programs and audiovisual content for reception by the public. Mr. Geist also said:

Government Orders

[F]or all the talk that user generated content is out, the truth is that everything from podcasts to TikTok videos fit neatly into the new exception that gives the CRTC the power to regulate such content as a "program".

He also said:

The kind of speech that many Canadians engage in on these platforms is just basic, fundamental freedom of expression that does not require, and should not be subject to, any sort of regulation or regulatory oversight by a broadcast regulator.

The bill would give the CRTC wide latitude to decide how to implement its new powers and there are legitimate concerns about regulatory overreach. One of the fundamental tenets of our free and democratic society is the need to separate political direction from the independence of the media. We see that in oppressive regimes like Russia and others that maintain a firm grip over what people see and do not see.

That is why I am so concerned about this bill and in particular section 7 and how it is expanded under Bill C-11. This section says that cabinet could tell the CRTC how to regulate online platforms. The section modifies cabinet's power to issue directives of general application on broad policy matters. The section would not only allow cabinet to issue general directions on broad policy matters, but would also allow cabinet to direct the CRTC on specifics, such as the definition of a Canadian program. It would shift the final authority for regulation from an independent authority to politicians and cabinet.

Just today in question period the Prime Minister refused to answer what direction the government would in fact give the CRTC for the implementation of this bill. That is a concern in and of itself, given the fact that debate is about to end in a few minutes on this bill and presumably we will be voting on it very shortly. The government says the goal of Bill C-11 is increasing the share of Canadian content consumed online by Canadians, yet the reality is that lots of Canadian content is already uploaded and shared every day, albeit in a disorderly manner. However, most Canadians have come to see social media and the Internet as an inherently disorderly place. In fact, it is what many Canadians appreciate about the Internet and social media. It is the sense of randomness and orderly chaos to the content they consume.

This legislation must be considered very carefully. We live in a society that values freedom of speech, thought and expression. These values are entrenched constitutional rights. By allowing the CRTC to impose a revenue test, any new online creator must now contend with the regulatory quagmire of rules, regulations and whim-of-government regulation for fear of being offside the fiat of the CRTC.

● (2320)

This test alone would have the exact opposite effect of encouraging Canadian content. In fact, I would go so far as to say that it would be a chill on new creators.

Government Orders

Former vice-chair of the CRTC Peter Menzies stated, “Overall, the big problem still is that [the Liberals] continue to believe that the internet is broadcasting, and I don’t think they really understand what it is”. Under the previous bill, Bill C-10, there was originally an exception, in proposed section 4.1, that would have allowed those who generated content on social media sites to be excluded. However, at committee, government members removed that exclusion, opening up user-generated content to regulation.

Further complicating the matter in Bill C-11, the Liberals added an exclusion to the exclusion, in proposed section 4.2, mainly regarding the revenue exception I have already mentioned. This exclusion to the exclusion is so broad that the government, through the CRTC, could once again regulate wide swaths of content uploaded to social media.

Canadians are rightfully concerned that an unaccountable government agency would be enforcing and controlling what people see and do not see on social media sites. Although the goal of promoting Canadian arts and culture is one I believe in, the government will never be able to be an honest broker, as it will always choose to highlight the content and media it subjectively enjoys. The incentive structure will change. The word will get out that if people want to get celebrated and promoted, they will need to share the government’s subjective view of what is Canadian. Canada is home to many world-class writers, actors, composers, musicians, artists and creators. Creators need rules that do not hold back their ability to be Canadian and global successes.

Honestly, when it comes to social media and other online platforms, Canadians’ main concerns are not about where their content is created; rather, their concerns are more personal. Canadians consistently express frustration that the current regulatory framework allows for the easy and near-constant sale of their personal information. What Canadians want is to take back control over their lives and their personal information.

Let me offer a constructive suggestion, if members will entertain a thought experiment. Suppose I am an Uber driver and I have a great reputation as a driver. I want to open an Airbnb apartment, but I have no reviews on that, which means it is going to be hard. What if I could port my reputation from one application to another? If we make reputations portable and free-existing, that would allow me to own my own reputation, instead of some social media giant. It could be regulated in a way similar to how we currently regulate intellectual property.

