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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 30, 2022

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

• (1100)

[*English*]

VACANCY

MISSISSAUGA—LAKESHORE

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to inform the House that a vacancy has occurred in the representation, namely Mr. Spengemann, member for the electoral district of Mississauga—Lakeshore, by resignation effective Friday, May 27, 2022.

Pursuant to paragraph 25(1)(b) of the Parliament of Canada Act, the Speaker has addressed a warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for the election of a member to fill this vacancy.

It being 11:01 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*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-233, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Judges Act (violence against an intimate partner), as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

The Deputy Speaker: There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.) moved that the bill be concurred in.

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I request that it be agreed to on division.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Deputy Speaker: When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anju Dhillon moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

She said: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-233 is now in the final stage of consideration here in the House. I am so pleased with the overwhelming support this legislative initiative has received thus far. I would like to thank all my hon. colleagues from the bottom of my heart for supporting this bill.

My colleagues and I, who worked on this bill, regularly receive emails and calls from women and organizations that are advocating to protect female victims of domestic violence. They want to express their appreciation for this bill. My colleagues from all political parties have also received countless messages from these victims' rights groups about helping pass this legislation.

There is nationwide support for Bill C-233. I want to thank all the people across Canada who wrote to me and shared their tragic and heartbreaking stories. I am very touched by the trust they have placed in me. There is no doubt that more needs to be done to help those who experience domestic abuse, physical or psychological.

• (1105)

[*English*]

It has been an uphill battle to recognize not only women's rights, but the real danger women often face when it comes to situations of domestic violence. Domestic violence, until very recently, was not talked about as openly as it is today. There was, and I believe still is, a stigma attached to it in many places. Whether it is victim-blaming or the feeling of shame, these horrific events should have always been given priority. The shame belongs with the person who does the tormenting, not the one who is subjected to it. Whatever the reason for this past humongous injustice, now is the time to address it full on and to never back down.

Private Members' Business

Domestic violence has affected many, many women, and I say this because it is oftentimes women who are victims of domestic abuse and who face the most distressing situations possible. Whether it is psychological, emotional or mental abuse, physical violence or threats thereof, coercion, being controlled through duress, or financial bondage, far too many women to count have suffered through this and continue to do so. Today, the statistics are very clear about this and the past history of domestic abuses that have been endured. Many times, these women were not heard because their voices were silenced or because no one was listening. They were not taken seriously, so they lived quietly with their shattered dreams and painful memories.

[Translation]

Other parts of the world come to mind, places where people have unshakable partisan beliefs, where deep divides within society impede progress and get in the way of important dialogue about social issues that affect a lot of people.

Our strength as Canadians, regardless of our political affiliations, our values and our beliefs, is that we are always guided by a common thread: the society we all want to live in and bequeath to future generations.

One of the pillars of our country is keeping everyone safe. Given the constant headlines about murdered women and children, we can all agree that we need to do more to protect these vulnerable people.

I realize that my Bill C-233 is just part of the solution. However, without this legislation, our efforts as a society to do a better job of protecting victims of intimate partner violence will not be as robust. It is time to put our collective shoulder to the wheel by supporting Bill C-233.

[English]

I would like to share an overview of the elements that favour this bill.

There is a critical window during which most victims of femicide lose their lives. It is in the first 18 months post-separation. After this critical period, things start to settle down and people are able to rebuild their lives slowly but surely.

However, there are some very troubled individuals who simply cannot stay away from their target, no matter the number of restraining orders issued by the court, such as the individual I spoke about during my previous debate. That person violated quite a few restraining orders and even went to prison for it. He continued to harass his ex-partner from prison. When he got out, he followed her and somehow managed to find the secret location she had been hiding at with her daughter. Once he found them, he stalked them. He sat outside their home for hours watching them, waiting for his chance. He tormented his ex-wife and tried to kill her and their daughter before he committed suicide.

In a situation like this, only an electronic monitor can dissuade the harasser from approaching the victim, as their location would be disclosed electronically. In turn, this would give the complainant victim some serenity and an opportunity to be better prepared in case the accused is close by. This law is for the victims.

For the longest time in the Canadian justice system, there was the belief that violence against an intimate partner did not necessarily mean that the violent parent was incapable of being a good parent to the couple's children. Some adjustments were made to the Divorce Act to better address this issue. However, this legislative initiative cannot be completely executed as long as those who decide on the fate of these children do not fully comprehend the ravages domestic violence leaves on all victims, including the children, who at times, vicariously or directly, also experience that violence. Those who give themselves the right to physically assault another human being or who psychologically terrorize them, often in front of the children, have a lot of work to do on themselves to change, and sometimes they just cannot or will not. That is something all judges need to fully acknowledge and understand before deciding what is in the best interests of the child.

● (1110)

[Translation]

In conclusion, this non-partisan bill will help prevent homicides and save lives. This critical step is needed to better support and protect the most vulnerable victims of domestic violence and their children. We must help break the cycle of violence and trauma, including for any children who are exposed to it.

Bill C-233 will help judges better understand the phenomenon of domestic violence and its impact, as well as coercive control in family relationships, in order to make the best decisions affecting the children of those relationships.

The other interesting point about this legislation is that it formally adds electronic monitoring to the Criminal Code as another possible condition for judicial interim release. This is another tool in the tool box for judges to use when they believe that the safety of any person, including alleged victims of intimate partner violence, could be compromised if the accused is released pending trial. This provision would ensure better protection where there is doubt about the safety of an individual, including victims of domestic violence and their children. It is worth noting once again that between 20% and 22% of femicides and filicides in the context of domestic violence were committed by former intimate partners within 18 months of separation.

As a society, it is important that we continue to look for solutions to significantly reduce violence against women and children in Canada. My legislative initiative is a practical measure that will contribute to saving lives and help better protect victims of family abuse.

I sincerely hope that members still believe in the urgency of and need for Bill C-233 and will vote accordingly.

[English]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know this is a very important bill to get through today, but there are some things we still want to pass, so perhaps I could ask the member what additional things we would like to see as we continue build on the foundation of Bill C-233.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Madam Speaker, from the bottom of my heart, I thank my hon. colleague for all her hard work and advocacy, for working across all party lines to help with this legislation and for hearing the voices of organizations, victims and people who have spoken up.

To answer her question, there is still much to be done. As I said in my speech, this is just the start of what we need to continue doing, including having open conversations, exposing domestic violence and exposing the flaws in our criminal justice system and child custody cases. This is—

• (1115)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to allow time for more questions.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to hear what I am hearing this morning. I thank my colleague across the way because it was high time.

My thoughts are with a few organizations in Laurentides—Labelle, such as l'Ombre-Elle and Passe-R-Elle, because this has been their plea for many decades. What we are hearing this morning is a start on two levels, specifically in terms of the interpretation and implementation, and I commend that.

I just heard my government colleague mention that it was just the start of the continuum. Will any money be transferred to these organizations to help these women and families?

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her comments and her thoughts. I sense a great deal of passion as well.

To answer her question, I think we have to continue working with the provinces. As a member from Quebec, I am truly proud of the legislation that Quebec passed on electronic bracelets.

I hope we will be able to continue working with the provinces and territories to combat family and intimate partner violence against women.

[English]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle for introducing this bill to make the justice system more sensitive, responsive and safe for women and children.

I spoke to a constituent just last week about her experience in the court system and the many ways in which she and her children did not feel safe. I am wondering if the member could share with constituents in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, and the constituent I spoke with, what would be the first, most important piece to help

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increase safety for women and children as a result of this bill passing.

I would also like to express my full support for this bill.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith for her hard work and for listening to the tragedies that complainant victims go through in their experiences with the criminal justice system.

There are many gaps still to be filled, and I believe that, if we continue on this path, the first thing to do is to pass the bill and then keep addressing these issues. It is very important that judges be able to discern whether something being decided is in the best interests of the victim and the child. These are conversations we need to keep having, and I really hope I can count on the support of all of my colleagues.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if my colleague can provide her thoughts regarding the amount of support from, in particular, Liberal caucus members wanting to see this legislation pass and their contributions, along with those of stakeholders.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Madam Speaker, I have to say, and there is no other word that comes to mind, even in these conversations about tragedies, that I am enchanted by the support received from our own caucus and across all party lines. This is so meaningful. It is the first time we are talking about coercive control with regard to the Criminal Code and the criminal justice system, so this very important.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is wonderful to see you in the chair this morning as I talk about something so personal to you and any individual in this place.

I really want to talk about my time here as a member of Parliament over the last seven years. I have had the honour of sitting on the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, which has held a number of studies related to intimate partner violence. The committee has talked about it when looking at the Canadian Armed Forces and shelters.

However, the study on Bill C-233 is the study that has had the most impact on my life in my time in the House of Commons, as I have realized what a bubble we live in and why this study is so important. I have been here for seven years, and I have heard stories from witnesses over those years. After hearing what I have heard in the study of Bill C-233, as well as in the intimate partner and domestic violence study we will be tabling before summer, I can say there is a lot to be done in Canada when it comes to intimate partner violence and domestic abuse.

Private Members' Business

We need to ensure we are all working together. As the chair of the status of women committee, I could not be any prouder of the members for what we have achieved through working together, which is exactly what we did when we looked at this very important piece of legislation in the name of Keira.

I want to read into the record the testimony put forward by Keira's mother when she came to our committee. For anybody who knows what it is like to be a mother, I ask them to imagine being a mother who has lost their child. This is a woman who is fighting for every other child out there. This is something we are doing in Keira's name, but we recognize this is for all women, children and families.

This is from the testimony Keira's mother gave:

Essentially, I will tell you my story and why my story is not an anomaly but instead is emblematic of a broader problem in the way the family court system handles domestic violence cases and is reflective of a lack of judicial understanding of domestic violence and coercive control.

I was a victim of domestic violence in my previous marriage. It was a short marriage, and I was subject to multiple types of domestic violence, which included isolated episodes of physical violence as well as coercive control.

I had a young daughter and I was able to safely escape the abuser, but when I sought protection for Keira in the family court system, I found that the court system was not equipped to protect a small child. I was before, I believe, between 10 and 12 different judges, none of whom had an understanding of domestic violence and coercive control. During my trial, when I went to the stand to talk about the abuse I had experienced, I was cut off by the judge and told that abuse is not relevant to parenting and he was going to ignore it.

To me, that says it all. A judge decides that it is okay because parenting has nothing to do with the abuse. I am sorry, but perhaps this judge should maybe look at this training. As I said, I have been here for seven years, and I can tell members about the impacts just from listening to the testimony of others. Perhaps they need to get out of the bubble and also look at this. Perhaps they need to see and experience what Keira and her family have gone through, as well as so many other hundreds and hundreds of families across this country.

In the intimate partner violence study, the committee received 137 briefs. The majority of those focused on Bill C-233, as it had been introduced in the House of Commons. This is not just happening to Keira's family. It is happening across this country, and we need to make sure people understand. We need to understand what happens to a young child who has seen domestic abuse, what the impact is to that child and what we are going to do to ensure that child is safe.

The judge failed Keira. The judge failed this family. I am sure judges have failed other families as well.

I am not sticking it to the judges here. I am just asking them to please step back and recognize they are in a bubble. We are all in a bubble. When we are here in Ottawa, we are in the Ottawa bubble. When we are home with our families, we are in our family bubble. However, when we are actually learning about things like this and talking to people whose shoes we have never walked in, we are going to learn something.

I am urging each and every judge out there to understand Bill C-233 and to please read the report that will be tabled here in June of 2022 by the status of women committee. The study is looking at

coercive control, physical abuse, mental abuse and financial abuse. These are things that are happening across Canada to Canadians families, and we can do more.

I am going to leave members with one final thought. Yesterday would have been Keira's seventh birthday. She was not able to spend it with her family.

• (1120)

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, as the Bloc Québécois critic for the status of women and the vice-chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, I rise today to speak to Bill C-233 yet again.

The bill is now at report stage. It amends the Criminal Code to require a justice, before making a release order in respect of an accused who is charged with an offence against their intimate partner, to consider whether it is desirable, in the interests of the safety and security of any person, to include as a condition of the order that the accused wear an electronic monitoring device. The bill also amends the Judges Act to provide for continuing education seminars for judges on matters related to intimate partner violence and coercive control.

I can confirm that the clause-by-clause study was conducted in a truly collaborative spirit at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Its members were focused on one thing only, because the lives of women and children, as well as men, let us not forget, are at stake.

At the risk of repeating myself, the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of Bill C-233. I will begin my speech by talking about the important role of this bill, with its inclusion of electronic monitoring devices, in addressing intimate partner violence. I will then talk about coercive control and will close by making a few more proposals on how to complete the continuum of assistance for women and children who are affected by intimate partner violence.

First, let us look at the role this bill can play in cases of intimate partner violence. Recently, Quebec called upon Ottawa to act. A few days ago, the Quebec public security minister explained that electronic monitoring devices could be issued only by authorities under Quebec jurisdiction and for provincial sentences. That means that only provincial sentences of two years less a day will be covered and that offenders who are given longer sentences in federal penitentiaries will be exempt. As a result, last week, Minister Geneviève Guilbault openly invited the federal government to follow Quebec's lead, while reminding the government that Quebec has control over what falls under our jurisdiction. Ms. Guilbault said that she spoke about this with the federal public safety minister.

With Bill C-233, electronic monitoring devices would be used in cases involving serious sex offenders who have received a sentence of more than two years, to be served in a federal institution, because sentences under two years are served in institutions run by Quebec. The federal government had little choice but to follow suit, especially since electronic monitoring devices are already used in other countries, like Spain and France. We should be able to build on their experiences. I have also spoken with the Australian consulate about making coercive control a criminal offence. We will come back to this.

The other problem has to do with the Internet and the technological gaps, since, realistically, broadcasting and transmitting services are not going to be implemented across Canada in the short term. A number of witnesses expressed concerns in committee about how this would affect the implementation of this measure. They told us that a woman's postal code should not determine whether they can feel safe. Nevertheless, this device must in no way be used as an excuse to reduce funding for other measures to combat domestic violence. These support measures are managed by the Government of Quebec, and Quebec must continue to receive the money required to run them.

For the other part of the bill, it is important to note that it addresses coercive control only with respect to the education of judges. The Criminal Code amendment proposed in this bill does not criminalize coercive control even though numerous experts, some of them internationally recognized, made that recommendation to the status of women and justice committees a number of times. The experts emphasized that the notion of coercive control is inextricably linked to the definition of intimate partner violence and that acknowledging this notion in Canada's Criminal Code would trigger the awareness and training mechanisms needed by the professionals and people on the ground who work directly with victims along with the funding to pay for it.

Let us not forget that family violence needs to be part of the conversation. In addition to the women who were murdered, 14 children were killed last year in intimate partner violence incidents.

Regarding the importance of the device, Ms. Lemeltier from the Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale cautioned that we must not think that intimate partner violence ends once the woman leaves the family home, because that is not true. The violence can morph into what is referred to as post-separation spousal abuse. It can manifest in many ways, including harassment on social media, maintaining financial control, withholding a woman's immigration documents or denying supervised right of access, which impacts children's safety.

This controlling behaviour continues and gets worse over time. The period after a separation is the most dangerous time for women and children. The amendments proposed in the bill to the Judges Act are therefore in keeping with the Bloc Québécois's positions in that they help enhance the protection of complainants. The issue of victims' safety is crucial.

This amendment would expand judges' education on sexual assault so they have a more in-depth understanding of intimate partner violence, by adding a component on coercive control.

Private Members' Business

• (1125)

It is reasonable to believe that a better understanding on the judges' part will improve the protection and safety of victims of intimate partner violence. That is something that I insisted on adding in our committee study.

My party welcomes any measure designed to increase the safety of victims of domestic violence. It also condemns any violence between intimate partners, the victims of which are most often women. We stand in solidarity against intimate partner violence and femicide, both of which have sadly and unacceptably increased during this pandemic.

We also want an inquiry into how to prevent, eliminate and create a legislative framework for the form of family violence known as honour crimes. These are our other hopes for the future.

Furthermore, we demand that the federal government contribute financially to the Quebec government's efforts in the area of violence prevention. During the 2021 election campaign, the Bloc Québécois argued that funds for the fight against intimate partner violence should come from the Canada health transfers, which should immediately increase by \$28 billion, without conditions. Long-term investments will also enable the generational change that is crucial to fighting this fight.

Furthermore, court cases involving crimes of a sexual nature are heavily influenced by the training and abilities of judges. It goes without saying that continuing education for judges on sexual assault law needs some updating. The Bloc Québécois has unequivocally supported this type of initiative since the subject was first raised in the House in 2020.

This bill complies with a recent recommendation of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. In its April 7, 2022, report entitled "The Shadow Pandemic: Stopping Coercive and Controlling Behaviour in Intimate Relationships", the committee recommends that the federal government engage with provincial and territorial governments and other relevant stakeholders to promote and fund a public awareness campaign on coercive and controlling behaviour, as well as training of judicial system actors, such as police, lawyers, and judges, about the dynamics of such behaviour. Training must be trauma-informed, integrate intersectional perspectives and be accompanied by tools and policies to support action on this issue.

At the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, Pamela Cross, the legal director at Luke's Place, a support and resource centre for women and children, reminded us that until every actor in both the criminal and family legal systems has a fulsome understanding of the reality of violence in families, the prevalence of it, the fact that it does not end at separation, the fact that there are many fathers who use the child, weaponize the child, to get back at their partner, we are going to continue to see shelters that are turning away 500 women and children a year and we are going to continue to see women and children being killed.

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Experts who appeared before the Standing Committee on the Status of Women all stressed the importance of training. This was emphasized by Simon Lapierre, a full professor at the University of Ottawa's School of Social Work, who also appeared before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. He said:

Having the judicial system better aligned with psychosocial services seems to me to be very important. Above all, we have to understand that even if a lot of measures are put in place, many of them will unfortunately not achieve their full potential if they are not accompanied by adequate training for all actors in the system, including social workers, police, lawyers and judges.

Training is extremely important and should be expanded across the country. Simon Lapierre also noted that it is important to reinforce the very concept of coercive control. This concept was already in place before the Divorce Act came into force, but he says that we should also include it in the Criminal Code. What is more, it needs to be accompanied by training programs for all stakeholders in the various sectors, including judges, and there needs to be a coherent approach to intimate partner violence, including youth protection services, across the country.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the incredible work of the entire team at an organization in my riding, the Maison Alice-Desmarais, which helps victims of intimate partner violence and their children. Last week, the organization opened a new duplex. The good news is that an entire community rallied behind the cause, but the bad news is that the needs are still immense. One more victim is one too many.

Everyone agreed that community organizations that help victims of intimate partner violence need more help. It is great to have the best training possible for judges and electronic monitoring devices for greater safety, but we need organizations to help the victims, and we need to support them as a society.

Let us, here in the House, support the work they do on the ground every day and help the victims and their children.

• (1130)

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today and speak in support of Bill C-233, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Judges Act, which will require new judges to take ongoing training about intimate partner violence and, when necessary, require those who have been convicted of intimate partner violence to wear an electronic bracelet.

Before I begin, I wish to first acknowledge Jennifer Kagan-Viater, who lost her daughter Keira Kagan as a result of intimate partner violence. I know this bill does not go far enough to truly honour her daughter. It is a first step of many, which needs to occur to end violence against women, girls and diverse-gendered individuals.

It is an issue that has worsened during the pandemic, something that falls on the deaf ears of those in power, who continue to make us beg for incremental justice while lives are lost to violence. It is violence that is often hidden as a result of stigmatization against victims and the minimization of violence by those who are able to ensure safety, including judges, often uneducated and unaware of the signs, as in the case of Jennifer Kagan-Viater, who expressed her concerns about the safety of her daughter having visitation with the father, only to fall upon the deaf ears of judges, who not only

ignored her, but assumed she was a manipulative parent, a revengeful ex-spouse, which is a common stereotype placed on women who express concerns about violence. This cost Keira's life, so, no, this bill does not go far enough, in the way that it requires only new judges, not current judges, to take training, the training they clearly needed to save Keira's life.

Training for judges must be culturally appropriate and reflect the realities of those experiencing violence. It must be holistic and include an understanding of violence from diverse social and cultural contexts. Training also needs to provide a greater understanding about how intimate partner violence intersects with other forms of oppression, including racism, sexism, ableism and homophobia. For instance, judges need to clearly recognize how experiences of gender-based violence against immigrant and refugee women, children and individuals require an understanding of not only how gender-based violence impacts individuals, but how various intersecting identities further marginalize an individual, often resulting in inequalities in accessing culturally proficient resources, services and supports.