I know this idea is imperfect; it is more of a rough sketch of a solution. My point is that Canadians are way more concerned about control of their personal information online and reputation portability than they are about the already pleasantly abundant supply of Canadian content. The truth is that Bill C-11 is nothing but a solution looking for a problem. Instead, why not solve real problems? Canadians should control the valuable data they generate, and the government should focus on issues that truly preoccupy everyday Canadians.

For this reason, I cannot support this legislation.

• (2325)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, in his closing remarks, the member said the government should be focusing on issues that Canadians are concerned about, basically suggesting that the promotion of Canadian content and the preservation of Canadian cultural identity are not important. If I heard him correctly, he was basically saying that he does not see the value, in this place, of talking about how we can continue to promote and preserve Canadian culture.

That is what he said. Could he confirm that?

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, I do not know what speech the hon. member was listening to, but I certainly did not say anything like that.

I do want to say something else. I found it interesting that the member for New Westminster—Burnaby earlier talked about how it is impossible to find Canadian content online. I did a quick Google search for Canadians who became famous by posting online, and the first site that came up was an article that talks about five super famous Canadian singers who got their start on YouTube. I do not know if the member across the way who just asked the question has ever heard of Justin Bieber, but he posted a YouTube video in 2007. If this law had been in existence then, Justin Bieber would be paying royalties, would not pass the revenue test under proposed section 4.2 and would be brought under the regulation of the CRTC. Do members know who else became famous—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We need time for more questions.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Shefford.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, Russia and Canada are fighting the same fight. It is not me saying it, I have heard it from people on the Conservative benches. Some people compare this bill and its threat of dictatorship to the disinformation campaign in Russia. That is serious. That is going pretty far.

My colleague talked about violating freedom of expression and pointed to one of the committee witnesses as an example. What does he make of the Department of Justice’s legal analysis, which states that this threat to freedom of expression is untrue? What does my colleague make of all the groups of Quebec artists and all the Quebec media calling for a modernization of the act, insisting that we move forward and not leave things hanging? What do we do with them?

He talks about—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. I will give the member a chance to respond.

[English]

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, the truth of the matter is that the Internet and platforms like YouTube have been a godsend for Canadian artists and creators. There are so many of them who are famous and successful today, and they are doing Canada proud on the national stage. We have Justin Bieber, Carly Rae Jepsen, Shawn Mendes, Alessia Cara and The Weeknd. I just did a quick Google search. I am sure I could find many others, including many from Quebec.

I am saying, as I said during my speech, Bill C-11 is a solution looking for a problem.

• (2330)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member made it very clear that this bill needs to be examined and analyzed properly. We have the Liberals, the Green Party, the NDP and the Bloc who all want to do that. We actually want to get it to committee, but the Conservatives do not want to contribute anything to improve this legislation. We know the Conservatives have been the gatekeepers for the super wealthy and big oil.

I do not know why they are sacrificing Canada's cultural workers and broadcasters at the expense of the big web giants. They are now the gatekeepers for the big web giants.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, that is very rich coming from a member who just voted to cut off debate on this bill in this House. It is very rich when he says that we want to analyze the bill. Of course we want to analyze the bill. We would like to keep putting up speakers, but the government members have cut us off. Unfortunately, at midnight, debate on this bill is going to end. It is very unfortunate that the member has taken away the ability of parliamentarians to properly analyze the bill in this House the way it should be.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the time tonight. For those watching, it is 11:32 p.m. here in Ottawa. The bill that we are debating is Bill C-11, in case folks out there have not picked up on that already.

I think the question that we are really asking tonight is whether we can trust the Prime Minister and the government.

Let us not answer that question quite yet. It seems like the NDP and the Bloc want to completely trust whatever the government is going to do. It is kind of a marked shift from where the NDP used to be. The NDP used to be critics of the government. Now, again, it is carrying the water of the government. It is different. My hope is that it would be a true servant in opposition again.

The question is whether we can trust the Prime Minister and the government. We are talking about Bill C-11, but I will give a bit of preamble.

Everybody remembers the values attestation for the summer jobs program: this is where the Prime Minister said, if one is going to be from a certain faith-based group or has a certain belief, there is no need to sign up for the summer student jobs program.

Government Orders

This is a government that proves that it makes value judgments and decides who the winners and the losers are. Again, my question is: can we trust the government?

How is it relevant to Bill C-11?

For some in the NDP, who said that we had not read the bill, I have it right here. It is marked up quite a bit. I marked up Bill C-10: the previous iteration of the act. I was former chair of the access to information, privacy and ethics committee. We studied these kinds of issues at length.

As to the key section that the member across the way in the Liberal party mentioned, it is kind of interesting. We all heard it. He mentioned different clauses in the bill but he missed the real key one, and that is proposed section 4.2.

He forgot to mention that one, which is a pretty key category, so let me read through it.

4.1(1) This Act does not apply in respect of a program that is uploaded to an on-line undertaking that provides a social media service by a user of the service for transmission over the Internet and reception by other users of the service.

If it just stopped there, we would probably say that it sounds pretty good, but it goes on.

(2) Despite subsection (1), this Act applies in respect of a program that is uploaded as described in that subsection if the program (a) is uploaded to the social media service by the provider of the service or the provider's affiliate, or by the agent or mandatary of either of them; or (b) is prescribed by regulations made under section 4.2.

What many experts have said about that particular section is that it is an exemption a truck could drive through.

This is the concern for us, and this is why we are debating until 12 o'clock at night. It is because of that particular section. What it essentially does is that that user content that is supposed to be exempted from this oversight is now included. That is massive.

We talk about TikTok videos. We talk about YouTube videos. They are all now under the purview of the CRTC and the arm of the Prime Minister, of shutting down free debate and free speech in this country. That is the potential that it has. Can we trust him? Can we trust the government? Again, do not answer the question quite yet.

I will go through some quotes because, again, the member across the way has not heard enough quotes tonight, but I will read some out.

These are from some experts who have appeared at committee in the House of Commons and are well-respected witnesses.

The idea that the CRTC can—or should—regulate the global Internet, in an age when market intervention should be sharply decreasing, is unworkable and counterproductive, falsely pitting the industry against itself.

This is not really a glowing quote on Bill C-11 from a person who has got some pretty good credentials: Dr. Irene S. Berkowitz, senior policy fellow at Ryerson University, who is a pretty significant individual.

It is really hard to hear in here, on both sides, actually. I had to say it.

Government Orders

My next quote is from Scott Benzie, managing director of Digital First Canada:

Bill C-11 still has many issues for Digital First Creators, the 'sandbox' that is said to be given to the CRTC is too broad and could include every piece of content online.

Now members should listen to this:

● (2335)

Most concerning though is that there is still room in the bill for the government to force platforms to put "approved" Canadian content ahead of independent Canadian content and artificially manipulate the algorithms. Even in the best case scenario this bill only has downsides for Digital First Creators while the traditional media industry gets their funding doubled.

Again, that is Scott Benzie, managing director of Digital First Canada.

It is not just Michael Geist who is speaking against this bill. There are many who are concerned about this. It is much broader in the community.

Here is another quote from Scott:

That exemption, clause 4.2(2)(a), is far too vague. It's far too broad. There are no guidelines. It basically includes the entire Internet.

I mentioned that exemption, proposed section 4.2, but the Liberal member failed to mention it.

Again, we wish the NDP down the way would be in opposition with us and fight some of these bills. It would be nice if the NDP members read the bill and actually understood some of the problems with it, and stood with us instead of criticizing us. That is all we have heard tonight, criticism from fellow opposition parties. It is really strange. Anyway, I digress. I know time is a-wasting.