It is no secret that the judicial systems are already unfriendly to women, girls and indigenous and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals. One only has to read the aboriginal justice inquiry, the truth and reconciliation report, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and, most recently, the Feminist Alliance for International Action to affirm this assertion. It is time that judges are provided with training to ensure they are trauma-informed. This needs to be led by survivors of violence and those working on the front lines. Training must use anti-racist and anti-oppression approaches.

Intimate partner violence is a crisis in this country, and the lack of government action to combat it is telling. Today, we have an opportunity to pass a new law, a small step, but a major one to address violence.

Every six days, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner. In 2018, 44% of women reported experiencing some form of psychological, physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. These rates of violence increase depending on where one lives in Canada. For example, women and girls in the north experience violent crime four times higher than Canada's overall population, and rates of intimate partner violence experienced by rural women are 75% higher than for urban women, yet there is a lack of action. There are epidemic rates of violence, and the government's response continues not to reflect the severity of the crisis in which we find ourselves. Begging for support, begging for a change in laws to better protect women, girls and diverse-gendered individuals, is met with a pile of excuses and rationales about why it cannot be done. This is particularly alarming considering that the current Prime Minister claimed to be a feminist, the leader of a so-called feminist government, yet the need for response and support to end this violence often falls on deaf ears.

There is a lack of funding to address this issue. Meanwhile, the government can find the resources to provide \$2.6 billion in this year's budget for fossil fuel subsidies. How many billions have been given to pad the pockets of big oil since 2015, while women, girls and diverse-gendered individuals continue to experience violence, sometimes resulting in death, or the billions of dollars for military weapons while women, girls and diverse-gendered individuals continue to perish as a result of violence?

• (1135)

There is no excuse for the lack of action and the inadequate support, whether it be in regard to strengthening laws to address issues of violence or providing the resources necessary to ensure that communities can offer the support and services required to save lives.

These issues become even more pronounced in certain populations, including BIPOC communities, transwomen and women with disabilities. According to Stats Canada, at least 25% of Black, indigenous and racialized women experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months; three out of five transwomen experienced intimate partner violence before the age of 16; and women with disabilities are three times more likely to experience intimate partner violence than women living without disabilities, a situation that becomes even more dire because of increased barriers to accessing services.

These rates become even more alarming for indigenous women. Sixty-one per cent of indigenous women report having experienced some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetime. Indigenous women are killed at nearly seven times the rate of non-indigenous women. Indigenous women and girls are 12 times more likely to be murdered or missing than any other women in Canada, and 16 times more likely to be murdered or missing than white women.

What was the 2022 budget allocation to address the ongoing genocide against indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals? It was zero. Meanwhile, the needs are great, including in my riding of Winnipeg Centre, where our community has been literally begging for over 10 years for a 24-7 low-barrier safe space. We are still waiting. Meanwhile, women continue to be murdered, including two women last week.

Private Members' Business

I wish to honour Rebecca Contois and Doris Trout. The system failed them. Those in power failed them. I honour them and their friends and family today. I will keep fighting for our community to get that safe place, so that their spirits have a safe place to always be.

As I indicated at the beginning of my speech, this bill is a start, but the government needs to do more to ensure that all women, girls, and diverse-gendered people can live in dignity, in safety and with security. This is a start.

The use of electronic monitoring devices has been shown to increase the likelihood of survivors of violence feeling safer and serve as a deterrence factor for abusers from approaching and harming victims of violence. We need to ensure that this device is available in all parts of Canada, including in rural and remote areas.

The government must also immediately support equitable access to services, because even if the issues with infrastructure for electronic monitoring devices are addressed, if improvements and increased funding to resources, community support services, emergency dispatches, and culturally relevant training for dispatches are left out of the solution, electronic monitoring devices will not address the needs of victims of violence in rural and remote areas.

Funding holistic approaches needs to happen to address intimate partner violence, including supporting the recommendations from the Ending Violence Association of Canada, in a consultation initiative informed by experts in frontline sexual violence services and advocacy organizations across the country, which identified priorities for a national action plan to end gender-based violence, including efforts to provide sustainable core funding; expand a robust and intersectional social infrastructure, including enabling an environmental framework as a key to prevention and providing safe and low-barrier housing and shelters, which is central to this recommendation; implement oversight and transparency in training for the justice system, while addressing systemic barriers that further marginalize victims of violence; support indigenous-led approaches and indigenous-informed solutions; and finally, implement the 231 calls for justice.

Without efforts to expand, fund and implement community-led programs and services that uplift people and uphold the human rights of all individuals, especially those who have experienced violence, we will continue to perpetuate the violent cycles of abuse, but—

• (1140)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are out of time.

Private Members' Business

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour today to speak to Bill C-233. I would like to start by thanking the member for Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle for putting forward and creating space for the bill. Throughout her career, she has been a tremendous advocate for those who have suffered from domestic and partner violence, both for those who have endured physical violence and for those who have silently suffered emotional and psychological abuse: coercive control that is no less harmful and in many cases has a violent or even deadly outcome after protracted years of silent suffering.

The member understands deeply that deterrent tools to preventing such violence, which happens to far too many partners and their children behind closed doors in far too many homes in this country, require education and a trained comprehension to effectively use the tools in our legislative tool box to protect those who are most vulnerable in a court system that is, in many cases, failing them.

When the member for Oakville North—Burlington and I came to the member with the story of Keira Kagan, she compassionately understood and made space for the work we are debating today. We have heard the story of Keira Kagan: the little girl who was the brightest of sparks who was tragically lost and whose death was completely preventable. I note, as did other members, that yesterday should have been her seventh birthday. We have shared the tireless advocacy of her mother, Dr. Jennifer Kagan-Viater, and her stepfather, Phil Viater, on the floor of the House. It was a parent's cry for justice in a system where there was every effort to do what every mother wants to do at the very core of her being: protect her child.

We heard their call. It became the siren for many others, including leading advocates for women from my community in York Centre and from across this country who were no longer asking, but demanding that light be shed on this pervasive form of abuse: to name it, to know it and from there to be able to use the tools we have to protect them.

To each one of the large and small organizations in my riding, from Tikvah Toronto to the North York Women's Shelter, from local advocates for immigrant and racialized women to the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto chapter, and to the many parents and victim-centred organizations from coast to coast, I can clearly and with gratitude say as we enter the last hours of debate here in the House that they have been heard.

It is a rare but incredible thing when we have consensus across the floor. When we do, we know it is because we have heard the call of Canadians at the deepest levels.

Bill C-233 was first tabled in early February. It went through to second reading and to committee in April with a co-operative effort to move schedules and get it to the important work of the committee by May. I would like to thank the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London, in her role as chair for the status of women committee. She, like many of us, understood the importance of the bill and her co-operation and leadership from across the floor must be acknowledged as we contemplate the bill now.

Much of the work that goes into the legislative process involves many conversations and emails, coordination of witnesses and stakeholders, asking the hardest of questions and unpacking key issues here and at committee. Each of the members who I have mentioned played a key role in the learning and advocacy that has taken place for Bill C-233.

Bill C-233 seeks to address two key components of education and legislative tools. It amends the Judges Act to expand judicial education, which currently covers topics such as sexual assault and social context, to include coercive control in domestic violence. It amends the Criminal Code to require a justice to consider whether an accused who is charged with intimate partner violence should wear an electronic monitoring device before a release order is made.

Through this process, we have shed light on the definition of coercive control. An important piece of this legislation is providing education to understand that while physical forms of intimate partner violence and domestic violence are well known and easy to detect, there are more covert forms of psychological abuse that are not always recognized as violence.

Coercive control can often be an early indicator that abusive relationships will escalate into physical or even lethal violence. A study of femicides from 2015-19 found coercive, controlling behaviours such as stalking, isolation and threats were frequent components. On average, a woman is killed by an intimate partner every six days in this country.

The patterns of behaviour for coercive control are intended to isolate, humiliate, exploit or dominate a victim. This can include emotional, verbal and financial abuse; isolation, such as preventing someone from going to work or school; and limiting their access to finances.

● (1145)

This invisible chain of behaviour escalates and can be quite visible through warning signs, when we know them, that include monitoring movements, sexual coercion, threats to harm a child and restricting access to money or even food. This outline of coercive control only scratches the surface of what judges will need training on in what has until now been a murky side of the court system. Victims straddle family and criminal court systems, and there is a dire, and at times deadly, impact on children.

We now understand the pathology of this form of intimate partner violence. It is unseen and brutally harmful. Its victims are the partners and children of these relationships where dependency, vulnerability and children themselves become weaponized. We cannot look away any longer.

The second aspect of Bill C-233 addresses the contemplation of using e-monitoring as a deterrent tool. In Keira Kagan's case, her father had 53 court orders against him. None ultimately served as a tool to keep her safe from harm. What we know is that education and implementation go hand in hand, and that is what this bill intends to do. It is a start.

There are those who see these amendments as first steps. We heard from many national advocates who expressed their concerns on the implementation of e-monitoring in terms of the settings and who would be subject to it. There is undoubtedly more work to do; there always is, but we must start and we have.

With this bill, coercive control and its understanding would become part of the language used within our legislative system. Our judicial system would have the tools to be educated on this and to identify it when it is in their courts. It would have deterrent tools that could prevent escalating violence in a cycle that does not end with the separation of a relationship.

We must be talking about this, and Bill C-233 has opened the conversation nationally, so that judicial training can set a precedent for the discussion of coercive control and the needed deterrent tools in other aspects of our system, be it with lawyers, social workers, health care workers or the many aspects of our system that are meant to protect victims and children.

We are in lockstep with other countries doing this work and exploring education on and, in some cases, criminalization of coercive control. These range from Australia, where studies have been done on the impact and potential criminality of it in the framework of domestic violence since as early as 2020, to the United Kingdom's section 76, which includes coercive controlling behaviour in an intimate family relationship as an offence.

Even here in Ontario, more recently than any of the above mentioned, the former Bill C-78 sought to update the definition of "family violence" in the Divorce Act to include "coercive and controlling behaviour". The discussions and the work have begun, so that we can ensure the victims are not left unprotected.

Each morning I wake up and spend a short bit of time in the practice of the Jewish tradition called *Daf Yomi*, the daily page of Talmud, whereby around the world, over a cycle of seven and a half years, an entire community studies a page of law. We review the compendium of Jewish law that has evolved over thousands of years, studying each debate, each small change and its lead-in to the next. We are taught to first learn much and then seek to understand it profoundly.

This daily practice humbles me and reminds me that, each day in the House, we are putting our efforts forward to create change, and that the work we do here each day is a small step that makes space, as the member for Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle has done, and sheds light to understand how we can protect and create safety for our community and all of its members, especially its most vulnerable. It is a profound responsibility and a privilege to do this work, and we must. For the many victims of abuse, families, partners and children, we owe it to them to protect them, and yes, we owe it to Keira Kagan.

Privilege

• (1150)

[Translation]

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Madam Speaker, I just want to thank all of my colleagues from the bottom of my heart.

[English]

I thank all the organizations, and Dr. Jennifer Kagan and her husband, Mr. Philip Viater, for having advocated for so long. Yesterday, as was mentioned, was Keira's birthday. Only in memory of her can we continue to speak out for other victims of domestic violence, such as her, who are the most marginalized and vulnerable people in our society. I just want to take this moment to say that Keira is everybody's daughter. These children are our children, and we suffer along with those who suffer.

I thank everybody from the bottom of my heart, and I hope we can pass this bill as quickly as possible.

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

• (1155)

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we would request a recorded vote.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 1, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

The Chair has been advised that there is a question of privilege that the hon. member for Perth—Wellington would like to raise.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today on a question of privilege concerning the refusal of my request for Adjournment Proceedings, or a late show, concerning my question pursuant to Standing Order 37(2) to a spokesperson for the Board of Internal Economy during the May 16 question period.

On the afternoon of May 16, I followed the provisions of Standing Order 37(3), which states, "A member who is not satisfied with the response to a question asked on any day at this stage...may give notice that he or she intends to raise the subject matter of the question on the adjournment of the House. The notice referred to herein...must be given in writing to the Speaker not later than one hour following that period the same day."

Privilege

The following morning, I received the following message from the Private Members' Business Office: "We are not able to accept your notice for an adjournment debate because Standing Order 38 indicates that only a minister or parliamentary secretary may answer questions during the Adjournment Proceedings."

While the office was correct in acknowledging that this is what Standing Order 38 says, it overlooked the House's order of October 2, 2001, recorded at page 677 of Journals, which stated:

By unanimous consent, it was ordered, — That notwithstanding any Standing Order, a question to a spokesperson for the Board of Internal Economy may be raised during the proceedings pursuant to Standing Order 38 and a spokesperson for the Board who is not a Minister of the Crown or a Parliamentary Secretary may give the response during those proceedings.

I pointed this order out in a reply email. The answer I received from the Private Members' Business Office was as follows, "Should you obtain unanimous consent, as was obtained on October 2, 2001, we would then accept the notice provided yesterday."

I had filed my late show notice because I had hoped perhaps there might be more information, which the spokesperson for the Board of Internal Economy, the hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe, could not have shared in the 35 seconds he had to answer me during question period. Additionally, given that it might be September or October before the late show gets scheduled, perhaps there might even be an update on the file, which then could be shared with this House.

It is my concern that my privileges in being able to raise this matter further are being frustrated, perhaps by a misapprehension of the nature of the order adopted by this House on October 2, 2001. Footnote 127 on page 517 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, describes the provenance of this order:

In 2001, Mauril Bélanger...raised a question of privilege to object that, while oral questions could be put to a representative of the Board of Internal Economy, the Member, if dissatisfied with the reply, could not then discuss the matter further during the Adjournment Proceedings since only Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries could reply to questions during such proceedings. The House later adopted a motion, by unanimous consent, to provide that the spokesperson for the Board, who was not a Minister or a Parliamentary Secretary, respond during the Adjournment Proceedings.

Here we are with yet another question of privilege on the right to have a late show concerning an inquiry about the House of Commons administration. In my view, the House's 2001 order was of a permanent standing nature. Paragraph 20.96 of *Ersine May*, 25th edition, explains the following:

Orders of a permanent character which 'stand' in force from one session to another and (unless indicated otherwise) from one Parliament to another, codify and direct many of the procedures and practices of the House and are known as standing orders. Standing orders may be amended or repealed, or new standing orders introduced, by motion and decision in the House in the normal way; there are no set rules on how such a motion may arise.

Madam Speaker, I draw your attention to page 16 of *Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand*, fourth edition, which adds:

Some orders of the House have a shorter or longer life than a session. For example, an order of the House may give committees a longer time to report on particular Estimates or annual reviews than is permitted under the Standing Orders. Such an order is spent when the business to which it relates has been dealt with. On the other hand, some orders, although not made into Standing Orders, may come to be regarded as having virtually permanent operation. One such order was passed in 1962 adopting a form of words for the prayer with which the House begins each sitting.

Of course, the wording of our own daily prayer, a matter of recent discussion, traces its approval to a decision of the House found at pages 172 and 174 of the Journals for February 18, 1994. The wording of the prayer has not been approved in every subsequent session, but rather, the 1994 order has proven to be of sufficient authority.

For an example of another House order of a similar enduring nature that was adopted by this House without ever having been catalogued among the numbered and bound Standing Orders, I refer the Chair to pages 72 and 73 of the Journals for November 19, 1984:

● (1200)

By unanimous consent, it was ordered,—That the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs shall have permanently referred to it all annual reports made to Parliament pursuant to section 72 of the Privacy Act and section 72 of the Access to Information Act; and

That it be an instruction to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs to:

1. consider every report prepared under section 72 of the Access to Information Act and of the Privacy Act;

On the strength of that House order, all annual reports from departments and agencies under the access to information and privacy laws were referred to the justice committee for over 30 years, until just a few years ago, despite the fact that the House created, in 2004, a special committee dedicated to, among other things, access to information and privacy issues.

Only in 2015 was this 1984 House order superseded, after the House adopted an amendment to Standing Order 108(3)(h) concerning the mandate of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics to specify that the committee would receive access to information and privacy annual reports.

In my respectful view, the House's order of October 2, 2001, is of a similar nature and remains in effect today. A plain reading of that order suggests that it was neutrally worded with regard to time in stating, "a question... may be raised... and a spokesperson... may give the response".

Nowhere in the order does it say it is limited to Mr. Bélanger's question or that its application was limited to a single question. Looking beyond the actual wording of the October 2, 2001, order, I would invite the Chair to consider also the motivations which led to its adoption.

In response to Mr. Bélanger's question of privilege, which I described earlier, the then-government House leader, the Hon. Don Boudria said, at page 5722 of the Debates on September 28, 2001:

This is most unfortunate, and creates an injustice. I agree with the hon. member on that. If, in the near future, the clerks could prepare for us the necessary amendment to the Standing Orders, I would be agreeable to discussing it with the other House leaders, with a view to amending the Standing Orders and making things equitable. It seems to me that is the solution.

The following week, when the motion for the October 2, 2001, House order was presented, the then-parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, Geoff Regan, said at page 5883 of the Debates:

Following other discussions among the House leaders I believe you would find, if you were to seek it, unanimous consent for the following motion.

If one were to follow the thread between these events, I think it is patently clear that the order of October 2, 2001, was meant to address, permanently, the gap in the published Standing Orders, which allowed questions to be posed to spokespersons for the Board of Internal Economy but not a late show follow-up or, in other words, in the words of Mr. Boudria, to make an equitable cure to this injustice.

Accordingly, I would respectfully submit that my notice seeking to raise the matter during adjournment proceedings should have been treated as receivable and therefore received by the House administration. Further, the House administration's refusal to accept my late show notice respecting my question about the allegations of Liberal partisanship on the part of the Clerk of the House constitutes a breach of privilege.

I do not make this point lightly. Put simply, pages 81 to 83 of Bosc and Gagnon confirm that “an offence against the authority or dignity of the House, such as disobedience of its legitimate commands” and “acting in breach of any orders of the House” constitute contempt of Parliament.

Should you agree, in addition to permitting my notice to be received by the table, I would be prepared to move the appropriate motion to refer the matter to the procedure and House affairs committee for their consideration.

• (1205)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I thank the hon. member for Perth—Wellington for bringing that to our attention. It will be taken under advisement and we will return with a decision.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

ONLINE NEWS ACT

BILL C-18—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-18, An Act respecting online communications platforms that make news content available to person in Canada, 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. Alexandra Mendès): 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

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

The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

[English]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, you and I are in a unique position: We both have front-row seats to what is becoming quickly a further decline of democracy here in Canada.

The government has moved time allocation on this bill with just two hours of debate. One speaker on the official opposition side has spoken to this piece of legislation, a piece of legislation that has been universally panned. It is quite controversial and warrants further debate.

This is the 101st time that the Liberal government has used time allocation and the 22nd time in this Parliament that their partners in the NDP, the NDP-Liberal coalition, have agreed to time allocation, which makes Motion No. 11 laughable, because the government's argument was that it was going to extend time to give more debate for members, which we now are seeing as a farce.

My question for the minister is this: Given the controversial nature of this bill and the fact that it does warrant further debate, I am wondering how he feels his legacy will be seen in furthering a decline in democracy in this country by muting the voices, limiting the voices, of millions of people speaking through members elected in this place.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us put things in context.

If we look at what has been actually happening in our country, we see that over 450 news outlets have closed their doors in the last 15 years, and 64 or 65 in the last two years. Does that have an impact? It has a huge impact on our democracy. Our democracy is not becoming stronger; it is becoming weaker because of that. Things are changing. Things are evolving extremely quickly, and what professional news media outlets are doing has value, and the web giants have to recognize that there is a value and that it is normal that they contribute.

I am very surprised that my Conservative friends have a problem with that, because they even said in the last campaign that this is what we should do. There is an agreement, almost a consensus, that we have to act and that we have to act now. The Conservatives have been stalling debate in this House. They did it with Bill C-8 and Bill C-11. They like to stall things. If they do not want to come here to work, then they should move aside and we will do the work.

• (1210)

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have not been a member of the House for all that long, so I would like someone to explain to me what has been happening here over the past few weeks.

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I would like to start by saying that we want to work to find solutions to what is happening to our media. The groundwork was laid during the previous Parliament, and we knew where we wanted to go. However, the Liberals called an election and we had to start over. The previous bill that has now become Bill C-18 still contains some of the same elements with no changes. However, we need to find a solution, and we need to do it fast, because billions of dollars are being lost and we need to protect freedom of expression and our media.

There is one other thing. I would like the member opposite to explain to me the point of these incessant motions. Not a day goes by that I do not have to try to explain to my constituents and even to my children what is happening with the legislative process in this session of the House.

I would like to know what we can expect in the coming days. What is the point of constantly challenging democracy, when we have a duty to debate each bill fully?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, with all due respect, I would tell my colleague that the bill she is referring to is the former Bill C-10, which is now Bill C-11.

Today we are talking about a different bill, Bill C-18, on which we are generally working quite well with my Bloc Québécois colleagues, and in particular the member for Drummond, who is the Bloc Québécois's heritage critic and who works very hard and very diligently on everything that he does, including as a member of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

I thank the Bloc Québécois for highlighting the freedom of the press and for emphasizing that the media must be independent and that print media must be strong and autonomous. That is precisely the purpose of Bill C-18, which would enable the media to not only survive but also succeed. The bill would also ensure that the media is strong not only in major cities, but also in the regions. We are talking about media in all forms, big, small, print, radio or television.

Together, all these forms of media help strengthen our democracy. Journalists representing these media outlets ask us tough questions here, questions that we sometimes do not want to answer, but it is our job to do so. That is why we need to ensure that these media outlets survive and grow even stronger in the future.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, we find ourselves in this place once again discussing time allocation on an important bill. I think for most Canadians, they look at this and say, "We want to see adequate debate on these topics", yet, at times in this Parliament, when adequate time has been afforded, we see other parties using that time to perform obstructionist tactics and waste the time of this place.

Can the minister please comment on the bind we seem to find ourselves in where we have to choose between time allocation and putting up with obstructionist delays?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, my colleague's question highlights what the Conservatives have been doing for weeks and months in trying to jam the work of Parliament in the chamber and in committees. Who benefits from that? No one does. The Con-

servatives think that they benefit from it, but Canadians do not benefit from what they are doing now.

Now we are talking about Bill C-18, which is fundamental for a strong, free, independent press. I said before that 450 media outlets have closed their doors in the last 15 years, and 64 or 65 have closed in the last two years. This makes our democracy weaker, not stronger.

We have to reinforce it. We have to be able to answer the tough questions, and I want to thank NDP members who are taking this extremely seriously in committees, in their ridings and in meeting with the media. They are bringing back good feedback. They want to collaborate, which is the difference between them and the Conservatives. The NDP wants to collaborate, but they do not.

● (1215)

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, again, it is troubling the way that this Liberal-NDP government is contributing to the decline of democracy here. There are signs that this government simply does not want to hear from Canadians, and does not want to hear from the opposition parties, so it is shutting down debate again. It is shameful that the NDP is siding with it on these time allocation motions.

The heritage committee is already backed up with the legislation it is dealing with already. We have only had one speaker from the Conservative Party on the opposition side on this important debate. This is a debate that is important to all Canadians so that all Canadian voices can be heard.

Is this stifling of debate necessary because the Liberal government does not want to work? The Liberals have set an example. In 2019, the House only sat for 75 days. In 2020, we only sat for 86 days. In 2021, we only sat for 95 days. Prior to that, the House sat for an average of 122 days.

We know that this Liberal government does not like to be in the House and be held accountable. Why are they pushing to further shut down debate from the opposition parties on this motion?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, I have been in this House for a few years now. I have sat on that side for many years, and I know how important the work of the opposition is. However, at that time, as with other members, we respected the House and Canadians.

I think that there is a way to work together respectfully, and I want to commend my official opposition critic who does exactly that. We may disagree on a lot of things, but he is very respectful. He respects the work of committees and the House, and he respects the bill too. I would love the Conservatives to be a little more respectful of the whole process, and we have seen what they have done on Bill C-11 and others.

Now it is time to work for democracy, not against it. A strong, free and independent press reinforces democracy, and that is exactly what Bill C-18 is all about.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, at times in the past, I have supported time allocation when there has been reasonable debate on a particular bill. For government to function, it is important for respectful debate to take place. I agree with the minister about the importance of Bill C-18. In fact, I was looking forward to hearing various perspectives in this place on the legislation.

In this case, as others have shared, we have had a total of two hours of debate on a Friday afternoon before moving to time allocation. Can the minister share why he feels this is so necessary, and why this is the only option available to the governing party to move ahead with respectful debate in this place?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, debate happens here in this beautiful House, it happens in committees and it happens in the Senate. Those debates will take place.

We all know how important committee work is. This is where the thorough questions are asked and where we hear from witnesses. I go to committee and appear with great pleasure. A big chunk of the work is done there. What the Conservatives have been doing is trying to jam this place. It is very sad for someone who ran to come here to see what is being done. I am sad when I look at them and even more when I listen to them.

I know they do not like me to be sad, so I ask them to maybe change a little how they do things. Maybe they can participate a bit more in the debates or maybe be a bit more constructive and make suggestions instead of trying to jam everything in the House.

Bill C-18 is about democracy and journalism, and Conservatives should support it.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am disappointed because my colleagues and I were looking forward to debating this piece of legislation. So far, the only Conservative member to speak to it has been me, which is unfortunate.

To my colleague, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, it is obviously a forgone conclusion that this bill will be passed and time allocation will be guillotined on this bill.

I want a clear commitment from the minister that he, the government House leader and the whip will not interfere at committee. I want a clear commitment that they will permit the committee to hear from witnesses and that there will not be a guillotine or programming motion at committee and that the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage will be permitted to fully explore the bill, hear from witnesses and not be forced into a programming motion.

• (1220)

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, of course there will be very important work done at committee. It would be a pleasure, if my colleague and the members invite me, to go because I have many important things to say on the bill. For example, it is really an arm's length bill. It is a bill that sets a table for the web giants, tech giants and news media across the country, big or small, to sit down and work on fair agreements for all. That is extremely important.

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That is one of the things we can discuss at committee. Another thing we could discuss at committee is how this bill would allow collective agreements, which would include a lot of small and regional papers. If I go to committee and the member asks me that question, I will talk about collective agreements. Of course there will be lots of time to work at committee, and it will be a pleasure to see my friend there.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Madam Speaker, I will rephrase my question. I was giving a passionate speech, and I did not know whether I had 60 seconds to ask my question.

We obviously want to have a solution.

The solution is what is proposed in Bill C-18, which incorporates certain aspects of bills C-10 and C-11. The groundwork has been laid, and this should be acknowledged.

My questions are as follows: What is going on? What can we tell our constituents?

As it stands, we have had only two hours of discussion and debate on such an important bill. I expect to hear an answer from my colleague across the aisle, because this is not the first time this has happened, and my hunch is that it will not be the last. I would like an explanation.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, I will not comment on my colleague's hunches, but I will say this: I am somewhat surprised that the Bloc Québécois, which is generally the exact opposite of the Conservatives when it comes to ideas, principles and ideals, is so openly supportive of the Conservatives in this type of discussion.

As I understand it, the Bloc Québécois members support Bill C-18. Why do they support it? They support the bill because it strengthens our media, because it strengthens a free and independent press, a press that will ensure that we have news about what is happening in Chibougamau, Trois-Rivières, Sherbrooke, Gatineau, Amos and Brossard.

The purpose of this bill is to ensure that there will continue to be a press. From what I understand, the NDP supports it as well. As for the Conservatives, who included it in their platform, I hope that they will agree with themselves. If all goes well and they listen to themselves, they should support the bill. Then it will be unanimous.

[English]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, when the Conservatives were in government, a majority government at that, they used time allocation over 100 times. Here we are now, and we are seeing the Conservatives using obstructionist tactics over and over again.

Could the member share why this bill is important? Could he also share why it is important that we make a decision that Canadians need to be made and why these obstructionist tactics are in the way of Canadians being served?

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Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, my colleague's comment and questions highlight how important it is to be able to collaborate.

Even if we disagree, we come here for the same reasons. We want to represent the people who voted for us, and we want our country to improve. We want a better society for our children. We may disagree on how to get there. Once or twice, we may disagree on how to get there, but we are here for the right reasons, which is to make a better country.

This will make Canada a better country because we will have a stronger free and independent press, and that press is disappearing. I mentioned 450 media outlet that have closed during the last 15 years, and that is huge. We are not only talking about small ones. There are small and big ones in different regions.

If they all disappear, who will be there to talk about what my colleague is doing in their riding, what I am doing or what anyone else is doing? About 80% of advertising on the web is going to two web giants: Facebook and Google. That is the reality. That is what is happening at this moment. We need to have the tech giants and the media outlets sit down and negotiate fair deals. It would be fair for all.

• (1225)

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the answers to the questions so far, the minister has talked about the loss of thriving news agencies. He has talked about the 450 news agencies that have been lost in the last couple years and how it is so important for us to have these thriving news agencies to support our democracy.

He just talked about the differences we might have in the House as we come to debate bills. We come to represent our constituents and to have a discussion in this House, but he does that in the context of limiting the opportunity for us, as members of Parliament, to come and have discussion and debate a particular bill. He talks about how substantive this bill is.

How does limiting our discussion and debate by invoking closure on this bill allow for members of the House to come and represent their constituents in an adequate manner?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, some numbers came out this morning about the importance of supporting a free and independent press, and they are quite interesting.

If members do not want to listen to me, then maybe they can at least listen to their own voters, the people who voted for them, and 71% of self-identified Conservative voters think web giants should have to share revenue with Canadian media outlets. That is 71% of Conservatives. I have a second number, and it is that 74% of self-identified Conservative voters think that Parliament should pass a law that would let smaller outlets negotiate collectively with web giants. This is exactly what we are doing with this bill.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, this bill is important. It is important to ensure that web giants such as Facebook, Meta and Google pay their fair share. When I think about the Canadians watching the debate and the constituents of our Conservative colleagues watching this party obstruct not only this bill but so many more before it, I imagine they are disappointed.

I'm wondering if the minister can speak to those Canadians and talk a bit about the importance of the work we do here and how it is incredibly disappointing to see what the Conservatives have been doing.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, that is a very important comment from my colleague. I want to thank her for everything she is doing, and her party for what it is doing, on this very important bill.

With respect to Canadians being disappointed, of course they are disappointed with the Conservatives. I am very disappointed myself with them, which says a lot. However, it is not only Canadians. I referred to the numbers: 71% of Conservative voters said that we should do this and 74% said we should allow small media outlets to negotiate with the big web giants. This is written in the bill, so if the Conservatives do not want to listen to me or to us, will they at least listen to the people who might vote for them in the future?

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, since we are making up numbers, I have a poll here stating that 100% of Liberal voters did not vote for an NDP-Liberal coalition, but that is where we are at. With how quickly and how far the New Democrats have fallen in holding the government to account as a fourth party, they sound like lapdogs to the Liberal Party.

This is important because the government representative, the minister, is talking about obstruction that has been going on, but we have had two hours of debate on this bill. The official opposition, Her Majesty's loyal opposition, has had one member speak to this bill, which has been universally panned. There is no question that there is a need to fix this issue, but when we actively engage in vigorous debate in this place, ideas are formed. That is how better bills are passed. To see the heritage minister use obstruction as a reason for ramming this bill through the House is rather disingenuous.

The minister's legacy will be a decline in democracy as it relates to this institution. We wonder why people are losing faith in our institutions, and this the exact reason: Voices are being silenced in this place, those of millions of people who voted for opposition parties, including the Conservatives. It is a legacy he will have to live with.

A free and open democracy requires an independent news media. We agree with that, but this is not the way to get this done.

• (1230)

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, if my colleague agrees with that, he has a weird way of showing it. I see the Conservatives attacking the New Democrats because they come here trying to make a difference. On some things we collaborate; on others we do not and we disagree, which is fine. However, to the Conservatives the word “collaboration” makes no sense. What they prefer to do is jam things, filibuster, listen to each other and clap for each other all the time. They think it is a good thing to shut down democracy like they are doing now. It is totally wrong.

We have to move forward. This bill has to move forward. This bill will go to committee and will have hours of discussion and witnesses. I will go there and speak about the importance of it and how it allows collective bargaining to help smaller media news outlets and regional news outlets. I will talk about how this will translate into fair agreements between the tech giants and media outlets across the country. I will talk about the importance of the press. I will talk about the importance of the press for our democracy and the importance of a strong, free and independent press, because that is what bill C-18 is all about. That is it.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, to the hon. minister, this moment we have now is not about debating the substance of Bill C-18. I look forward to an opportunity to debate that, but I will not get that opportunity because time allocation is being used again.

I have to say that, on principle, I object to this. I objected to it when the previous administration under Stephen Harper did it over and over again at a level unprecedented in parliamentary history. What is now happening is the governing Liberals are normalizing the suppression of debate at second reading. Maybe we can debate this in the Standing Orders debate we are to have. Is the goal of governing parties in this place to shut down all debate at second reading and just say, “We will get to it in committee”? That is not acceptable.

This is not acceptable and I will not be voting for time allocation. On principle, I have maybe once been persuaded that there really was a case for it, but today on Bill C-18 there is no case for it.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, it is important that we move on with such a crucial bill for our democracy. I think it is a well-balanced bill. We took the original idea from Australia and we tweaked it and improved it. It is more transparent. It is arm's length legislation, and we have set the table for the tech giants to sit down with media outlets big and small so they can negotiate to come to different agreements. There is minimal intervention from the government.

The Conservatives should be happy about it, but they do not seem to be happy. I do not understand why. They even wrote in their own platform that they would do exactly what we are doing. Maybe they changed their minds again on this, but I think we are doing the right thing.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when I was in opposition in the third party, I indicated that there is a time when governments need to use time allocation as a tool to pass legislation. We have before us today, and have wit-

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nessed for a number of months now, an official opposition that has absolutely no intention to allow legislation to pass. It does not take very much for an opposition party to prevent legislation from passing. As I said when I was in opposition, at times the government has to use time allocation as a tool.

Would my colleague not agree that, given the strategy of the Conservative Party not to pass legislation and to even filibuster legislation that it supports, the only way we can pass this legislation is if we use time allocation, something the Conservative Party used to vote for extensively?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, I would say more than extensively. I was here with my colleague, and the Conservatives were using time allocation time after time, even when we were not doing anything. However, in this case, the Conservatives are jamming the debate on many important transformational bills, on bills that Canadians want and even on bills that Conservative supporters now want.

This bill is fundamental. As we speak, news media outlets are closing their doors. I spoke about the 450, but there are more and more. Time is of the essence.

There is debate here. There is debate in committee. There is debate at the Senate. These important debates have to take place and have to bring us to the conclusion where this bill is adopted, because this is what Canada needs.

• (1235)

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Madam Speaker, this is my last question. I certainly understand that all the questions about the process we are going through will not be answered.

I heard the minister. The Bloc Québécois is not just here to oppose things. We will vote in favour of things that are good for Quebec, and, obviously, we believe that Bill C-18 is extremely good for Quebec.

Nevertheless, if collaboration is so important, why was the Bloc Québécois not consulted so that we could reach an agreement ahead of time? This is not our first time allocation rodeo. Over the past few weeks, closure has been all the rage. Again, the question is, how did we get to this point? Are the Liberals short on inspiration or on strategy?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is consulted regularly. In fact, I have an excellent professional relationship and excellent collaboration with the Bloc's heritage critic, the member for Drummond.

Government Orders

As I said off the top, the member cares deeply about all of this and he takes this extremely seriously. I know he consults people, and I know he does so very thoroughly because we talk to the same people. He offers suggestions, he listens to what we say and we talk about it all. We will continue to discuss issues with my colleague from Drummond, the rest of the Bloc Québécois and all the parties. What matters is moving this bill forward because Canada needs it.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forth with the question on the motion now before the House.

[Translation]

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.

[English]

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Call in the members.

• (1320)

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

(Division No. 104)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blois	Boissonnault
Bradford	Brière
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry

Gaheer	Garneau
Garrison	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gould
Green	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Miller	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Singh
Sorbara	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thompson
Trudeau	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Virani
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 172

NAYS

Members

Aitchison
Arnold
Barlow
Benzen
Bergeron
Bérubé
Blanchet
Block
Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe
Caputo
Chabot
Champoux
Cooper

Dalton
DeBellefeuille
Desbiens
Doherty
Dreeshen
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
FERRERI
Fortin
Gaudreau
Genuis
Gladu
Gourde
Hallan
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Lake
Larouche
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Maguire
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Moore
Morrice
Motz
Nater
Patzner
Perron
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Schmale
Shipley
Small
Steinley
Stewart
Stubbs
Therrien
Tochor
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer — 137

Davidson
Deltell
Desilets
Dowdall
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Garon
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Gray
Hoback
Kmicie
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lantsman
Lawrence
Lemire
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
MacKenzie
Martel
Mazier
McLean
Michaud
Morantz
Morrison
Muys
O'Toole
Perkins
Plamondon
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Rood
Savard-Tremblay
Shields
Simard
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Thomas
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

I wish to inform the House that because of the proceedings on the time allocation motion, Government Orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

SECOND READING

The House resumed from May 13 consideration of the motion that Bill C-18, An Act respecting online communications platforms that make news content available to persons in Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to talk about an important piece of legislation. I suspect that what we would find is virtually universal support, no matter where one goes in Canada, for this type of legislation.

In fact, it was not that long ago when we were in a national election and the Conservative Party of Canada was talking about how important it was to deal with this very same issue. On the one hand, Conservatives seemed to love the idea back in September, but something has happened. Maybe it is that leadership vacuum, but the bottom line is that the Conservatives now seem to want to waffle.

Let me assure my friends across the way that Canadians understand the issue. They understand it fully. Unlike the Conservatives, we recognize the value of our public having media sources they can actually count on and of supporting that industry, both directly and indirectly.

Someone who was suspicious of the Conservative tactics on this legislation might raise a couple of issues. One that comes to mind is the issue of fake news. The Conservatives love fake news. It was not that long ago the Conservatives were saying the Liberals are going to put a tax on trucks. Do members remember that one? That was a Conservative fake news spin. A big part of their agenda—

• (1325)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I know we have been away for a week and I am so glad to see that everybody is looking forward to talking and happy to see everybody, but I would ask to just keep the noise down a bit and respect other members.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am trying to emphasize why it is so important that we support the industry. From a government, from a party or even from the average person in our communities, they all recognize the true value of fact-based news. It is somewhat foreign to the Conservative spin doctors, and that is why I brought up the truck issue.

In the very brief discussion I had moments ago, another example came up. Do members remember the fake news when the Conservative Party said the Liberals are going to put a tax on the sale of principal homes? We can stand up in the chamber and tell Conservatives that this is just wrong and is an outright untruth. I did not say the word “lie”; I said “untruth”.

The Conservatives would say something of that nature, and we would stand up and say that it is just not true, yet the Conservatives still try to say something that is questionable—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Let us all take a moment and take a deep breath. Question period is not for another hour or so. Let us bring the temperature down, but also let us not do indirectly what we cannot do directly either.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, let me restart, if I can put it that way. There is an expectation that we all have. We all have it because we went through a national election where it was made very clear that the government was given a new mandate and part of that mandate was to show there was a need for opposition parties and government to work together. We see that taking place quite often between different opposition parties and the government.

Unfortunately, the Conservative Party has taken an approach where it does not matter what the legislation is and the importance of Bill C-18—

The Deputy Speaker: There is a point of order from the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, we hear this narrative all the time with the Liberal Party saying that the Conservatives do not co-operate. We had unanimous consent on the constitutional amendment for Saskatchewan, so we have co-operated—

The Deputy Speaker: We are descending. This is debate, and I am sure there are lots of slots that people can fill on this debate on the bill before us today.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, being inspired, I would ask if there would be unanimous support to see this legislation go through, given the fact that all political parties supported the principle of the legislation and supporting the principle would only see it go to committee stage. I would encourage that sort of enthusiasm for support on Bill C-18.

The point I was trying to get at is that Bill C-18 is important legislation that would have a profoundly positive impact. The minister has done an incredible job, through the ministry, of gathering and sharing thoughts and ideas and getting the information necessary to bring forward legislation that would make a difference and would be a true reflection of what Canadians wanted back in September of last year.

We also need to recognize there is the expectation that the government will bring forward legislation and that opposition parties will participate and be engaged. We often see that, especially from members of the New Democratic Party, the Green Party and the Bloc. At times we will see it from the Conservatives. It is not too often, but maybe at times.

The bottom line is that what we have witnessed in recent months is a great filibuster on whatever the legislation might be. That is the reason we needed to bring in time allocation on this legislation. The best example I could probably give would be Bill C-8. Members might remember Bill C-8 as the fall economic statement legislation that was just recently passed. That is an excellent example of the manner in which the Conservative Party will go out of its way to stop legislation from passing.

Bill C-8 was all about supporting Canadians through the pandemic. Bill C-18 is all about protecting a critical industry here in Canada. It is an industry that needs legislation of this nature. Canada is not alone. There are other countries that have moved in this direction and recognized the need for national governments to bring forward legislation. In fact, the official opposition recognized

and seemed to support what was taking place in Australia on this issue. It has made reference to that.