I have one last quote that I will mention tonight. The question that is hanging out there for everybody to answer has not been answered yet. This is from Andrew Coyne, a columnist from The Globe and Mail. I would not say he is a Conservative. He is not Michael Geist either. Michael Geist is very reputable, and I will say I have heard him testify. He is a very reputable individual. For the Liberal Party to completely disparage this witness does not say too much about the party across the way. Here is the final quote:

This bill would assign a wide latitude to regulate, well, the Internet: not just the big audio and video streaming services like Spotify or Netflix, but any number of other services, from podcasts to audiobooks to news channels, and not just those based in Canada but anywhere in the world.

He goes on to say that this is surely the far greater concern. Whether the users of these services are subject to regulation in their capacity as content posters, and insofar as the services are compelled to give greater prominence to certain content, its users can hardly be unaffected.

I do not know if the member across the way heard how significant that one phrase was: "to give greater prominence to certain content". One thing that we have learned, and I have another former chair of the access to information committee sitting behind me, is that that concerns us greatly. We have seen examples of big tech throttling up and throttling down certain social media accounts. We were the ones who subpoenaed Mark Zuckerberg and Sheryl Sandberg to appear at our committee, because of our concerns around their misuse of personal data.

What the government is now asking is, "Hey, look, big tech, we actually want to take over. We want to do that job." Again, can it be trusted? Will it be trusted?

I will finish this quote.

To the extent that the services are [compelled] to give greater prominence to certain content, their users can hardly be unaffected. They are [certainly] subject to regulation, as are consumers.

I would just say that our concerns are very warranted. It is not just the Conservative Party across the way. It is the many experts we have heard from tonight. Again, I started with a question: "Can we trust the Prime Minister and the government?" I would say tonight that the answer is a firm "No." That is why we need to oppose Bill C-11.

I would just commend my colleagues for staying up for hours at night to do the good work of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, holding the government to account.

● (2340)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for referencing somebody other than Michael Geist. It took the Conservatives only until 11:35 p.m., 20 minutes before the debate is to be over, to do that. I greatly appreciate that.

More to the point, the member started to go down the road of algorithms again. I heard him talk about that, like many Conservatives did. I do not know if the member has read the bill, but he should refer to page 14 of the bill, which specifically speaks to algorithms, "computer algorithm or source code". It says:

The Commission shall not make an order under paragraph (1)(e) that would require the use of a specific computer algorithm or source code.

It is written in the bill that the commission does not have the authority to do that. Why do this member and all Conservative members continue to get up and say the same thing over and over?

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, one thing we have fought for on this side is algorithmic accountability and looking through the dark curtain of big tech to see how it is throttling up and down certain social media accounts.

Again, what this member fails to mention, and I have not heard him refer to it yet tonight, is proposed section 4.2. He may want to check it out, because it is the exemption that would allow a truck to drive through what he just said. It would allow for all that to happen. I challenge the member to read it.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I really liked my Conservative colleague's speech. I also liked the fact that he quoted experts other than Michael Geist. That was refreshing.

He mentioned Scott Benzie, the director of Digital First Canada, whom I had the opportunity to meet in committee. He appeared before the committee to speak to Bill C-11 when we were talking about something else, so it was not exactly the right place, but I was still curious to meet him.

I asked him to tell me a bit about his organization. He is a very nice man who really had some genuine concerns to share. I asked him how many members his organization had. He said it had none, because he was in the process of creating it. I found that interesting. I asked him if he was registered as a lobbyist as part of our meeting. He said he was not.

More research may be in order before people start citing experts, who are nonetheless very interesting. Mr. Benzie met with people from Quebec's production and cultural sectors and his horizons were certainly broadened. I think that the conversation with him may have been different without such pointed questions to guide the answers.

If we level the playing field by easing the burden for traditional broadcasting companies and by not regulating online undertakings, then how does my Conservative colleague propose that we protect Quebec and Canadian culture from the American giants?

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, I am not totally sure what the question was, but witnesses appear. One thing I appreciate at the House of Commons and our committees is that we have not only experts with Ph.D.s, but also regular folks who come here to testify. They are just as legitimate as other witnesses, and they are able to speak to some of their concerns around the bill.