I believe Bill C-18 is—

• (1330)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Somebody has their microphone on in the parliamentary feed.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor. I am sorry to be interrupting him so much.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am sure I will be given the time back.

At the end of the day, I believe we have better legislation than Australia. I understand the Conservative Party supports what is taking place in Australia. There is more transparency in Bill C-18, so one wonders why the Conservative Party would not see the value of it and not only support the legislation but allow it to ultimately pass as opposed to continue to put up some form of a filibuster.

At the end—

The Deputy Speaker: It seems we keep getting the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount on the parliamentary feed, so let me once again make sure we are clear.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: We will try this again, Mr. Speaker.

What we are looking at in Bill C-18 is legislation that would provide more transparency and ultimately more accountability than we saw in Australia. Canadians as a whole, in all regions of the country, desire to see fact-based news reported. One of the ways in which we can ensure that takes place is to support Bill C-18.

On one hand, we had every political entity inside this chamber in the last federal election say that it supported that form of legislation. The good news is that, like so many other platform issues in an election, the Government of Canada has brought forward legislation that would fulfill yet another commitment to Canadians, so it should be no surprise. Part of that commitment is to see this legislation ultimately pass. That is why the Minister of Heritage was here about half an hour ago, talking about why it was important that we bring in time allocation to get this legislation passed.

I would appeal in particular to my Conservative friends to recognize the true value of the legislation and suggest to them that times have changed. When I was first elected as a parliamentarian a few years back, I can remember walking back into the Manitoba legislature in 1988 and looking into the press gallery. We have a press gallery up here, but it is not very often that we actually see members of the press in there. Having said that, when I first walked into the Manitoba legislature during a question period, the press gallery was packed. We would have two cameras from CBC. We would have CKND there. We would have CTV. We would have at least three reporters from the Winnipeg Free Press and from the Winnipeg Sun and even some rural media. There were not that many chairs, and often we would see media personalities standing. When I left the Manitoba legislature a number of years ago, prior to coming here, we might get one or two members of the media sitting in the gallery.

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We need to recognize the number of local news outlets that have been lost through print media, radio and television. Our communities really miss community-based reporting of local news. At large companies, including CTV, CBC and other major media outlets, there have been cutbacks. We should all be concerned. We are a parliamentary democracy in Canada. Our system is very much dependent on having a healthy, modern media industry. I have used the word, as many of my colleagues have. When we talk about a modern industry, it is absolutely critical that it be fact-based. That is why more and more we are seeing a sense of urgency in getting this type of legislation put before the House and into committee, and ultimately coming back and getting the royal assent that is necessary in order to make it the law of the land.

The legislation would ensure that there is a free, independent press that is able to enhance our democratic values, and it would ensure that there is a certain element of fact-based news that we see when we look at Facebook and YouTube and those high-tech world-leading giants, if I can put it that way.

• (1335)

Let us compare yesterday to today, yesterday being a number of years ago, and the advertising that would have taken place. I will use the Winnipeg Free Press as an example and the advertising dollars it would have generated during the 1990s. We can compare that to the amount of advertising required today. Whether it is print, radio or TV, it is advertising dollars that generate the revenue to provide opportunities for those companies to pay their employees, from the people delivering, publishing or printing the papers to the journalists, the ones writing the stories and providing the editorials. There has been a massive loss of advertising revenue not only by our major newspapers, but also our community-based newspapers. If we look at rural communities and municipalities versus larger urban centres, we have seen a reduction in what I would suggest is reliable, fact-based reporting because of the loss of revenue.

Where we have seen an explosion, on the other hand, is through the Internet. It has been cited, for example, that Facebook and Google consume somewhere in the neighbourhood of 80% of what goes into advertising. Are the reporters and investigative journalists receiving any sort of real financial compensation for the work they are doing to create and provide the fact-based stories that come from Internet giants Google and Facebook? If we do a Google search or look at Facebook, we see these streams that incorporate news broadcasts. Is there fair compensation being provided?

The government and, based on the last federal election, I would argue all members recognize that there is a deficiency and that fair compensation is not being provided. It is the Government of Canada that is in the best position to ensure that there is a higher sense of awareness and that we have an industry that is being protected. It goes much further than the issue of jobs. It is an industry that we cannot afford to lose or neglect. I would suggest there is an obligation for us to protect it and do what we can to enhance it. When we read through Bill C-18, that is what we will find it would do. The sooner it gets through the House of Commons and becomes law, the sooner we will enable many news agencies to have the opportunity to have fair discussions and negotiations with companies such as Google and YouTube. That is why I believe it is so critical.

In the questions and answers the Minister of Canadian Heritage provided earlier today, he was talking in part about the number of people we are losing in that industry. I do not have the actual numbers, but I could speculate in terms of salaries. I suspect the average salary in that industry has modestly increased and I would not be surprised if, in many ways, it has decreased at a time when, as the Internet explodes, there is an even higher demand for reliable news.

• (1340)

I know how important it is. On a weekly basis, I go to a local restaurant where every so often a certain gentleman would come by, and I could tell what paper he was reading by the criticism he was providing. One day I suggested to him that he should broaden his reading and share other stories that were being published. Interestingly, he never did show up again. I suspect it was because he had been looking at the broader media and reading what was being published by some of those agencies that we have grown to trust over the years. There is a high sense of accountability for Global, CTV and CBC, and newspapers both nationally and locally. When they appear in newsfeeds, whether it is on Facebook or YouTube or in whatever format, it does make a difference.

This government is not going to be intimidated in any fashion by the tech giants of the world. We want to ensure that the industry is protected, and we need to put everyone on a more level and fairer playing field. There needs to be proper compensation to our media outlets that are being tapped into in order to foster greater profits for those high-tech world companies, and in short, that is exactly what Bill C-18 would do: It would put in place a process that would enable negotiation and a much higher sense of fairness. It would protect our news industry as we modernize and continue to move forward.

I encourage all members not only to support the legislation before us but also to support its passage so that it can get royal assent possibly as early as the end of June.

• (1345)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would say that I would like to thank my colleague for Winnipeg North for his speech, but that would be disingenuous.

The member talked a lot about support for local media, which is funny, because in the operations committee about three years ago, we actually studied government advertising in Canada. The committee came up with recommendations that the government should stop sending all its money to Google and Facebook and use government advertising to support local media, small newspapers, the Winnipeg Free Press, which he mentioned, and a lot of local ethnic newspapers. What did this government do? It took the recommendation, threw it in the garbage, and continued to push more money to Google, Facebook and these big web giants.

Why, then, is the member speaking out of both sides of his face? He is saying to support local business, but when we had the chance to do so, the government gave the money to Facebook and Google.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, this legislation is actually good news.

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Let us be realistic. The federal government, as it has for many years, invests in advertising in a significant way, from community newspapers to radio programs, both urban and rural. We have ethnic advertising that takes place, and yes, there is advertising that takes place on Google and on YouTube. There are very important programs that the government has, and it is important that Canadians find out about them, whether they be programs that serve our vets or programs that advertise the greener home building program or other programs from which Canadians can really benefit if in fact they are informed about them.

Governments have done advertising for many years, although not with as much money as Stephen Harper ever spent, but governments have done it for many years.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I organized a major public consultation during last week's constituency week. There is an airport in my riding, and I held public consultations on developing that airport. It is an important piece of infrastructure that affects the lives of 400,000 people in the region.

My riding has just one local weekly newspaper, *Le Courrier du Sud*. We wanted the media to come and cover this event, which would affect everyone in my riding, not to mention people in neighbouring ridings, so we sent a press release to the newspaper. We were told that no journalists were available to cover this event, despite how important it was to our local community.

The legislation presented for our consideration does not ensure that small local weekly newspapers will have enough bargaining power to fully participate in negotiations with web giants.

Can my colleague comment on that? Can he assure us that local media will be able to get sufficient funding through the negotiations that will take place with the web giants?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, with Bill C-18's passage, we will see for the first time a greatly enhanced opportunity to ensure that we do get fair compensation, not only for the large media outlets but for small media outlets also. I can understand and relate to what the member is talking about, especially in rural Manitoba, as an example, or even in some of our major urban centres where there is a need for more journalists. As a society, we want to support that industry. For me personally, fact-based news is of critical importance.

I hope to see the bill go to committee, and maybe the member can participate at the committee stage. If there are things we can do to improve and enhance the legislation, I am sure that the minister would be open to those ideas. In fact, if the member has specifics, he should probably raise them with the minister or the parliamentary secretary in advance of the bill going to committee.

• (1350)

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this bill is important, and it is so important that we make web giants pay their fair share. It is also important that we learn lessons from other countries.

The member mentioned Australia, and I want to follow up on the question from my colleague in the Bloc. We have seen in Australia that Facebook and others have been entering into revenue agreements with the large publishers. It means that the smaller publishers are not getting fair compensation. Therefore, I am wondering if the member will commit to advocating for changes at committee stage to ensure that smaller publishers get a fair shake.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question and I think there is a great deal of interest not only on my part but from within the Liberal caucus and hopefully others, such as the member, in recognizing the importance of the smaller news agencies. That is one of the reasons I incorporated this point in my comments and talked about ensuring fairer compensation for both large and small media outlets. They are absolutely critical, especially to our local communities.

I really do believe that this legislation would enhance that sense of fairness for both large and small media outlets. If there are things that we could do to better ensure that outcome, I would encourage my New Democratic friends to raise the issue and bring up the example, and if they have an amendment, to share it with the minister or the staff. They do not have to wait until it goes to committee; they can do that at any point in time. I am sure that if there are ways in which we can improve the bill, the minister would be open to them.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am very troubled by what has happened to journalism in Canada. I agree, as the hon. parliamentary secretary said, that democracy itself is under assault when we lose our local journalists. In fact, there have been empirical studies that show that as parliamentary bureaux of local papers across Canada close up shop, the level of voting in those communities goes down. I agree with the diagnosis, but I do not know that we have the right prescription.

What we now see in Australia are a lot of concerns after the Australian model, which we are now pursuing, has been used as a big stick to drive people to private negotiations with no transparency. There is a lot of concern about following this model.

I am not saying I am against it and I want to figure out how it might work, but surely the simplest thing is to go to the source and say to Google, Twitter, Facebook and anything that is undermining our journalism that they are publishers, just like the newspapers. They are not platforms but publishers, and they have to follow all the same rules as print journalism in Canada.

Would the hon. member comment on that?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, for many years, giant tech companies such as Facebook, Google and YouTube have been going around the world and getting away with a great deal while enriching themselves worldwide. We are seeing more countries today saying that it is not acceptable and that we want to ensure that there is protection for their media industries, and that is something that is very tangible coming from this government. This legislation will go a long way toward ensuring a higher sense of fair compensation and protecting a critically important industry.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for fitting me into this debate.

I would say this to the hon. member for Winnipeg North: We just heard a comment from the Conservatives across the way that they did not want to hear from him because he had an alternative point of view. In fact, a lot of news is presented online in a biased fashion. Could the member talk about news as entertainment versus news as a source of information on the different points of view that help to inform us?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. That is why I shared the story of the gentleman who would show up and talk to me. After a few weeks, I could tell exactly what outlet he was using as his source. It was always the same outlet. When I made the suggestion that he try to expand and look at other media outlets, he literally stopped coming. It was a pleasant discussion we had.

The point is that it is very important that we be supportive of our news industry and journalists. That is what this legislation is all about. It is about ensuring there is proper compensation. We have some of the best journalists in the world and we need to support them. We need to be there for the industry. It is healthier for our democracy.

• (1355)

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been an enjoyable afternoon listening to some of the fairy tales from the government, because it is cutting off debate after two hours on a bill that, from coast to coast, we have not seen much of.

Bill C-18 is an interesting bill. As a former journalist and broadcaster, I am glad today that I have the opportunity to speak to this bill and right the ship, if the House does not mind.

I spent 40 years in the industry, in radio and television. I began the career in Yorkton, working midnights as a disk jockey. I spent some time in Melfort doing radio. I moved over to CFQC in Saskatoon—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I apologize to my friend for interrupting.

There is an incredible amount of background noise going on just outside the chamber. Perhaps you could pass along an instruction for them to quiet down a bit.

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate that intervention. I try to remind folks as they come into the chamber and the lobbies to keep their conversations a lot quieter, because the sound coming over from the other side is a little too much for this House of Commons. Again I would ask members coming into the House to keep the lobby doors closed to keep the volume down.

I apologize. The hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood has three minutes.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, picking back up, I spent some time at Melfort, went over to Saskatoon in radio and then spent the majority of my career as a sports journalist and anchor at CTV News Saskatoon.

Statements by Members

As a journalist, I remember having the opportunity to travel and cover some of the biggest news stories in Saskatchewan's history. I was on the field for countless Roughriders games, Grey Cup championships, Olympics and world curling championships. I remember covering the historic attempt when Saskatoon and Saskatchewan tried to get the St. Louis Blues to move to Saskatoon. That was in the 1980s.

What a success entrepreneur Bill Hunter and his group had back then, as they had thousands of people activated in our province, all going through the news media. We went to Madison Square Garden in New York for the NHL hearings. I remember the night before the hearings I was in the New York Islanders' dressing room celebrating the team's four-game sweep of the Edmonton Oilers. I talked to the many Saskatchewan-born players on the Islanders' team: Bryan Trottier, Bob Bourne and so on. It was a historic week being in New York trying to get the St. Louis Blues back to Saskatchewan and Canada.

I am afraid those stories would probably not be told today because of the lack of budgets for small- and medium-sized news organizations in this country. They have cut their staff, some down entirely to zero. In stations that actually remain, the person we hear on the air is often the only person in the entire building. Big stations are not exempt from this either. I have seen my fair share of colleagues and friends over the years being shown the door when cuts came around to address lagging revenues.

Earlier in my career, though, I worked late nights covering the station at a time when there was actually live coverage of radio throughout the night. Now, most stations are live for maybe six hours a day, or 12 at best. It is actually exclusively pre-recorded and it is satellite radio. This is a shame because where can young broadcasters get into the business now when, with a flip of the switch, people can have satellite radio?

We are getting ready for question period, and I will, as they say, come back for the rest of the story.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

ROGER FARWELL

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to share today about my friend Roger Farwell.

Roger was not only an architect, a community builder and a champion of arts and culture, he was one who was deeply devoted to his family and his community. He passed away tragically last summer, and yesterday family and friends came together to celebrate his life and legacy.

Statements by Members

Waterloo region is known as a barn-raising community, where people come together to support each other. Over his life, Roger received nearly every prestigious award our community offers to recognize leadership and service, including our highest honour, the Barnraiser Award, which was inspired by former governor general David Johnston.

Roger was the consummate barnraiser. He gave to others, worked quietly behind the scenes, and expected nothing in return. In so many ways, Roger was the best of our community.

As we continue to mourn the loss of Roger, I want to extend my deepest condolences to his wife, Cathy, and the rest of his family. We send them all our love and wish them strength as they continue to grieve. Together we will do our best to make Roger proud.

NATIONAL TOURISM WEEK

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is blessed with stunning natural beauty, vibrant cities and diverse cultural gatherings that draw people from around the world to experience them.

Before the pandemic, the tourism industry employed one out of every 11 Canadians. Across our country, from the slopes of Whistler, to the Calgary Stampede, Le Vieux-Port of Montreal and Gros Morne in Newfoundland, chances are that tourism is one of the important parts of the local economy and a source of immense pride for communities to welcome visitors.

This week is national Tourism Week. As we celebrate Tourism Week, I invite every member in the House and every member in the other place to join me in the panorama room at the Delta Hotel for a reception, hosted by the parliamentary tourism caucus and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, to share some food and drinks from across our great nation and talk about how we could jump-start tourism in Canada to once again share our beautiful country with the world.

JOY SMITH FOUNDATION

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, human trafficking remains a vicious and growing crime in every corner of this country, and it is within 10 blocks of where we live. It must end.

Today I am pleased to recognize the work of one of the great heroes in the fight against human trafficking, the former member of Parliament Joy Smith. For years, Joy was relentless in raising this issue in the House and championing the voices of victims and survivors. During her time as MP, she had one motion and two private members' bills adopted that strengthened Canada's human anti-trafficking laws. Joy also initiated the former Conservative government's national action plan to combat human trafficking. As a former teacher, Joy has always said, "Education is our greatest weapon".

Since leaving office, she has continued the fight against human trafficking through the Joy Smith Foundation, educating thousands of Canadians and supporting countless survivors. Last year, Joy's

foundation launched the National Human Trafficking Education Centre, which provides courses for teachers, parents and frontline responders. We thank Joy for her tireless work to stand up for the vulnerable and securing freedom for those enslaved.

CANADIAN RANGERS

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 75th anniversary of the Canadian Rangers. They are dedicated, courageous men and women, and they are Canadian Armed Forces members. They live and work in remote, isolated, coastal regions of Canada. They are trained and ready to serve.

This year they celebrate a major milestone of loyal service to Canada. They are 5,000 strong, and they serve in more than 200 communities across Canada's north. I want to thank all those who serve in the Canadian Rangers.

We see them in times of crisis, such as search and rescue operations and natural disasters. We see them helping communities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and we see them in times of celebration as they mark the extreme events of Canada's military history. They are always there to support their communities and to support Canada's northern regions.

I ask members of Parliament to join me in extending our thanks and appreciation to all those who have served in the Canadian Rangers and Junior Canadian Rangers for Canada for the past 75 years.

● (1405)

[Translation]

NATIONAL TOURISM WEEK

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this week is National Tourism Week. We all know that tourism is a vital part of our economy. In Quebec alone, it generates \$15 billion in economic spinoffs each year, and there are 25,000 businesses employing 400,000 people in tourism.

The last two years have been especially difficult. It is now time to look ahead. Our industry must regain its international competitiveness. The industry is ready, and it is safe. It is working flat out to offer tourists an exceptional experience.

We must support our businesses and sing the praises of our own little corner of the world. I have plenty to boast about. With its wide-open spaces, its history, its amazing food scene, its new-world accent and its charm, Quebec is ready to welcome tourists back with the same warmth and good humour as before.

Happy National Tourism Week, everyone.

OUTAOUAIS MULTICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURS ACTION NETWORK

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to draw your attention to the 10th anniversary of the Outaouais Multicultural Entrepreneurs Action Network, or RAEM, which contributes significantly to the socio-economic integration of immigrants through entrepreneurship. Together with many local stakeholders, RAEM is known for the services it offers to immigrant entrepreneurs in the Outaouais region.

A celebration was held in the organization's honour on May 24, and I was there to personally attest to its valuable contribution to the socio-economic development of Gatineau over the years.

I would like to highlight the commitment of *Señor* Jaime Baquero and his team, the board of directors, and the many volunteers and partners who contribute to the success of immigrant entrepreneurship.

Once again, I wish the entire Outaouais RAEM team a wonderful 10th anniversary.

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[English]

BROOKS BANDITS

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after winning the Canadian championship in 2019 and two cancelled seasons, the Brooks Bandits are once again the Canadian Junior Hockey League national champions. In 2022, they scored 109 points in regular season, and in the playoffs' four rounds, they went 12 and one. This is their fifth Alberta junior hockey championship in 10 years. Yesterday, with a four-to-one victory, they finished undefeated in the Centennial Cup final. They are back-to-back champions. It was their third in 10 years.

I send my congratulations to everyone in the organizations: players, coaches and management. They focused on education and scholarship, attracted young talent and furthered the players' educational and career goals. They are doing the city of Brooks, the county of Newell, the Bow River riding and Alberta proud while forging a legacy in junior hockey. Next year, the Bandits are going for three in a row. Go, Bandits.

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THE GREAT LAKES

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, representatives of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence stakeholder communities are today visiting Parliament Hill to share their vision for the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence. Then, later tonight, we are hosting an event for MPs, Senators and staff to learn more about the triple bottom line impacts of this massive freshwater system.

Representatives from the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, the OFAH, the Council of the Great Lakes Region, the Ontario Commercial Fisheries' Association and more will be on hand to take questions and to showcase the great things happening in the area.

These resources are binational treasures that we hold in trust for future generations. They support hundreds of thousands of jobs and

Statements by Members

billions of dollars in trade and economic output. They are a source of clean drinking water for millions, and they are part of an environmental trust we all share.

I thank these groups for helping to keep the Great Lakes great, and I thank all members of the House for supporting this essential work.

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CANADIAN JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this Canadian Jewish Heritage Month I would like to recognize and celebrate Jewish culture, heritage and history in Canada. Jewish Canadians have made and continue to make important contributions to the socio-economic development of Canada. I would like to recognize and thank Rabbi Mendel Blum of Ottawa Torah Centre and the leadership team at Congregation Beit Tikvah of Ottawa for their services to the Jewish community and beyond in Ottawa.

I would like to recognize and thank Andrea Freedman of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa for her services to the Jewish Canadian community. I also would like to recognize and thank Corey Balsam for his hard work representing Independent Jewish Voices Canada.

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● (1410)

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to recognize a local legend in Alberta municipal politics, Helen Posti.

Helen left office last year after 30 years as mayor of Eckville and a total of 35 consecutive years on council. While Helen may be leaving the job she held, which spanned five different decades, she is certainly not leaving her role as a public servant. I know Helen will continue to be a cherished volunteer and lend her expertise to a number of community groups and boards.

Over the course of her career, Helen saw the transition from typewriters to Zoom meetings and has a list of accomplishments that anyone in this chamber would be envious to call their own. From being instrumental in bringing family and community support services to town and overseeing the creation of multiple subdivisions, to a new water treatment plant, countless new pieces of community infrastructure and a new fire hall with ambulance personnel quarters, there is not much she has not done.

I thank Mayor Posti, Helen, for being a shining example of what public service ought to be.

*Statements by Members***NATIONAL ACCESSABILITY WEEK**

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week is National AccessAbility Week, when we get to celebrate the tremendous contributions of persons with disabilities and highlight the work of Canadians and organizations working together to remove barriers in communities across Canada.

That was the case last Saturday in my hometown, with the official opening of the Farrow Riverside Miracle Park. Miracle Park is the first fully accessible park, playground and baseball diamond in Windsor, and it has already brought countless smiles and pride to our community.

So many stepped up to make this miracle happen, inspired by the leadership of the Riverside Minor Baseball Association and the generosity of families, including the Farrow, Solcz and Toldo families, among other. Bill Kell, the Miracle Park co-chair said, “No matter how big or small, you made a difference.”

I urge all my colleagues and all Canadians to highlight the miracles happening in their communities during this year's National AccessAbility Week celebrations.

* * *

SUPREME COURT RULING

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently, the Supreme Court struck down life without parole for mass murderers, dealing yet another blow to victims' rights in Canada. When I first heard this, I was shocked and then I got angry. I later spoke with my constituent Sharlene Bosma, whose husband Tim was brutally shot in the head and then incinerated in 2013.

The murderer, who also killed his father and girlfriend, was then convicted and sentenced to life in prison for three consecutive 25-year sentences. Sharlene believed she would never have to go through a parole hearing in her lifetime, but the murderer will now be able to apply for parole in just 16 years, and every two to five years thereafter. This is revictimization. This dangerous and disappointing ruling essentially gives would-be mass murderers the licence to kill at will because our Supreme Court believes in the dignity of the offender over the well-being of victims' families.

This decision should outrage all parliamentarians. I urge the government to think of the Bosma family and bring balance back to our justice system.

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NATIONAL TOURISM WEEK

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if we want to know how much we need something, simply take it away. That is what happened this past week in my riding of Peterborough—Kawartha, in Ontario, when we lost our power. I want to take a minute to thank all the hydro workers, both local and from all over, who came to restore power.

It is also what has happened in the last two years to our tourism sector. When we lost tourism, we lost human connection. It is responsible not only for one in 10 jobs, but for memories.

As shadow minister for tourism, I am excited to work in the all-party caucus. We have a lot of work to do, and I know every member in here believes in tourism because it impacts every single one of our ridings. We have a lot to be enthusiastic about, but we have a lot of work to do. It is my job to be critical and to put pressure where pressure needs to be applied.

It is time to open up Canada for business, it is time to drop the mandates and it is time to support the industry that needs us so much. Happy National Tourism Week. Canada is the best of the best, and I am so honoured to represent it.

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● (1415)

[Translation]

PATRIOTS EXILED TO AUSTRALIA

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just returned from an incredible trip to Australia, to which 58 patriots from Quebec were exiled 182 years ago for participating in the 1836-39 rebellions.

These courageous men, including farmers, businessmen, notaries and doctors, had fought for better democratic representation in the colony of Lower Canada.

Two men from Sainte-Martine, Louis Dumouchel and Gabriel Chèvrefils, died there. All the others returned home after being pardoned by Queen Victoria, except for Joseph Marceau of Napierville. He fell in love with a young Australian woman and stayed there. The couple had 11 children and many descendants who still proudly celebrate their Québécois Canadian heritage to this day.

This is a little-known story that deserves to be told.

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[English]

LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENTS COALITION

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week, the Land Claims Agreements Coalition gathers in Ottawa to continue its important work developing a comprehensive, modern treaty implementation framework. I am pleased to share that among the participants is a group of leaders from the Nisga'a Nation in northwest B.C. who, almost exactly 22 years ago, achieved B.C.'s very first modern treaty. After 113 years of hard work and struggle by the *sim'igat* and *sigidimnak'*, they won self-government for their people at long last.

Today, the work of treaty is as important as ever, and we are reminded of the need for Canada, as a treaty partner, to engage in good faith and address treaty concerns in a timely way.

Joining us in Ottawa this week are Nisga'a Lisims Government President Eva Clayton, Council of Elders chairperson Herb Morven and over a dozen other elected leaders from the Nisga'a Lisims Government and the four Nisga'a village governments. I invite my colleagues here to join me in honouring these leaders for their hard work and in wishing them a productive week of meetings while they are in our capital.

* * *

[Translation]

SHOOTINGS IN UVALDE

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday, tragedy once again struck our American neighbours when a gunman killed 19 children and two teachers in cold blood at an elementary school in Texas. Our hearts go out to the families affected by this heinous crime.

It would be a mistake for us to think that we are safe because we live on the other side of the border. If we do not take action, something that has become all too common in the United States could become the norm here too. The recent shootings in Montreal show that there is already a worrisome move toward a real culture of gun violence here.

The mayor of Montreal and the Premier of Quebec have been clear. They have reiterated that we need to ban handguns and crack down on gun trafficking at the border. With all due respect for hunters, we also need to take action against all military-style assault weapons, not just on a model-by-model basis. These weapons are not made for duck hunting, and they have no place in a society that needs to keep its citizens safe.

* * *

[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned about recent events in our justice system. Someone who commits multiple murders is now eligible for parole as though they had committed only one, and extreme intoxication can be a defence for sexual and violent crimes.

One event that recently hit me most when I reread it just this morning came in a case from a few months ago of a seven-year-old child sexually victimized by her own mother. Her childhood was stolen. The Crown sought a lengthy jail sentence, but a B.C. judge imposed house arrest. Why? The offender had no criminal record, which is not uncommon in these types of offences, the offender was intoxicated and, worse, the judge reasoned that it happened only once.

One time is too many. This seven-year-old child may now have a psychological life sentence, while the person who was supposed to protect her avoids a jail cell. I have three words for the government: Change this now.

Oral Questions

• (1420)

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, vaginas and vulvas are a source of strength, empowerment and pleasure, yet throughout our lives we have been taught that the terms “vulva” and “vagina” do not have a place in polite conversation. That is one more way that the bodies of over half the world’s population are stigmatized, sexualized and objectified.

With the recent news in the United States regarding Roe v. Wade, conversations about sexual and reproductive health are more important than ever, and they start here on Parliament Hill. We need to reclaim space in health research, in politics, in policy-making and at the doctor’s office to celebrate the power of vulvas and vaginas.

It is 2022, and we should not be embarrassed or ashamed to talk about our bodies. Join me, the MPs for Winnipeg Centre, Saanich—Gulf Islands and Shefford, Senator McPhedran and Action Canada as we jointly host a celebration on May 31 to reclaim the conversation and celebrate vulvas and vaginas as powerful and important.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives always put victims' rights above criminals' rights.

On Friday, the Supreme Court issued a disappointing verdict that will allow violent criminals and serial killers like Alexandre Bissonnette and Justin Bourque back into society in spite of their life sentences.

They murdered nine people. These victims will never be back in society, never be with their families again.

Will the Prime Minister do everything he can to ensure that people who commit mass shootings serve sentences that reflect their crimes?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize that this has been painful for the families in Quebec City and for families in communities all across Canada.

I remind members that just because an offender is eligible for parole does not mean that parole will be granted. The Parole Board of Canada will determine whether Alexandre Bissonnette or any other convicted murderer will be granted parole after serving 25 years of their sentence.

Oral Questions

We respect the clear and unanimous decision of the Supreme Court of Canada. It clearly stated that the law it was striking down constituted cruel and unusual punishment.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2015, the Prime Minister promised to make life more affordable for everyone.

Seven years later, here is his report card: Gas costs twice as much, housing prices have doubled, groceries cost a fortune, and inflation has risen from 1.1% to 6.8%. With the carbon tax, the government itself is happily picking the pockets of Canadians.

The facts speak for themselves. Under the Liberals, more and more Canadians are having trouble paying their bills. What will the Prime Minister do to help the middle class and those who are paying more and more just to stay in it?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand, as all Canadians do, that inflation is a global phenomenon. However, we also understand that this is making life difficult for Canadian families, and that is why our government has taken action.

Our budget includes practical measures, such as dental care for Canadians, a one-time payment of \$500 for people who are facing housing affordability challenges, and the introduction of a multi-generational home renovation tax credit.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a whole lot of nonsense.

The government's response to inflation and the rising price of gas, food and housing is sorely lacking in compassion for Canadians. It is not by comparing Canada to other countries that we are going to help the families who are struggling to make ends meet at the end of the month.

The government is one of the biggest beneficiaries of inflation since it is collecting more and more taxes from Canadians. Instead of continuing to fill its coffers at Canadians' expense, can the Prime Minister give them a bit of relief and lower taxes?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have no lessons to learn from the Conservatives when it comes to helping the most vulnerable Canadians.

We brought in the Canada child benefit, which is indexed to inflation and has helped to lift nearly 300,000 children out of poverty. It was our government that increased the guaranteed income supplement, which is also indexed to inflation and has helped more than 900,000 seniors.

We have helped the most vulnerable and we will continue to do so.

• (1425)

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the United States, the United Kingdom and

Australia are all acting on high gas prices. Even Germany slashed its fuel tax by \$16 billion. Our Canadian government did zip, zero, nothing, nada.

The Conservatives proposed exempting GST from fuel to give Canadians a break at the pumps, but the speNDP-Liberals voted against it. Will the Prime Minister take a cue from other G7 leaders and start acting on high gas prices, or is the only acting he enjoys these days playing the Prime Minister on TV?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that inflation is a global phenomenon. We understand that it is very much driven today by Putin's illegal war in Ukraine. That is why we are so active on that issue.

However, we also understand that it is causing real hardship for Canadian families, and that is why our government has acted. We created the CCB, which is indexed to inflation, and now a single mother with two children will receive up to \$13,666 from this benefit. OAS, indexed to inflation, is going up by 10% this year. Of course, there is also early learning and child care.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, more recycled talking points are not going to help people on low income due to inflation. Nearly half of all Canadians say that skyrocketing grocery bills are making it impossible to feed their families, and food banks are at a breaking point. Economists say inflation started in meat products, but now it has broadened to the most common food items due to rising gas prices.

Will the speNDP-Liberals cut taxes at the pumps to help curb grocery inflation, or was it their plan all along to simply pass on the burden to food banks?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the most vulnerable Canadians, precisely the people who need to rely on food banks, we will take absolutely no lessons from the Conservatives when it comes to supporting them.

In 2015, when we formed government, more than 5.1 million Canadians lived in poverty. In 2019, the last year for which we have figures, that number had dropped to below 3.8 million. We have programs indexed to inflation supporting the most vulnerable, and there is more support in the budget.

*Oral Questions***NATIONAL DEFENCE***[Translation]***JUSTICE**

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the cat is out of the bag. The Liberals have finally announced their intention to challenge Quebec's Bill 21 when it reaches the Supreme Court of Canada. They are in such a hurry to do so that they have announced their intention even though the matter is not yet before the court. They are out of control. As the Premier of Quebec said, "This is a blatant lack of respect...for Quebecers".

Bill 21, the state secularism bill, was passed by a majority of the members of Quebec's National Assembly, who represent a majority of Quebecers. What part of the concept of democracy does this government not understand?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the start, we have made it clear that we have concerns about the pre-emptive use of the notwithstanding clause in the Constitution. We have made that clear from the start.

I said so clearly the other day when I announced our intention to go to the Supreme Court of Canada if the Court of Appeal's decision were appealed. It is very important to ensure respect for democracy and look at legal jurisdiction and the Constitution. We have concerns relating to section 33 of the Constitution, and we will defend Canadians' rights.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I hope he is embarrassed.

The Liberals like to accuse the Bloc Québécois of picking fights, and yet just last week, they were quick to launch a full-blown attack on Bill 21 on secularism, for one thing. Second, they also suggested they will challenge Bill 96, which is meant to protect the French language. Third, they refused all of Quebec's requests to better manage its own immigration. Each of those represents a slap in the face to democracy in Quebec. That is what they did.

The Liberals want to stop Quebec from protecting its secular, francophone society. They want to stop Quebec MNAs from doing what Quebecers want them to do.

Who is the one really picking a fight here?

• (1430)

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am a Quebecer. Quebecers from various sectors, including anglophones, francophones, legal experts, doctors and other players in the health sector, have all expressed concerns about Bill 96. As we have said, we will be following the legislation's implementation to see whether it violates the constitutional rights of Canadians. That is not an insult. We are simply carrying out our duty.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I would like to point out that we enjoy vigorous debate, but not fighting.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it has been seven years since Justice Deschamps made specific recommendations on how the government could address sexual misconduct and harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces. Her report has been gathering dust on a shelf for seven years while the government has been doing nothing. Meanwhile, the government's failure to act continues to have devastating consequences for women in the military. Today, Justice Arbour tabled a new report on the situation.

How long will it take for the government to act and implement these recommendations?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. Arbour for her detailed report, which will be the cornerstone of our efforts. I accepted the report in its entirety. I spoke with the Prime Minister this morning, and we completely agree with the important issues raised by Ms. Arbour.

My priority is to build an institution where everyone is safe, protected and respected at work.

[English]

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it has been seven years since Justice Deschamps provided specific recommendations on how the government could address sexual misconduct and harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces. In those seven years, we saw brave women come forward while the government covered for powerful men at the top. This failure has devastating consequences for servicewomen and emboldens abusers. Service members have endured incredible harm. The government stood by while careers and lives have been destroyed.

Will the minister apologize to service members specifically for her government's failure to address the toxic culture in the Canadian Armed Forces?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank Madam Arbour for her comprehensive and detailed report, which will be the cornerstone of our culture change efforts going forward.

This morning, I accepted her report in its entirety. I spoke with the Prime Minister. At the outset, let me be clear that we wholeheartedly agree with the significant issues identified by Madam Arbour. My top priority is to build a military where everyone who puts on a uniform for our country can work in a safe, respected and protected manner.

*Oral Questions***HEALTH**

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives have been asking the government to release the metrics and the science it has been using to justify the travel restrictions and mandates. Last week, no one in this House could produce any. Today, at committee, the transport minister finally admitted that he has specific advice that led to the decisions to keep the random testing of 4,000 passengers a day and the mandates for domestic travel in place.

If he has it, why is it a secret? Will he tell everyone in this House what his colleagues were not able to tell us last week?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no secret. The data are available. The experts have been very clear.

Consider this example. During the omicron wave, a total of 163,000 deaths could have been prevented in the United States alone if the U.S. had had a higher vaccination rate like we have in Canada.

That said, Canada still has a lot more work to do. We need to keep increasing our third-dose vaccination rate to protect ourselves against the pandemic.

[English]

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our airports are still in the news for their worsening delays. The minister blames travellers, and the parliamentary secretary has now taken to blaming stakeholders. He has the health advice, but no one is allowed to see it. That means it is a secret. The Prime Minister once said that Canadians deserve the most transparent and open government in the world.

Would the minister describe refusing to release the scientific evidence as actions of the world's most transparent government, or will he just do the right thing and get back to prepandemic normal?

• (1435)

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to talk science when it comes to such an important topic.

Take the number 130,000. That is the number of hospitalizations that the United Kingdom was able to prevent in recent weeks because it has a high third-dose vaccination rate. Because so many people have gotten vaccinated, they are better protected individually and are also helping to protect their communities and families.

[English]

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the government refuses to tell Canadians what scientific advice it has received in regard to travel mandates, if any. Worse yet, while denying and delaying, the government is ignoring programs like NEXUS, which significantly reduce wait times during travel. Just this morning, The Canadian Press reported that the backlog of applications has ballooned to nearly 300,000.

Why does the government have so much trouble handling the basic things Canadians expect of it?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is a basic number: 690,000. That is the number of hospitalizations that the United States would have avoided, just in the last few months during omicron, had it had a high vaccination rate like the one we have in Canada. As I said earlier, there is more work to do because, unfortunately, however difficult it may be for some to hear and understand, the pandemic is still with us and we need to keep fighting it.

* * *

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Sandra recently experienced the mismanagement of Toronto Pearson International Airport first-hand. She waited on the tarmac. The lines were long and confusing to navigate. The CBSA officers were stressed, passengers were angry and agitated, and nobody knew what to do or where to go. She said it was embarrassing, as a Canadian, having new people come to our country and this being their first experience and impression. This week is Tourism Week, but we need to do better to welcome tourists.

Will the Liberal government restore travel confidence, help with airport delays and vote to drop the mandates?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know how frustrating delays at airports have been for Canadians and travellers. It is something that we are taking very seriously. We are witnessing similar phenomena across the world. Airports all over the world are experiencing this, but we are taking action. We hired over 400 CATSA employees. We have convened CBSA, CATSA, airports and airlines to work together on bottlenecks to address this. We are investing in resources. We are addressing procedures. We want to make sure that every Canadian is able to travel safely and efficiently.

The Deputy Speaker: I am hearing lots of comments. If you want to get on the list to ask questions, talk to your whips in your groups and you will get on the list to ask questions.

The hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, from passport delays and airport backlogs to unnecessary travel mandates, the Liberals are continuing to create an environment of uncertainty for our small business owners, and businesses are raising the alarm on serious impacts. Business leaders in Toronto stated, “The current travel experience will have detrimental and lasting impacts on how...Canada [is] viewed on the international stage.” At the industry committee, a tourism spokesperson implored government officials to take action.

Will the government take immediate action, or are the Liberals okay with continuing to hurt small businesses and throwing away hundreds of thousands of tourism jobs?

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the last two years have been very difficult on Canadians. The pandemic, a once-in-a-hundred-years event, has caused significant disruptions to our businesses and to our lives. Our government was there helping small businesses and supporting Canadians during a very uncertain period. We will continue to do whatever it takes to protect Canadians. We are glad to see businesses come back to normal. We are glad to see the economy is booming. We are glad to see unemployment at the lowest record in history. We will continue to support Canadians.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “we are working on it” just simply does not cut it. The expected jump in travel should have been foreseen. People have lost confidence in travelling to and in Canada. Other countries are dealing with it just fine. In Canada, the union representing many airport workers stated that airport delays are here to stay for the long term. Small businesses have faced a death by a thousand cuts, thanks to the Liberals. These long-term airport delays and ongoing mandates will further squeeze them.

When will the small business minister defend against the transport minister's unfair and extreme made-in-Canada travel delays?

• (1440)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, around the world people are looking to travel after being home for two years. This is something that is not just happening in Canada. In fact, when we look at passport-processing times in other countries, we see that in the United States, for example, it is nine to 11 weeks. When we look at the U.K., it is a minimum of 10 weeks. When we look at Sweden, it is actually 27.5 weeks before people can get a passport.

Around the world, in countries like Canada, people are looking to travel. They all want to do it at the same time and passport systems around the world are struggling with this demand, but here in Canada we are doing everything we can to meet it.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec National Assembly had not even voted on its Bill 96 before the Prime Minister suggested that he could challenge it in court.

Oral Questions

Let us make one thing clear. Regardless of our differences of opinion, Bill 96 was democratically passed by a majority of elected officials. That is a democratic choice that responds to the clearly expressed will of Quebecers to better protect French. More importantly, this democratic choice was made by all Quebecers, not by a handful of federal politicians.

Democracy in Quebec has spoken. Will the government respect that?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I, too, am a Quebecer and I, too, have the right to share my opinion in this regard, as do other Quebecers from various sectors and fields.

Legal scholars, health care professionals and other experts have all spoken out against Bill 96. We all want to protect French, and we all should protect French. That is exactly what our Bill C-13 would do for Quebec and all of Canada.

As I said, we will be following the implementation of Bill 96 to ensure that it does not exceed Quebec's jurisdiction.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are not just issuing threats against Bill 96, they are already dismantling it.