Again, Bill C-11's threat is real, and I hope the House will vote against it.

• (2345)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 11:45 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

Government Orders

The question is on the amendment to the amendment. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of amendment to the amendment to House*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the amendment to the amendment be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, it is important Canadians know exactly how everybody voted on this, so I will request a recorded division, please.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the division stands deferred until Thursday, May 12, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

The hon. President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. President of the Treasury Board moves that the House do now adjourn. Pursuant to order made on Monday, May 2, the motion is deemed adopted.

[*English*]

It being 11:47 p.m., pursuant to order made on Monday, May 2, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 11:47 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

| | |
|--|------|
| Soo Greyhounds | |
| Mr. Sheehan | 5105 |
| National March for Life | |
| Mr. Viersen | 5105 |
| National Nursing Week | |
| Ms. Bérubé | 5105 |
| Rotary Clubs | |
| Mrs. Lalonde | 5106 |
| Espace Monarque Project | |
| Mr. Lauzon | 5106 |
| Vaccine Mandates | |
| Mr. Falk (Provencher) | 5106 |
| Rohingya Centre of Canada | |
| Ms. Bradford | 5106 |
| <i>American Idol</i> Contestant | |
| Mr. Sorbara | 5106 |
| William Dwyer | |
| Mr. Shipley | 5107 |
| Automotive Industry | |
| Ms. Sahota | 5107 |
| Blais Family | |
| Mrs. Vien | 5107 |
| Bill C-11 | |
| Mrs. Thomas | 5107 |
| The French Language | |
| Mr. Weiler | 5108 |
| Sex Trade Workers | |
| Ms. Barron | 5108 |
| 30th Anniversary of Aluminerie Alouette | |
| Mrs. Gill | 5108 |
| Asian Heritage Month | |
| Ms. Bergen | 5108 |
| Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program | |
| Ms. Sgro | 5108 |

ORAL QUESTIONS

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Public Safety | |
| Ms. Bergen | 5109 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5109 |
| Ms. Bergen | 5109 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5109 |

Government Priorities

| | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| Ms. Bergen | 5109 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5109 |
| Public Safety | |
| Mr. Berthold | 5110 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5110 |
| The Economy | |
| Mr. Berthold | 5110 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5110 |
| Diversity and Inclusion | |
| Mr. Blanchet | 5110 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5110 |
| Mr. Blanchet | 5110 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5110 |
| Taxation | |
| Mr. Singh | 5111 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5111 |
| Mr. Singh | 5111 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5111 |
| Natural Resources | |
| Mr. McLean | 5111 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5111 |
| Mrs. Stubbs | 5111 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5111 |
| Canadian Heritage | |
| Mr. Nater | 5112 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5112 |
| Mr. Nater | 5112 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5112 |
| Mrs. Thomas | 5112 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5112 |
| Mrs. Thomas | 5112 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5112 |
| Diversity and Inclusion | |
| Mr. Blanchet | 5112 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5113 |
| Mr. Blanchet | 5113 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5113 |
| Foreign Affairs | |
| Mr. Hallan | 5113 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5113 |

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Mr. Hallan | 5113 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5113 |
| Mr. Chong | 5113 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5113 |
| Mr. Paul-Hus | 5113 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5114 |