Bill 96 imposes the Charter of the French Language on federally regulated businesses, but the Liberals are giving them a way out in their own Bill C-13, which will allow these businesses to continue to work in English with complete disregard for Quebec laws.

On language matters, the Liberals' actions speak for themselves. Why are they encouraging the anglicization of Quebec instead of protecting French?

[English]

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor: Mr. Speaker—

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: I have two ministers fighting to answer.

The hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had not even uttered the word “fight” yet.

What I am sensing here is a disregard for democratic debate and for diverging opinions. We have 35 MPs here from Quebec, who were elected by Quebecers, who reflect their constituents' points of view, and who are also entitled to a say.

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Just because we did this does not mean we are in favour of anglicization or against French. On the contrary, we stand up for French every day. We have done more than any other government, but it is not up to the Bloc Québécois to decide who is a real Quebecker and who is not. A Quebecker is a Quebecker.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a true Quebecker would stand up, defend French and defend Quebec culture.

I want to talk about the Liberals' actions when it comes to French. The posting for the appointment of a new CRTC chairperson states: "Proficiency in both official languages would be preferred". It is not mandatory, simply preferred. The Liberals decided to make French optional for the person responsible for the regulation and future of Quebec television and the entirety of our telecommunications system. They feel it is okay to put someone who does not speak French in charge of an entire segment of our culture.

Do the Liberals realize that their actions speak for themselves, and that those actions speak English?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that is going too far.

In the Liberal government's opinion, it is absolutely essential that the next CRTC chairperson be able to speak both languages. It is a question of respect for the cultural sector, whether for English or French Canada. I think it is dangerous to get into an identity debate where the Bloc assumes the right to declare who is a true Quebecker and who is not. In addition to the bickering it causes, it creates a deep division, and that is unacceptable.

As parliamentarians, we must work together for unity and social cohesion. We can have different points of view, but we should never try to divide ourselves like that.

* * *

• (1445)
[English]

JUSTICE

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a troubling and recent Supreme Court of Canada decision allowing some of Canada's worst mass murderers to apply for parole much sooner means that families are revictimized by a vicious cycle that forces them to relive the worst day of their lives over and over again at repeated parole hearings. That includes the families of three RCMP officers who were killed in the line of duty in Moncton, New Brunswick in 2014.

The families of victims are speaking out and standing up for their lost loved ones. Will this government do the same?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question, and we acknowledge the pain that families and victims go through in these kinds of cases.

Nothing in the Supreme Court's decision changes the fact that all people convicted of murder receive mandatory life sentences. What happens here is that they are now eligible for parole after 25 years,

but that does not mean that they will get parole. It is extremely rare for people who have been convicted of multiple murders to receive parole.

It was a clear and unanimous decision by the Supreme Court of Canada. It stated that the lack of parole was cruel and unusual, and we will respect that.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is self-induced extreme intoxication? According to the Women's Legal Action and Education Fund, self-induced extreme intoxication means that a person is so intoxicated that they are in a state of automatism, meaning that their actions are not considered voluntary or something that they can control. "Self-induced" means that the person chose to consume substances, such as alcohol or drugs, that caused their intoxicated state.

Victims already have enough barriers. When is this government going to table legislation against this type of defence?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank the hon. member for her question.

We are committed to keeping communities safe, to protecting victims and to ensuring that their rights are protected. We are looking carefully at the decision. I will work with the hon. member and members on all sides of the House in order to reach a solution. We are troubled by the decision as well.

I would remind everyone in the House, and I would remind everyone across Canada, that as the hon. member has pointed out, this ruling only applies in a small minority of extreme cases. We will act, but we need to keep that in perspective.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Brian Ilesic and two other victims were murdered in an armed robbery. They were shot point-black in the back of the head. A fourth victim survived with serious brain injuries. Brian's parents, my constituents Mike and Dianne, feel completely betrayed that this cold-blooded killer will be eligible for parole years sooner, along with other mass killers.

What assurance can the Minister of Justice provide, aside from empty words, for Mike and Dianne and other grieving families in the face of this unjust decision by the Supreme Court?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that was a 9-0 decision. It was a unanimous decision. It was clear and unequivocal.

Our hearts go out to victims. We make the justice system better by enacting and applying laws and seeing them applied. I remind everyone in this House, and I remind everyone across Canada, that eligibility for parole does not mean one will get parole. It is extremely rare that people convicted of mass murder achieve parole. That is the fact. We will respect the ruling of the Supreme Court.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, the legacy of colonialism is deep. Former students, now parents and grandparents, told churches and governments about the loss of their loved ones. They were ignored.

Unmarked graves are now being found and many more will show the truth of what was hidden. Indigenous peoples need the resources to support each other in these traumatic experiences.

Will the government provide funding directly to indigenous organizations, communities and families to help with healing, instead of giving funds to the RCMP?

• (1450)

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as part of this comprehensive approach to supporting communities as they reel from the ongoing discoveries of unmarked graves, clearly what they have asked of us is to have a concerted approach, whether it is from me, the Minister of Indigenous Services or other departments, or whether they need supports now or for the next 10 years.

This is something that, sadly, will go on for some time. There are 70 searches and supports ongoing. Yes, we will absolutely provide those resources to communities.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it has been one year since the date of the discovery of the remains of 215 indigenous children at the Kamloops residential institution, but not even this shocked the government into action.

The Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations has admitted it has been too slow. This is a pattern. On clean drinking water, the housing crisis and the calls to justice, it has been too slow. Enough is enough.

One year ago, the government blocked my motion calling for support for communities, including bringing in international experts, such as the International Commission on Missing Persons.

When will the government do what is needed to help communities bring their children home?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite's point, clearly what we have seen in this country is a pattern of dispossession that has continued to retraumatize and traumatize communities, and the constant denial of this reality is what characterizes today's discourse as well.

We have a duty, as a society, to keep opening our minds and being more respectful, and to show compassion to communities that are reeling, but also to provide those resources. We know that some communities are not even ready at this point and it may take some

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time, and the last thing they want to think about is any party in the House suggesting that the funding would ever stop.

I would encourage all people in the House to support our efforts in walking with communities and supporting them in their searches.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like many Canadians, I followed closely the work of our government to respond to the sexual misconduct crisis in our military institutions.

Today, the Minister of National Defence presented Madame Arbour's final report regarding this issue and presented the government's path forward. As part of a military family, I was pleased to see our government's commitment to creating change and establishing meaningful reforms that will stand the test of time.

Can the Minister of National Defence outline our government's response to Madame Arbour's report?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I announced that I have received, and I welcome and accept, Madame Arbour's report in its entirety. I confirmed that as an immediate step, I have accepted, and the defence team will be immediately moving on, implementing over one-third of Madame Arbour's recommendations.

This is just the beginning of our response, and I look forward to providing a further update as we strengthen, grow and improve our defence team and institutions.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, Morghan Fortier, creator of Canada's most-watched YouTube channel, appeared before the heritage committee, and had this to say about Bill C-11:

It's been written by those who don't understand the industry they're attempting to regulate....worst of all, section 4.2 hands sweeping power to the CRTC to regulate the Internet use of everyday Canadians and small businesses.

This is the creator of Canada's most-watched YouTube channel. It is someone we should be celebrating and not holding back. Will the minister make the very simple commitment to remove section 4.2 from Bill C-11?

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Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we are hearing at the committee is that our cultural sector needs Bill C-11. It is fundamental. This is what we are hearing day after day. Our musicians, producers and creators all need it. This is what we put forward. It has the support of a lot of people across the country.

I would like, for once, the Conservatives to support our industries and for once to support the cultural sector.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we can support the cultural sector by taking user-generated content out of this bill and letting Canadian creators thrive here at home and internationally.

The Liberals claim that user-generated content will not be included in Bill C-11, yet the chair of the CRTC contradicted the government and said that it would and that it could regulate user-generated content.

We still have not seen the government's policy directive on Bill C-11. The government could do that right now. It could release the policy directive and confirm and make it clear that user-generated content would be excluded from the bill.

• (1455)

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to admit that the Conservatives are very creative, because they invent a lot of stuff.

Bill C-11 is only about online streamers, those companies, so that they contribute to the Canadian culture. It is very simple. Platforms are in and users are out. That is it.

Could the Conservatives please, for once, support our artists and our cultural sector? That would be really nice.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we find ourselves in a bit of a dilemma here, because the heritage minister keeps telling Canadians that user-generated content, such as YouTube videos, is out, but Mr. Scott, the chair of the CRTC, has said that actually user-generated content is in. Both of these men cannot be correct, so I would ask the minister to please tell the truth.

The Deputy Speaker: I think we will ask the question.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is very parliamentary, but I will still, out of respect for our democracy, answer the question.

I am quite surprised that the Conservatives quote the CRTC, because they keep attacking the CRTC like they keep attacking the CBC. Actually, there is no institution they do not attack. Now it is also the Bank of Canada, for some of them.

The thing is that this is simply to ask streamers to contribute to our culture. That is it—

The Deputy Speaker: It is not for me to dissect things. All I want to do is make sure that people are listening, that people are able to ask their questions, that people are able to answer them and that we use parliamentary language.

The hon. member for Lethbridge.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what I find interesting is that I simply asked the minister to tell the truth, but he could not even do that. He had to ramble on and make excuses for himself.

I will ask the minister again. The chair of the CRTC has said that user-generated content, such as Facebook videos, is in: It is captured. Meanwhile, the minister has said not to worry, that it is not. Which one of these is reality?

The Deputy Speaker: If we are asking someone to tell the truth, we are saying that they lied. That is basically what we are saying. I just want to make sure people are using the best possible language in the House of Commons so everybody is comfortable in that direction and so we get good questions and good answers.

The hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that we can all agree that we may disagree on some points, but we can still respect each other. I think that is fundamental in the House.

Bill C-11, once again, is very simple. We are asking those big streamers, those platforms, to contribute to Canadian culture. Why? Because that is important for us. It is important to be able to tell our stories and to keep telling those stories that are fundamental. That is the only thing the bill does.

We hear a lot of theories, conspiracy theories, and this and that, but we want to help our culture. For once, I would have loved for the Conservatives to help us, but I guess they will not.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we would all like to believe that we are safe from gun violence and that our children are protected.

In Montreal, just last week, someone shot up a day care centre. Fortunately, there were no casualties. Fortunately, the day care centre was empty. However, gun culture is emerging in Montreal.

Again, we simply cannot allow the situation to deteriorate. The mayor of Montreal, the Premier of Quebec and the Bloc Québécois are once again calling for Ottawa to ban handguns.

When will the minister finally do what everyone in Quebec is waiting for him to do?

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working closely with the Quebec government to reduce gun violence, and the Minister of Public Safety recently attended a forum in Montreal. We have directed \$46 million under our guns and gangs fund to the Legault government. We are finalizing a transfer specifically for Quebec under our building safer communities fund to prevent gun crime.

The minister continues to engage directly with his counterparts in Quebec.

• (1500)

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety has a historic opportunity this afternoon with the introduction of his bill. He can ban handguns. That would be one more tool to counter their proliferation in Montreal. He can ban all military-style assault weapons, not just ban models one by one. He can use this opportunity to announce new border measures to combat illegal firearms, which are still the crux of the problem in Quebec.

Will the minister seize this historic opportunity this afternoon, or will he announce more half measures?

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member not just for her question but for her advocacy.

Handguns are the number one type of gun used in shooting homicides across the country. We are taking action to make sure that handguns do not fall into the hands of criminals by requiring stronger background checks and investing more to stop illegal gun trafficking at the border.

We will continue to engage our provincial partners, such as the Province of Quebec, as part of our national approach to tackling handgun crime.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, an entrepreneur in my riding, Tony Ouellet, president of Feuillages du Québec, relies on temporary foreign workers to run his business.

Unfortunately, only one of the three workers he hired has arrived. Nothing is happening at Immigration Canada with respect to the other two. Many planting contracts must be completed by June 15, which is in two weeks, or he will have to pay severe penalties.

Why should Mr. Ouellet pay for this government's failures and mistakes?

[English]

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the employers out there who are working hard to bring in workers to fill gaps in the

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labour force. It will help kick-start one of the strongest economic recoveries that is already taking place. We have put tons of resources into boosting the processes and capacity of the department, including \$85 million in the economic and fiscal update to target work permits, study permits, temporary residency visas, proof of citizenship cards and PR cards.

I am pleased to report that these efforts are taking hold. This year, to date, we have already processed more than 216,000 work permits, compared to only 88,000 this far into last year. We are starting to make serious progress. We are going to continue to make the necessary investments to grow our economy.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking today for the 20th time about the government's incompetence on immigration and the temporary foreign worker program.

Two businesses in my riding called me just this past weekend to tell me that they still do not have the workers they need, who should have already arrived. These landscapers and manufacturers are losing contracts.

When will the government take this issue seriously and help these businesses grow instead of pushing them towards bankruptcy?

[English]

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I just answered in response to the previous question, we are making unprecedented investments in Canada's immigration system to ensure that we can smoothly welcome people to Canada who make essential contributions to our economy.

I would like to point out to the hon. member that we are now in an economic context in which we have seen 115% of the jobs lost during the pandemic come back. Our GDP is better than pre-pandemic levels and our unemployment level is now at the lowest rate since we started recording those statistics more than 50 years ago.

That said, we can do more by continuing to bring in workers to fill the almost 900,000 gaps in the economy and the labour market. We are going to continue to invest in our immigration system to do that. It is the path forward that will help us achieve growth.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the temporary foreign worker saga continues.

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A number of businesses in my riding received their confirmation letters of a positive labour market impact assessment on April 15, 2022, after more than eight months of waiting. That is far too long and the process is not even complete.

The government has a duty to simplify the process for approving temporary foreign workers. At some point it needs to walk the talk.

When will it do so?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that immigration plays a key role in combatting the labour shortage. IRCC is prioritizing work permit processing for in-demand occupations.

This year, we have processed more than 200,000 work permit applications, which is nearly double the number processed over the same period last year. We will continue to ensure that Canadian employers have access to the workers they need to secure Canada's economic recovery.

* * *

• (1505)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, investing in our official language minority communities must include implementing a range of measures to enable them to flourish and prosper.

As a teacher, I understand why it is necessary to invest in education at all levels, including post-secondary education. We need to ensure that there will be jobs for francophone students when they graduate.

Could the Minister of Official Languages, who proudly represents francophone communities across the country, explain to the House how our government is helping francophone students in New Brunswick prepare for their future careers?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague from Fredericton for her important question. I would also like to thank her for highlighting the importance of ensuring that our young people in official language minority communities have a career path that will allow them to continue to work in their language.

Last week, I had the privilege of announcing a \$6.6-million investment in projects at New Brunswick Community College. This investment will give Acadian and francophone students more tools to advance professionally throughout their careers.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week I spoke to Krystle. The rising cost of living is threatening her small business in Amherst. She has worked 28 of the last 30 days to make enough money to keep her business solvent. A recent errand for supplies has cost her \$600 versus the usual \$350, as the cost of fuel and goods has gone up. She cannot un-

derstand why the government would not support two Conservative motions to reduce fuel prices.

On which date will the government remove tax upon tax and get fuel prices and the cost of living under control?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me tell you what we are doing in budget 2022 for small businesses. We are cutting their taxes. We know that businesses in Canada have recovered over 100% of the jobs that have been lost since the pandemic. Businesses are looking to grow. They are not only looking to grow in Canada, but they are looking to grow through exports into the international market. We are going to work with our businesses to grow here and to scale up internationally, and we have cut their taxes so that they can grow here in Canada.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Firefighter Aid Ukraine, based in my riding of Edmonton West, has been delivering crucial life-saving equipment and supplies to Ukraine for the past eight years. The Russian invasion has only made its work more critical. It has collected 25 tonnes of life-saving medical supplies desperately needed for Ukraine's doctors and hospitals. An oil and gas company has donated the transport fuel needed to get the supplies over to Ukraine. All it needs is a transport plane to get it there.

Will the government provide this plane?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to making sure that Ukraine has the humanitarian support that it needs. We will work with businesses. My team will contact the member's staff, look at the details and see what we can do.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fishing industry is sick and tired of the lack of respect shown to it by the government. With the season now upon them, fishers in Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame and in all of Newfoundland and Labrador are wondering where the capelin management plan is. DFO's own science says that seals consume 99 times more capelin than fishermen harvest. This year, the assessment did not happen.

With these facts in mind, will the minister confirm that she will reinstate last year's quota for capelin, or will she listen to activists like Oceana and shut another fishery down?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all fisheries are important. All conservation measures are intended to make sure that we maintain a healthy stock. That is the responsibility of DFO.

With respect to the capelin decision, we are reviewing the science. We will be coming out very soon with a determination for the harvesters in the coming weeks.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the 75th World Health Assembly convened last week. It was the first to be held in person since the beginning of the pandemic.

This was an excellent opportunity for the delegates, WHO experts, partner agencies and civil society to discuss current priorities and future solutions to issues critical to global public health.

Can the Minister of Health tell the House more about this assembly and how Canada plays a leading role in global public health?

• (1510)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking our colleague from Pierrefonds—Dollard for his excellent work.

Last week I did indeed have the opportunity to participate in the World Health Organization's 75th World Health Assembly. The theme was "Health for peace, peace for health".

At the assembly, I was able to meet, talk and work with many of my counterparts regarding the fight against the pandemic and efforts to prepare for future pandemics. We also talked about antimicrobial resistance and the effects of climate change on health and health care.

I was also able to meet with Ukraine's health minister to offer him the Canadian government's unwavering support for his people's health and health care.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, our community has been begging for a 24-7 low-barrier safe space for women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people for over 10 years. We are still waiting. Even though the former minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations called Winnipeg "Ground Zero" for MMIWG, last week we had another two women murdered. Thoughts and prayers do not cut it.

Will the minister confirm that the funding they announced Friday will be used to open a 24-7 safe space in Winnipeg and save lives now?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Friday we announced a historic investment of \$121 million to invest in shelters and transitional housing for women and children fleeing gender-based violence.

Oral Questions

This is going to support 16 projects across the country in virtually every province and at least one territory. I am happy to work with the hon. member to see if we can continue to support projects in Winnipeg.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, understandably, Russia's assault on Ukraine has dominated our foreign policy agenda, but we know it is not the only crisis. The Taliban has declared war on women and girls. They are not allowed to go to school. They are not allowed to walk down the street. Their male family members have become their jailers. This is a regime of gender apartheid.

Will the government confirm that with a feminist foreign policy, the policy is not to stand back and do nothing? What does "feminist foreign policy" mean for women and girls in Afghanistan?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the situation Afghans are facing, in particular Afghan women and girls, is absolutely terrible. Canada condemns the Taliban's oppression of women's liberty in Afghanistan. As the Taliban continues this act of discrimination, the prospects for a better life are being denied to girls. Access to education is a human right to which every woman and every girl is entitled, and the Taliban will be judged by its actions and not by its words.

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

I want to make a quick comment about some of the debates that go back and forth. A number of weeks ago there was a question the member for Thornhill asked of the Minister of Transport when they used the issue of honesty. Today, we sort of ran into the issue of telling the truth. We keep rebounding onto that issue, so I just want to make sure that for consistency, we watch the words we use in the House of Commons. I want to thank members for that.

* * *

SHOOTING IN UVALDE, TEXAS

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

There have been discussions among the parties, and I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following heartbreaking motion. I move:

That the House express its horror at the school mass shooting in Uvalde, Texas, and extend its deepest condolences to the families, friends and communities who lost loved ones.

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

It is agreed.

Business of Supply

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

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1515)

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—RULES AND SERVICE LEVELS FOR TRAVEL

The House resumed from May 19 consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 3:15 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 Thornhill relating to the business of supply.

The question is on the motion. May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

• (1525)

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

(Division No. 105)

YEAS

Members

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

Motz
Nater
Patzner
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Rood
Scheer
Shields
Small
Steinley
Strahl
Thomas
Tolmie
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

Muys
O'Toole
Perkins
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Schmale
Shipley
Soroka
Stewart
Stubbs
Tochor
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer— 112

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulrice
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Ehsassi
Fergus	Fillmore
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Fry
Gaheer	Garneau
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Jaczek

Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larouche
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lemire
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Michaud
Miller	Morrice
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Singh	Sorbara
Ste-Marie	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thériault
Therrien	Thompson
Trudeau	Trudel
Turnbull	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vignola	Villemure
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zuberi— 201	

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

We have a point of order from the hon. deputy House leader of the official opposition.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, during the vote, and in this hybrid Parliament, we have had an abridgement of some of the Standing Orders when it comes to voting from our seats. The member for Laval—Les Îles heard the question but was seated in a different seat during the roll call on the government side. He moved seats to have his name called for the vote.

Government Orders

I would like clarity from you on whether that vote can be counted in the House and clarity on the rule when it comes to whether we stay in our seat during the entire vote before our name is called.

● (1530)

The Deputy Speaker: I think the practice we have adopted in the past is that once the vote starts, a member stays in their seat for the question and the answer. That means we will have to delete that vote. The motion is still defeated.

* * *

AN ACT FOR THE SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY OF CANADA'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The House resumed from May 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to the amendment to the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-13.

The question is on the amendment to the amendment. May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of amendment to the amendment to House]

● (1540)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 106)

YEAS

Members

Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Bérubé
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Brunelle-Duceppe	Chabot
Champoux	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Fortin	Garon
Gaudreau	Gill
Larouche	Lemire
Michaud	Perron
Plamondon	Savard-Tremblay
Simard	Ste-Marie
Thériault	Therrien
Trudel	Vignola
Villemure— 29	

NAYS

Members

Aboultatif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault

Government Orders

Arya	Ashton	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Atwin	Bachrach	Liepert	Lightbound
Badawey	Bains	Lloyd	Lobb
Baker	Baldinelli	Long	Longfield
Barlow	Barrett	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Barron	Battiste	MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
Beech	Bendayan	MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Bennett	Benzen	Maguire	Maloney
Bergen	Berthold	Martel	Martinez Ferrada
Bezan	Bibeau	Masse	Mathysen
Bittle	Blaikie	May (Cambridge)	May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)
Blair	Block	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Blois	Boissonnault	McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
Boulerice	Bradford	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean
Bragdon	Brassard	McLeod	McPherson
Brière	Brock	Melillo	Mendès
Calkins	Cannings	Mendicino	Miao
Caputo	Carr	Miller	Moore
Carrie	Casey	Morantz	Morrice
Chagger	Chahal	Morrison	Morrissey
Chambers	Champagne	Motz	Murray
Chatel	Chen	Muys	Naqvi
Chiang	Chong	Nater	Ng
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)	Noormohamed	O'Connell
Cooper	Cormier	Oliphant	O'Regan
Coteau	Dabrusin	O'Toole	Patzer
Dalton	Damoff	Perkins	Petitpas Taylor
Davidson	Davies	Poilevre	Powlowski
Deltell	Desjarlais	Qualtrough	Rayes
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Redekopp	Reid
Diab	Doherty	Rempel Garner	Richards
Dong	Dowdall	Roberts	Robillard
Dreeshen	Drouin	Rodriguez	Rogers
Dubourg	Duclos	Romanado	Rood
Duguid	Ehsassi	Ruff	Sahota
El-Khoury	Ellis	Sajjan	Saks
Epp	Erskine-Smith	Samson	Sarai
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)	Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Fast	Fergus	Schmale	Serré
Ferreri	Fillmore	Sgro	Shanahan
Findlay	Fonseca	Sheehan	Shields
Fortier	Fragiskatos	Shipley	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Fraser	Freeland	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Singh
Fry	Gaheer	Small	Sorbara
Garneau	Garrison	Soroka	Steinley
Gazan	Généreux	Stewart	St-Onge
Genuis	Gerretsen	Strahl	Stubbs
Gladu	Godin	Sudds	Tassi
Goodridge	Gould	Taylor Roy	Thomas
Gourde	Gray	Thompson	Tochou
Green	Hajdu	Tolmie	Trudeau
Hallan	Hanley	Turnbull	Uppal
Hardie	Hepfner	Valdez	Van Bynen
Hoback	Holland	van Koevorden	Van Popta
Housefather	Hughes	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Hussen	Hutchings	Vecchio	Vidal
Iacono	Idlout	Vien	Viersen
Ien	Jaczek	Virani	Vis
Johns	Joly	Vuong	Wagantall
Jones	Jowhari	Warkentin	Waugh
Julian	Kayabaga	Webber	Weiler
Kelloway	Khalid	Wilkinson	Williams
Khera	Kitchen	Williamson	Yip
Kmiec	Koutrakis	Zahid	Zarrillo
Kram	Kramp-Neuman	Zimmer	Zuberi — 288
Kurek	Kusie		
Kusmierczyk	Kwan		
Lake	Lalonde		
Lambropoulos	Lametti		
Lamoureux	Lantsman		
Lapointe	Lauson		
Lawrence	LeBlanc		
Lebouthillier	Lehoux		

PAIRED

Nil

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

[English]

The next question is on the amendment.

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

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

• (1545)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: I request a recorded division.

• (1555)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 107)

YEAS

Members

Barsalou-Duval
Bergeron
Blanchet
Brunelle-Duceppe
Champoux
Desbiens
Fortin
Gaudreau
Larouche
Michaud
Plamondon
Simard
Thériault
Trudel
Villemure— 29

Beaulieu
Bérubé
Blanchette-Joncas
Chabot
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Garon
Gill
Lemire
Perron
Savard-Tremblay
Ste-Marie
Therrien
Vignola

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Alghabra
Allison
Anandasangaree
Arnold
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barlow
Barron
Beech
Bennett
Bergen
Bezan
Bittle
Blair
Blois
Boulerice
Bragdon
Brière
Calkins
Caputo
Carrie
Chagger
Chambers
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)

Aitchison
Aldag
Ali
Anand
Angus
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Baldinelli
Barrett
Battiste
Bendayan
Benzen
Berthold
Bibeau
Blaikie
Block
Boissonnault
Bradford
Brassard
Brock
Cannings
Carr
Casey
Chahal
Champagne
Chen
Chong
Collins (Victoria)

Government Orders

Cooper
Coteau
Dalton
Davidson
Deltell
Dhaliwal
Diab
Dong
Dreeshen
Dubourg
Duguid
El-Khoury
Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Ferreri
Findlay
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Garneau
Gazan
Genuis
Gladu
Goodridge
Gourde
Green
Hallan
Hardie
Hoback
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Jones
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kmieciak
Kram
Kurek
Kusmierczyk
Lake
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lapointe
Lawrence
Lebouthillier
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lloyd
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKenzie
Maguire
Martel
Masse
May (Cambridge)
Mazier
McDonald (Avalon)
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod
Melillo
Mendicino
Miller
Morantz
Morrison
Motz
Muys
Nater
Noormohamed
Cormier
Dabrusin
Damoff
Davies
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Doherty
Dowdall
Drouin
Duclos
Ehsassi
Ellis
Erskine-Smith
Falk (Provencher)
Fergus
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Garrison
Généreux
Gerretsen
Godin
Gould
Gray
Hajdu
Hanley
Hepfner
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Joly
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Kitchen
Koutrakis
Krampp-Neuman
Kusie
Kwan
Lalonde
Lametti
Lantsman
Lauzon
LeBlanc
Lehoux
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lightbound
Lobb
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McGuinty
McLean
McPherson
Mendès
Miao
Moore
Morrice
Morrisey
Murray
Naqvi
Ng
O'Connell

Government Orders

Oliphant	O'Regan	Allison	Anand
O'Toole	Patzer	Anandasangaree	Angus
Perkins	Petitpas Taylor	Arnold	Arseneault
Polievre	Powlowski	Arya	Ashton
Qualtrough	Rayes	Atwin	Bachrach
Redekopp	Reid	Badawey	Bains
Rempel Garner	Richards	Baker	Baldinelli
Roberts	Robillard	Barlow	Barrett
Rodriguez	Rogers	Barron	Battiste
Romanado	Rood	Beech	Bendayan
Ruff	Sahota	Bennett	Benzen
Sajjan	Saks	Bergen	Berthold
Samson	Sarai	Bezan	Bibeau
Scarpaleggia	Scheer	Bittle	Blaikie
Schiefke	Schmale	Blair	Block
Serré	Sgro	Blois	Boissonnault
Shanahan	Sheehan	Boulerice	Bradford
Shields	Shipley	Bragdon	Brassard
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Brière	Brock
Singh	Small	Calkins	Cannings
Sorbara	Soroka	Caputo	Carr
Steinley	Stewart	Carrie	Casey
St-Onge	Strahl	Chagger	Chahal
Stubbs	Sudds	Chambers	Champagne
Tassi	Taylor Roy	Chatel	Chen
Thomas	Thompson	Chiang	Chong
Tochor	Tolmie	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Trudeau	Turnbull	Cooper	Cormier
Uppal	Valdez	Coteau	Dabrusin
Van Bynen	van Koeverden	Dalton	Damoff
Van Popta	Vandal	Davidson	Davies
Vandenbeld	Vecchio	Deltell	Desjarlais
Vidal	Vien	Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Viersen	Virani	Diab	Doherty
Vis	Vuong	Dong	Dowdall
Wagantall	Warkentin	Dreeshen	Drouin
Waugh	Webber	Dubourg	Duclos
Weiler	Wilkinson	Duguid	Ehsassi
Williams	Williamson	El-Khoury	Ellis
Yip	Zahid	Epp	Erskine-Smith
Zarrillo	Zimmer	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Zuberi— 289		Fast	Fergus

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.*[English]*

The next question is on the main 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 Avalon.

Mr. Ken McDonald: Mr. Speaker, we would like a recorded vote.

● (1605)

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

(Division No. 108)

YEAS

Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali

Lamoureux	Lantsman
Lamont	Lamont
Lamont	Lamont

Lapointe
Lawrence
Lebouthillier
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lloyd
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKenzie
Maguire
Martel
Masse
May (Cambridge)
Mazier
McDonald (Avalon)
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod
Melillo
Mendicino
Miller
Morantz
Morrison
Motz
Muys
Nater
Noormohamed
Oliphant
O'Toole
Perkins
Poilievre
Qualtrough
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Rodriguez
Romanado
Ruff
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Shields
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
Sorbara
Steinley
St-Onge
Stubbs
Tassi
Thomas
Tochor
Trudeau
Uppal
Van Bynen
Van Popta
Vandenbeld
Vidal
Viersen
Vis
Wagantall
Wagh
Weiler
Williams
Yip
Zarrillo
Zuberi— 289

Lauzon
LeBlanc
Lehoux
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lightbound
Lobb
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saatch—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McGuinty
McLean
McPherson
Mendès
Miao
Moore
Morrice
Morrissey
Murray
Naqvi
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Patzer
Petipas Taylor
Powlowski
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Robillard
Rogers
Rood
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Scheer
Schmale
Sgro
Sheehan
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Small
Soroka
Stewart
Strahl
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Thompson
Tolmie
Turnbull
Valdez
van Koevorden
Vandal
Vecchio
Vien
Virani
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Wilkinson
Williamson
Zahid
Zimmer

Routine Proceedings

NAYS

Members

Barsalou-Duval
Bergeron
Blanchet
Brunelle-Duceppe
Champoux
Desbiens
Fortin
Gaudreau
Larouche
Michaud
Plamondon
Simard
Thériault
Trudel
Villemure— 29

Beaulieu
Bérubé
Blanchette-Joncas
Chabot
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Garon
Gill
Lemire
Perron
Savard-Tremblay
Ste-Marie
Therrien
Vignola

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

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

● (1610)

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will further be extended by 51 minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS COMMISSIONER

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to paragraph 90(1)(a) of the Parliament of Canada Act, the annual report of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner in relation to the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2022.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(a), this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

* * *

[English]

FIREARMS ACT

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 118 of the Firearms Act, I have the pleasure to table, in both official languages, the proposed regulations amending certain regulations made under the Firearms Act.

*Routine Proceedings***GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 22 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Kamal Khera (for the Minister of Public Safety) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-21, An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms).

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY**

Hon. Jim Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security in relation to the motion adopted on Thursday, May 19, 2022, regarding the support for Finland's and Sweden's NATO memberships.

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security entitled "Main Estimates 2022-23".

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, entitled "Main Estimates 2022-23: Votes 1 and 5 under Department for Women and Gender Equality".

[Translation]

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in relation to Bill C-5, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on International Trade, entitled "Main Estimates 2022-23: Vote 1 under Canadian Commercial Corporation, Vote 1 under Invest in Canada Hub".

• (1615)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, en-

titled "Main Estimates 2022-23: Vote 1 under Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, Vote 1 under Canadian Energy Regulator, Vote 1 under Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, Votes 1, 5 and 10 under Department of Natural Resources and Vote 1 under Northern Pipeline Agency".

* * *

HEALTH OF ANIMALS ACT

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-275, An Act to amend the Health of Animals Act (biosecurity on farms).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am introducing a bill as an amendment to the Health of Animals Act. This is very fitting with what we have seen across Canada with the spread of avian influenza, the possibility of diseases like African swine fever, and what we have gone through it in my riding with BSE. These show us how important it is to protect biosecurity on our farms and ensure that those who may endanger our farms and our farm families are held accountable for those actions, which is why I am tabling this amendment to the Health of Animals Act.

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

* * *

[Translation]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-276, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (replacement workers).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to introduce this anti-scab bill to protect workers during a strike or lockout. This is a long-standing demand of workers and unions, and I am proud that my colleague from Manicouagan supports this bill. She is a steadfast ally of working people.

It is quite simple: If we want to foster industrial peace, free bargaining, and sound and sensible labour law practices, then the right to association, the right to free bargaining and the right to strike must be guaranteed. The failure to put anti-scab provisions in place undermines the power to bargain.

Such provisions have existed in the Quebec Labour Code since 1977, and this has contributed to industrial peace. In fact, federally regulated business see twice as many strikes or long lockouts as we see in Quebec, and this is due to the absence of anti-scab legislation.

The Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-276, and it is not the first. We hope that this will be a priority. It is unfortunate that it was not in the budget, but there is still time to do the right thing and act. That is where we want to go.

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

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Deputy Speaker: The following motion, in the name of the Leader of the Opposition, was put on the Order Paper:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 81(4)(b), consideration by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage of all votes under Department of Canadian Heritage in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023, be extended beyond May 31, 2022.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC) moved that the third report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics presented on Thursday, March 31, 2022 be concurred in.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to join everyone in the House virtually today, as I am still back in Manitoba. I am going to splitting my time on our third attempt to move concurrence on this report with the member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

It is interesting to note that every time we have brought this motion forward, the Liberals have adjourned debate, similar to the filibusters we saw in the 43rd Parliament when they tried to stop this report on the WE Charity scandal from coming forward to the House.

I will go into some detail on the litany of ethical breaches done by the Liberal government, but I can tell the House that in addition to the Prime Minister taking illegal vacations and being found in contravention of sections of the ethics act, sections 5, 11, 12 and 21, we know that he also was found guilty with regard to SNC-Lavalin for putting undue pressure on the then-minister of justice and attorney general, Jody Wilson-Raybould, as well as his continued breaches of ethical behaviour that we have seen from time to time, and how that has impacted other members of cabinet.

I do not need to remind the House of former minister Morneau and all the challenges he had when he was the finance minister, such as his having been found in contravention of the ethics act for having accepted an illegal gift, a vacation offered by the WE Charity.

He also forgot to recuse himself when talking about the WE Charity's delivery of the youth program that was proposed at that time. We know that he was also in conflict because his daughter worked for the WE foundation.

We need to also remind everyone of the former minister of fisheries' contravention of the ethics act through a conflict of interest, actually practising nepotism to make sure that family members received multi-million-dollar contracts in what we have called the surf clam scam.

We have a number of ethical breaches, and here we find today that the Ethics Commissioner, Mr. Dion, has opened another investigation on another Liberal cabinet minister, this time the Minister of International Trade and Small Business, for awarding a contract

Routine Proceedings

to a very close personal friend. That has resulted in looking at whether the minister contravened sections of the Conflict of Interest Act in her decision-making, whether she used her influence and whether she practised the duty to recuse.

I can tell the House that the minister of trade was working closely with a long-time fellow staffer back in the Wynne government days and also in the McGuinty era in Ontario, and that they are very close personal friends with the founder of Pomp and Circumstance, Amanda Alvaro.

We know that the \$17,000 contract, which was gifted for two days of media training for two people, was quite costly. It does not sound like much in the big scheme of things, the way we spend money in Parliament and the way the Government of Canada spends, but when someone can get away with sole-sourcing contracts, small amounts of money like \$17,000 can come to be a big amount of money. When we think about it, it was for only two days of media training for two people. There is no wonder that the Ethics Commissioner is doing the investigation on our international trade minister.

I want to again thank the ethics committee for the work that it did, both in this Parliament and in the first session of the 44th Parliament, in getting this report tabled on March 31, as well as the work that was originally done on this report in the 43rd Parliament, second session, when this report was tabled originally.

● (1620)

There is a pile of great recommendations on how to strengthen the Lobbying Act by giving more powers to the Commissioner of Lobbying and to the Ethics Commissioner to prevent these things from happening in the future. Unfortunately, we have a situation of the current government, under the Prime Minister, continuing to violate ethics rules.

One of the key things on which I have not gone into detail in my previous interventions with respect to this motion and the third report of the ethics committee in this 44th Parliament is that three individuals who were political staffers were supposed to appear: Ben Chin, Rick Theis and Amitpal Singh. All of them were political staffers either in Minister Morneau's office or the Prime Minister's Office, and it was important for the ethics committee to hear from them specifically. They refused to appear before the ethics committee in the 43rd session. The committee was actually required to come before the House to ask for an order from the House of Commons to ensure that they would appear before the committee. Unfortunately, the House leader for the Liberal government of the day refused to allow those political staffers to appear to talk about their role in awarding a half-billion-dollar contract to the WE Charity and how those decisions were made so that we could look at how pandemic spending was being used to help out friends of the current Liberal government and specifically friends of the Prime Minister and Minister Morneau. We know they failed to appear because of the direction from the House leader of the day, who is now the Minister of Canadian Heritage. I can tell the House that this again is in contravention of our parliamentary rules.

Routine Proceedings

I want to quote our former parliamentary law clerk, Mr. Robert Walsh, who said this at a previous committee hearing in the past:

...the Prime Minister, and any minister, has no authority to prevent someone from appearing in front of a committee.

Their ministerial function may present a limitation on what you can ask that political aide when they're in front of you, but everyone has a duty, apart from members of Parliament, senators, and the Governor General, to show up when summoned before a committee.

While the government prevented these individuals from appearing before the ethics committee, it is inherent upon us today to compel them to appear. We know for a fact that contempts of Parliament in the past are not, as any criminal activity, purged from the record just because of an election and a new parliamentary session beginning.

We now have the ethics committee's report on the WE Charity scandal before the chamber and we need to talk in detail and investigate further the outstanding questions of how this came into being.

We also know that aside from these political staffers, the member for Waterloo, the former minister of youth and social development, who was in charge of implementing this program through the WE Charity, essentially perjured herself at committee when she first said that she had never met with the Kielburger brothers, and ultimately we—

• (1625)

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

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe the hon. member just accused the member for Waterloo of perjuring herself. I do not think that is parliamentary language.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I thank the hon. member. I will have to go back and review the blues. I am not sure what the hon. member actually said, but I can go and review the blues.

I am not sure if the hon. member wants to respond to that as he is resuming. There are only 18 seconds left before he has questions and comments.

The hon. member.

• (1630)

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I will address the point of order. First, I would say it was in the committee report that was tabled that there was misleading evidence given or there was a failure to acknowledge that there were previous meetings between the minister and the Kielburgers that she had denied at her first—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to again remind members to be very careful with the language they use in the House because we would not want to mislead the House.

The hon. member has 14 seconds to wrap up before questions and comments.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, it is important that the committee is allowed to finish off its work and that anyone who obstructed those investigations in the past is allowed to appear now so

we can get the truth for all Canadians on how the WE Charity scandal had played out.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I lament again that we are on a concurrence debate, which is likely to mean that we will not get to petitions or other Routine Proceedings today, but I want to first agree with the member that I do not think we got to the bottom of the WE Charity scandal because of the refusal to allow the RCMP to investigate further.

I also do not believe that the language the hon. member used, which I heard clearly was to say that the member perjured herself, was parliamentary. I am a former practising lawyer and the word “perjure” suggests that someone has sworn an oath and lied under oath, and therefore has committed a crime. I think the hon. member should state now that he regrets using that language, because it is shocking to me as a member of Parliament to hear it in this place.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands that we addressed that under the point of order.

The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, we do have a practice in the House of Commons of making sure that there is ministerial accountability. It is in our rules and procedures.

The minister was sworn in under oath, and recommendation 3 of the report said that given the failure of the minister to reveal her April 17, 2020, meeting with Mr. Craig Kielburger, a review of ministerial accountability in committees must be undertaken. We know that committees were misled. I would say that the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands can use her legal background to determine what term she wants to use, but I will say that it is in the report and that report has been tabled in the House.