| | | | |
|--|------|---|------|
| Health | | The Environment | |
| Mr. Singh | 5114 | Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) | 5118 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5114 | Mr. Trudeau | 5118 |
| Telecommunications | | Business of the House | |
| Mr. Singh | 5114 | Mr. Holland | 5118 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5114 | | |
| Foreign Affairs | | GOVERNMENT ORDERS | |
| Mr. Maloney | 5114 | Business of Supply | |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5114 | Opposition Motion—Change to Standing Order 30 Regarding the Prayer | |
| The Economy | | Motion | 5119 |
| Mrs. Kusie | 5114 | Motion negated | 5120 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5115 | | |
| Natural Resources | | PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS | |
| Mrs. Kusie | 5115 | Permanent Residency for Temporary Foreign Workers | |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5115 | Motion | 5120 |
| Small Business | | Amendment agreed to | 5121 |
| Ms. Ferreri | 5115 | Motion agreed to | 5123 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5115 | Similarities Between Bill C-250 and Bill C-19 | |
| Housing | | The Deputy Speaker | 5123 |
| Mrs. Vien | 5115 | | |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5115 | ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS | |
| Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship | | Government Response to Petitions | |
| Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe | 5115 | Mr. Gerretsen | 5124 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5115 | Committees of the House | |
| Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe | 5116 | Procedure and House Affairs | |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5116 | Ms. Chagger | 5124 |
| Natural Resources | | Veterans Affairs | |
| Mr. Seebach | 5116 | Mr. Dubourg | 5124 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5116 | Petitions | |
| Mr. Seebach | 5116 | Taxation | |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5116 | Mr. Kusmierczyk | 5124 |
| Automotive Industry | | Climate Change | |
| Mr. Godin | 5116 | Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) | 5124 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5116 | Charitable Organizations | |
| Regional Economic Development | | Mr. Kurek | 5124 |
| Mr. El-Khoury | 5117 | Farmers' Markets | |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5117 | Mr. Johns | 5124 |
| Justice | | Banknote Redesign | |
| Mr. Moore | 5117 | Mr. Dong | 5124 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5117 | Human Organ Trafficking | |
| Mr. Moore | 5117 | Mr. Genuis | 5125 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5117 | Ukraine | |
| Mr. Cooper | 5117 | Mr. Genuis | 5125 |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5117 | Carbon Capture and Storage | |
| Women and Gender Equality | | Mr. Genuis | 5125 |
| Ms. Lambropoulos | 5118 | | |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5118 | | |
| Indigenous Affairs | | | |
| Mr. Singh | 5118 | | |
| Mr. Trudeau | 5118 | | |

| | | | | |
|---|------|--|-------------------------------------|------|
| Human Rights | | | Mrs. Vignola..... | 5142 |
| Mr. Genuis..... | 5125 | | Mr. Scarpaleggia..... | 5143 |
| Ethiopia | | | Mr. Kurek..... | 5143 |
| Mr. Genuis..... | 5125 | | Ms. Pauzé..... | 5143 |
| Energy Sector | | | Mr. Hardie..... | 5143 |
| Mr. Genuis..... | 5125 | | Mr. Albas..... | 5144 |
| Oil and Gas Industry | | | Mr. Davies..... | 5145 |
| Mr. Genuis..... | 5126 | | Mr. Nater..... | 5145 |
| Charitable Organizations | | | Ms. Dancho..... | 5145 |
| Mr. Genuis..... | 5126 | | Mr. Gerretsen..... | 5147 |
| Human Organ Trafficking | | | Mr. Davies..... | 5147 |
| Mr. Genuis..... | 5126 | | Mrs. Gray..... | 5148 |
| Questions on the Order Paper | | | Mr. Steinley..... | 5148 |
| Mr. Gerretsen..... | 5126 | | Mr. Scarpaleggia..... | 5149 |
| Questions Passed as Orders for Returns | | | Mr. Cannings..... | 5149 |
| Mr. Gerretsen..... | 5128 | | Mr. Albas..... | 5150 |
| | | | Mrs. Desbiens..... | 5150 |
| | | | Mr. Davies..... | 5151 |
| | | | Mr. Blanchette-Joncas..... | 5151 |
| | | | Ms. Hepfner..... | 5151 |
| | | | Mr. Caputo..... | 5153 |
| | | | Mr. Cannings..... | 5153 |
| | | | Mr. Hardie..... | 5153 |
| | | | Mr. Nater..... | 5153 |
| | | | Mr. Morrice..... | 5154 |
| | | | Mr. Gerretsen..... | 5154 |
| | | | Mr. Motz..... | 5155 |
| | | | Mrs. Desbiens..... | 5155 |
| | | | Ms. Idlout..... | 5156 |
| | | | Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)..... | 5156 |
| | | | Mr. Hardie..... | 5157 |
| | | | Mr. Trudel..... | 5157 |
| | | | Mr. Weiler..... | 5158 |
| | | | Mrs. Gallant..... | 5160 |
| | | | Mrs. Vignola..... | 5160 |
| | | | Mr. Cannings..... | 5160 |
| | | | Mr. Bragdon..... | 5161 |
| | | | Mr. Turnbull..... | 5162 |
| | | | Mr. Champoux..... | 5162 |
| | | | Mr. Julian..... | 5162 |
| | | | Mr. Turnbull..... | 5163 |
| | | | Mrs. Gallant..... | 5164 |
| | | | Mr. Davies..... | 5164 |
| | | | Mr. Viersen..... | 5165 |
| | | | Mr. Mazier..... | 5165 |
| | | | Mr. Gerretsen..... | 5166 |
| | | | Mr. Trudel..... | 5166 |
| | | | Ms. Idlout..... | 5167 |
| | | | Mr. Lauzon..... | 5167 |
| | | | Mr. Brassard..... | 5168 |
| | | | Mr. Champoux..... | 5168 |
| | | | Mr. Julian..... | 5169 |
| | | | Mr. Melillo..... | 5169 |
| | | | Mr. Trudel..... | 5170 |
| | | | Ms. Idlout..... | 5170 |
| | | | Mr. Morrice..... | 5171 |
| | | | Mr. Brassard..... | 5171 |

| | |
|---|------|
| GOVERNMENT ORDERS | |
| Online Streaming Act | |
| Bill C-11—Time Allocation Motion | |
| Mr. Holland..... | 5129 |
| Motion..... | 5129 |
| Mr. Calkins..... | 5129 |
| Mr. Johns..... | 5130 |
| Mrs. Desbiens..... | 5130 |
| Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)..... | 5130 |
| Mr. Gerretsen..... | 5131 |
| Mrs. Vecchio..... | 5131 |
| Mr. Boulерice..... | 5131 |
| Mr. Nater..... | 5132 |
| Ms. Pauzé..... | 5132 |
| Mr. Ellis..... | 5132 |
| Mr. Johns..... | 5133 |
| Mrs. Thomas..... | 5133 |
| Motion agreed to..... | 5135 |

| | |
|---|------|
| PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS | |
| Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act | |
| Bill C-234. Second reading..... | 5135 |
| Ms. Dabrusin..... | 5135 |
| Mr. Perron..... | 5137 |
| Mr. Lehoux..... | 5138 |
| Mr. Epp..... | 5139 |
| Mr. Lobb..... | 5141 |
| Division on motion deferred..... | 5142 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| GOVERNMENT ORDERS | |
| Online Streaming Act | |
| Bill C-11. Second reading..... | 5142 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|------|--|------|
| Mr. Sorbara | 5171 | Mr. Trudel | 5182 |
| Mr. Viersen | 5172 | Mr. Johns | 5183 |
| Mrs. Vignola | 5173 | Mr. Motz | 5183 |
| Mr. Julian | 5173 | Mr. Gerretsen | 5184 |
| Ms. Larouche | 5173 | Mrs. Vignola | 5184 |
| Mr. Brassard | 5175 | Ms. Idlout | 5184 |
| Mr. Julian | 5175 | Mr. Morrice | 5185 |
| Mr. Champoux | 5176 | Mr. Morantz | 5185 |
| Mrs. Block | 5176 | Mr. Gerretsen | 5186 |
| Mr. Gerretsen | 5177 | Ms. Larouche | 5186 |
| Mrs. Vignola | 5177 | Mr. Johns | 5187 |
| Ms. Idlout | 5178 | Mr. Zimmer | 5187 |
| Mr. Julian | 5178 | Mr. Gerretsen | 5188 |
| Mr. Scarpaleggia | 5179 | Mr. Champoux | 5188 |
| Mr. Falk (Provencher) | 5180 | Division on the amendment to the amendment deferred .. | 5189 |
| Mrs. Wagantall | 5180 | Mrs. Fortier | 5189 |
| Mr. Gerretsen | 5182 | Motion | 5189 |

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