That is why I believe the member for Waterloo, who is no longer a minister in the Liberal cabinet, needs to appear and account for her testimony during the 43rd Parliament.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today we were supposed to be debating Bill C-18. That is on the agenda. Is the member concerned that the Conservative Party says it wants more debate on legislation, yet it continues to focus on character assassination and preventing debate on government legislation? On the other hand, it complains that the government is bringing in time allocation, which seems to be the only way we can pass legislation because of the irresponsible behaviour of the Conservative Party.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I am disappointed with the member for Winnipeg North and his constant defence of the ethical behaviour and unethical consequences that have been caused by his government.

I will say this. We know that parliamentary institutions are being questioned quite vigorously by Canadians when they see unethical behaviour and sanctions brought forward by the Ethics Commissioner against the Prime Minister, former minister Morneau and other members of the government. When it comes down to truth, honesty and integrity, we have to make sure that we are holding those up in the utmost. It is important that we have these debates and carry on with these studies at the ethics committee to restore that trust in our democratic institutions.

• (1635)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member referenced it in his speech, but this is the third time that we have endeavoured to have the opportunity to talk about this important issue. I would ask the member if he would elaborate on why it is important that we have this debate here today.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, this comes down to the very foundation of our democracy. If we cannot restore confidence and trust in our democratic institutions, including in the government itself, then chaos will prevail. We need to make sure that we do not fall into the practices of other failed states where kleptocracies rule and corruption is part of everyday business. We are better than that, and that is why this committee report and the ongoing work that we are doing as members of Parliament at the ethics committee must be respected.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise in this place to talk about the issues that are so important to Canadians. I rise to speak to this issue not for the first time and not for the second time, but for the third time. The reason why I share that today is that it is unfortunate that over the past number of times when we have endeavoured to move this motion, the Liberals have, with the support of the NDP, moved not to allow it to proceed and be debated and ultimately voted on.

There is the old saying that suggests that where there is smoke, there is fire. I would suggest that when it comes to the issues that are outlined, I will get into some of the specifics of why it is so important that we have this discussion and that we do not simply allow the scandal that was the WE Charity report, as specifically referenced in the title of “Questions of Conflict of Interest and Lobbying in Relation to Pandemic Spending” that was tabled in the second session of the 43rd Parliament.

We have to have these conversations. I would simply ask if the government, and if the NDP as the Liberals' coalition partners, are truly in earnest when they talk about their openness and transparency. When they are outside of this place, they certainly repeat those talking points time and again. However, when it comes to having these discussions, they seem quick to dismiss, deny and shut down debate on these important subjects.

In the first session of the last Parliament, I sat on the ethics committee during what was the height of the pandemic. Let me provide a little context here as to what led to this report being done. It was at a time when Canadians demanded much of their government. The Prime Minister and certain high-level members of the government took it upon themselves not to work in the best interests of

Canadians, but rather to further their own political and personal interests.

That is egregious at every level. We saw it in the debate that took place at committee, where there was filibuster and delay and every effort imaginable to stop this motion from being studied. The government went through unbelievable efforts to try to stop it, but thankfully the committee under both the first and second session was able to move forward this motion and at least start to get some answers.

When I tabled the motion to retable this report from the last Parliament in this Parliament, the effort was simply that the calling of an election could not be an excuse to wipe the slate clean. There are consequences of one's actions. The Prime Minister promised not to call an election. Very clearly he said that, time and again. He even voted in this place. I saw the Prime Minister vote that he would not call an election during the pandemic, but history shows that he acted otherwise. There has been a lot of talk about unparliamentary language in this place. I will simply leave it to Canadians to judge what his conduct was.

Let me provide context. Just prior to the prorogation of Parliament in the summer of 2020, the ethics committee was hard at work and had documents that were being brought forward. The government members on that committee went to great lengths to ensure that the privacy of certain individuals would be protected and spent significant amounts of time in defence of ensuring that there would be protection of the privacy of certain individuals, such as the Prime Minister's family. The committee agreed, and gave consent for extraordinary measures to ensure the protection of privacy of these individuals.

• (1640)

However, the day that these documents were to be released to the committee, the Prime Minister prorogued Parliament. I would suggest that is an extraordinary measure to take to cover up answers to something that we may now never know.

Where there is smoke there certainly appears to be fire, whether it is in relation to the story that led to the eventual report, including some incredibly troubling conduct of certain former cabinet members who still have seats in this place and that my colleague from Manitoba alluded to earlier, or whether it is the need, which I believe has been clearly demonstrated, to continue having these conversations.

The government is going to be quick to say that we should be debating its priorities. Parliament is a place where the priorities of the nation are debated. Let me simply share how absolutely important getting answers on issues such as the WE Charity scandal are to Canadians. I, like all members, just returned from what was a very productive constituency week. I hosted many community events, driving thousands of kilometres across beautiful east-central Alberta, and had many folks come out and attend town hall meetings. I had opportunities to connect with the people I am so honoured to be able to represent.

Routine Proceedings

On every occasion when I hosted these town halls, and I did four last week, and at many of the other events as well, I had people who came and provided comments. They asked me questions, and in some cases, just as I was walking down the street, they came up to me to say, “Keep fighting. Keep trying to get answers.” They would mention things such as the SNC-Lavalin affair. They would mention things such as the WE Charity scandal. They would mention some of the more recent revelations about sole-source contracts. They talked, time and again, about the need for trust to be restored within our institutions.

One of the extensive conversations I had was at a town hall in a small community of about 700. These were my constituents sharing with me. It was not me sharing with them. It was about how they see that there is an incredible erosion of trust between the people of this country and its government. If we do not work diligently to restore that, I shudder to think what the consequences will be. I hear often from constituents who feel like the only choice is to give up on our country.

Any government that sees that as a consequence of its actions certainly should take pause to maybe re-evaluate, to show an ounce of contrition or maybe change direction and show an ounce of humility. The issues that we face within our nation are significant, and this, the trust of our institutions, is paramount among them.

I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word “that” and substitute the following: “that the third report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics presented on Thursday, March 31, 2022, be not now concurred in, but that it be recommitted to the committee for further consideration, provided that:

(a) the committee be instructed to:

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

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

(iii) report back within 60 sitting days; and

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

I would simply conclude by saying this. Trust has to be restored, and this is a clear opportunity—

● (1645)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the member cannot debate the motion and cannot clarify the motion, only table the motion.

The amendment is in order.

[Translation]

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 Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, Correctional Service of Canada; the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Health; the hon. member for Bay of Quinte, Housing.

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to designate Thursday, June 2, for the debate to be held pursuant to Standing Order 51.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS**

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to rephrase the question I asked the previous speaker. The Conservative opposition is asking for debate on Bill C-18, as it asks for additional debate on everything, because it does have that Conservative hidden agenda of not passing legislation and filibustering.

Why, on the one hand, does the Conservative Party say it wants more debate time for legislation, but then on the other hand, it filibusters by bringing forward concurrence motions on things that are coming out of the committee? It seems that on the one hand Conservatives are asking for debate on legislation, and then on the other hand they do not want to have that debate when they are provided the opportunity to do just that.

● (1650)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I would simply start by saying that it is very clear that the Liberals do not have a hidden agenda and that they are quick to cover up the corruption of the Prime Minister and the government. They have made that abundantly clear and abundantly public. I would simply suggest that they speak to their constituents about those actions, as I have certainly spoken to mine and they have made their position very clear.

There is an example that I think specifically answers the member's question. The last time we rose to debate this very issue, we offered to work late so that we could debate this issue, but also so that the government would be able to ensure that its priorities were debated that day. The Liberals voted no then. One and all Canadians need to take their machinations on such subjects with a grain of salt because certainly when we compare them to the facts, they simply do not hold up.

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Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise and ask a question of my colleague from Battle River—Crowfoot. While debating this ethics concurrence report, does he think the decline in democracy, the lack of faith that Canadians continue to have in some of our institutions, can be brought back to the fact that there continues to be ethics violation after ethics violation from the Liberal government? Does he think that would have a role to play in people having less faith in the Liberal government, having less faith in what the Liberals are trying to do and having questions about the authenticity of some of the programs rolled out? Most of the people who are getting ahead now in Canada have a connection and must be a Liberal insider. Does he have anything to say about that?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member. I think there has been a very concerning decline in democracy within our nation. If we do not take that seriously in this place, I fear what the consequences of that will be.

Certainly, as an Albertan and a western Canadian member of Parliament, I hear from many of my constituents who do not want to suggest it, but feel like they are left with no option but to look to a future that does not include being part of Canada. That is an absolute shame.

Many of the actions of the Liberal government have contributed to that decline in democracy that we are facing. I certainly hope that we can let this come to a vote and be debated thoroughly, but my fear is that, as they have done before, the Liberals will simply shut it down and continue the cover-up.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, we have seen in the past that when the government got into trouble, it prorogued Parliament to end one scandal and called an election to block another scandal. What does the member think the government will do this time around to prevent us from getting to the heart of this scandal?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, the member is right. There is no end the Prime Minister and the government will not go to to cover up their misdeeds and their corruption.

When I look back at Motion No. 11, I wonder how quickly the Prime Minister, the government or any minister of the Crown will rise and simply call an end to discourse and debate prior to the planned end of the sitting of this Parliament. I am fearful that they will use extreme measures to continue to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry. There is no more time left, and I even gave the hon. member a couple more seconds there.

Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am not too sure exactly where to begin. There is so much that one could start with, in regard to this particular motion that has been presented by the Conservative opposition. What it does is clearly show and amplify the silliness and the destructive force of the Conservative Party of Canada here in the House of Commons.

We can talk about consistency. The only consistency I have witnessed from the Conservative Party over the last number of years, including the days when I was in opposition and Stephen Harper was the Prime Minister, was the character assassination of the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, even before he was leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. All one needs to do is look at Hansard, the production of papers that clearly show what is being said inside the House of Commons.

When I was in the third party with the leader of the Liberal Party, if we review some of those S.O. 31s and the comments that were coming out, the Conservative Party was focused on personal attacks of the then leader of the Liberal Party. Nothing has changed. We went through an election back in 2015. All we have to do is take a look at the negative ads that were out there against the leader of the Liberal Party, and then take a look at the first few days after we took office back in 2015, to see that the Conservatives continued the personal attacks.

They expanded it. They started to include every minister they could possibly think of. They looked for the little rocks to try to uncover, amplify, distort and create issues that clearly were there for one reason and one reason alone, and that was to attack personally the Prime Minister and the leadership of the Government of Canada. They have spent a great deal of resources, both time and finances, whether it was justified or not, and it is always the latter, from my perspective.

I have stood in this place before and I have indicated, as other members of the caucus have indicated, that as much as the Conservative Party wants to spend all of its time and effort on character assassination, we will continue to be there for Canadians in a very real and tangible way by remaining focused on what is important to Canadians.

When the Conservatives first started attacking the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance back in 2015 and 2016, we might recall some of the initiatives we had taken. Coming out of the 2015 election, we made it very clear that our number one priority was going to be supporting Canada's middle class and those aspiring to become a part of it, while at the same time providing supports for those people who are in need. When we talked a great deal about that and took initiatives to support that, we still had the Conservative Party playing in the mud.

I remember the Conservatives saying, and they have referenced this in the last number of weeks, that the former minister of finance had a villa in France and it was not declared, and there was a ruling that came from the Ethics Commissioner that it should have been declared. They really like to ramp that up.

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• (1655)

However, it was shortly after the federal election when there was a news article in which the then minister of finance was publicly talking about the cottage he had in France. It is not like he was trying to hide something from the public or was trying to not be transparent. How is it a secret when the media are already aware of it? Yes, it should have been listed in a document, which we are all expected to fill out, and the Ethics Commissioner pointed that out. As such, like with other rulings from the Ethics Commissioner, who does more than just look at government members, a decision was made, and when that decision was made, we accepted it and acted accordingly.

We have respected the institutions that we have as parliamentarians, but from the Conservative Party's point of view, it is more about how they can build up the Conservative spin, how they can try to mislead Canadians in many ways and how they can turn it into government corruption. That is what it is all about, and that is the reason, in part, that they have a fixation on the issue of character assassination. This is why, as I have very much indicated, when we talk about the motion before us, the Conservatives want to bring something back to a standing committee of the House for the purpose of focusing the attention of the House of Commons on it.

In many ways, they want to focus purely on fabrications and issues that, quite frankly, have been discussed, debated and moved on from, whether through apologies, time or an election. Some of the stuff they talk about happened three Conservative leaders ago, but that does not cause them to lose their focus. I think it is important that we ask ourselves why we would want to continue to go in the direction the official opposition wants us to go. I would suggest that we need to do what we have been doing, and that is to remain focused.

I talked about 2015 when the Conservatives were being critical and making all sorts of allegations, and often they were allegations that they would only say inside the chamber but not outside of it. Their personal attacks were often attacks against family members as well. When that took place, I witnessed first-hand, as did other members, the Prime Minister indicated that they could continue their attacks on him as the prime minister, but, as he said, "We will stay focused on Canadians". We would take both the budgetary and legislative measures that were ultimately there to support Canadians.

As I said, in the first mandate with regards to the middle class and those aspiring to be in the middle class, we addressed many of the inequities, whether it was the tax on Canada's 1% wealthiest or support for children and seniors, which literally lifted hundreds of thousands out of poverty. We heard from the Minister of Finance earlier today the overall number of people who have been lifted out of poverty. We also had the tax break for Canada's middle class. These are the issues that we have brought forward, much to the chagrin of the Conservatives, who want us to be focused on their agenda.

• (1700)

If we fast forward, we went through another election in 2019. Once again, we saw the Conservatives preoccupied with the idea of trying to paint a picture of the need for change because of corrup-

tion. At the end of the day, we were given yet another mandate. Shortly after that mandate, we saw the need for us to work as a team toward the battling of the pandemic.

We put in a great deal of effort as a government to work with Canadians and a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including other provincial governments, indigenous governments, community leaders, school divisions, municipalities and people as a whole. We were very much working with health care experts, looking at science and remaining focused on getting us through the pandemic.

There was a very small window during which even the Conservative Party seemed to realize it was in the best interest for us to do that, but it sure did not last very long. It lasted maybe a couple of months, and then the Conservatives wanted to get back to the gutter. It is unfortunate, but the moment they started in that way, we continued with our focus. This is what we continue to do today.

Why now have the Conservatives brought forward this motion? What is the purpose of it? They will tell us it is because they want it to go to a standing committee and that they want to talk about ethics and so forth, again and again. That is no doubt one of the reasons it is important for them to try to change the focus of what is taking place on the floor of the House of Commons.

What were we supposed to be debating today? I had the opportunity earlier today to provide comments on Bill C-18. Prior to me speaking on Bill C-18, we had to time allocate the legislation. We had no choice but to bring in time allocation. One of the things we have learned is that the Conservative Party does not have any desire to see legislation pass through the House of Commons.

When Conservatives see co-operation coming from other political entities in the chamber, they get upset. They do not seem to understand that with the third mandate, which put us in a minority situation, it is just not the Government of Canada or the Liberal Party that was given the mandate. Opposition parties also have a responsibility in a minority government.

The Conservative Party, I would argue, has failed to meet up to the responsibilities Canadians entrusted them with back in September. We have seen that in the behaviour of its members, especially in the last few months.

I have more years of parliamentary experience in opposition than I do in government. I was in opposition for 23 or 24 years, and hopefully I will be able to match that in government. I have never seen such a destructive force as the Conservative Party's approach in dealing with legislation. Today we are supposed to be talking about and debating Bill C-18. Let me remind my Conservative friends that Bill C-18 is an election platform issue that even the Conservative Party supported back in September.

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• (1705)

I believe all political entities in the House recognized that having news agencies and reporters and news based on facts were of critical importance to our democracy, and that we needed to take on those tech giants. The former leader of the Conservative Party, not the interim leader but the former leader—

An hon. member: Which former leader? There are so many of them.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is somewhere in the tool box there. He will find it, I am sure.

At the end of the day—

• (1710)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. There are side conversations on both sides, and I would remind members to let the hon. member who has the floor speak. He still has another four minutes, and I am sure that people will be anxious to ask questions and to comment.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the point is to emphasize that this is good legislation. The former Conservative Party leader did support the principle of it. Second reading is about debating the principle of it. Let us get it to committee. Everyone supports it, yet the Conservative Party has shown no indication of a will to see the legislation pass. We have seen that with other legislation. Instead, the Conservatives want to play political games inside the chamber.

An hon. member: It is called debate.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, they can call it what they will, but it is games. It is political theatre. It is to prevent legislation from being ultimately debated and passed.

On the one hand, the Conservatives say they want more debate time, but when the government brought in Motion No. 11 to give them just that, what did they do? They voted against it. On the government benches, like many Canadians from coast to coast to coast, we work past 6:30 in the evening, so we were saying, “Let us have more debate time in the evenings.” The Conservatives said no. They want more debate time, but they just do not want to work late.

They say they want more debate time on government legislation, but when the government brings forward legislation, what do they do? They try to adjourn debate on the legislation. Heck, they will try to adjourn the proceedings of the day. They want to go home early. Sometimes, they will move that another member of their own caucus be heard so they can cause the bells to ring and they do not actually have to debate. Go figure the silliness that comes from the Conservative Party of Canada today. Instead of having a debate on the legislation that the Conservatives are saying they want to have more debate on, they bring in concurrence motions, which prevents hours of debate. When it comes to opposition days, do they ever bring in concurrence motions? No, because they want their debate time on their agenda.

The Conservative Party is not doing what it was given to do in the last federal election. The responsibility of being the official op-

position does not mean it has to be a destructive force, and that is what we are witnessing: a destructive force content on character assassination. That is the Conservatives' focus, and it really is quite unfortunate because there is so much more they can be doing, even as an official opposition.

They do not have to agree with everything we are doing. They can critique. They can be as critical as they want on a wide variety of policy issues. The New Democrats will support us through critical votes, but they are also some of our greatest critics because they understand the role that they were provided in the last federal election. I only hope that more and more of the Conservatives would come to the realization that they have more of a role to play than providing destructive character assassinations in the House of Commons today.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, that was one of the most fanciful speeches I have ever heard from the member. It was amazing. He lives in a parallel universe.

The Liberals brought in time allocation on Bill C-18. Their job is done. It is going to get voted on. Now he is making this big pitch about how we should be debating Bill C-18 and saying we are being obstructionist, but the vote is going to happen regardless.

The government got its wish; its job is done, so now we should get to a vote on this concurrence report and have the debate, because he has done his job. For the first time in eight months, the member actually got something done for the Liberal government. Time allocation was brought in, and he made this big fanciful speech about how we are obstructionist.

I am wondering if the member could lay bare some of the facts that happened today, such as the government bringing in time allocation and curbing debate on Bill C-18 after one Conservative member got to speak. The rest of the member's speech was about nothing. Could the member please put the facts on the table for Canadians about what has actually happened in the House of Commons today?

My constituents in Regina—Lewvan would like to hear a Liberal answer a question. For once, could he please be truthful about the fact that he did get Bill C-18 to where a vote is going to happen? Then we can move on and debate something as important as ethics in the government.

• (1715)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, to be very clear to the residents of Regina—Lewvan, the Conservatives do not want to pass Bill C-18. They would like to put up as many speakers as they can in order to filibuster the bill virtually endlessly.

The government brought in time allocation this morning, and when the minister stood up, we saw a number of Conservatives stand in their place to say they wanted to have more debate time on Bill C-18 and to ask why we were preventing them from having more debate time. Then when they were provided more debate time on the bill, which we are supposed to be debating right now, what did they do? They prevented debate knowing full well that it will be coming to a vote because time allocation was brought in.

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The Conservatives really need to understand what they are doing. I do not think they understand it. If they want more debate time and the government provides more debate time by sitting later in the evening, why not be happy with it and accept it? Why not allow for orderly proceedings? House leaders could sit down and opposition members could say they understand we have to pass legislation. Then we could have some time for this debate, maybe an extra few hours in the evening, and work it out in negotiations by talking about it, while acknowledging that there is a responsibility for the government to pass legislation and a responsibility for the official opposition to contribute to the debate in a positive, constructive way.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am a little discouraged to see the tenor of the current debate on procedures and the reason for the motion.

We have the opportunity to discuss a matter, the infamous WE Charity scandal, which we could not discuss before because the government prorogued Parliament. We could not discuss it when we returned to the House because the government threatened to call an election if we ever spoke about it again, which led to the NDP blocking the resumption of the study of the WE Charity file.

This leads me to wonder why my colleague opposite is not even able to debate the issue that is currently before the House. Is he so fearful of the collusion of the Prime Minister and WE Charity, and their notorious \$1-billion contract, that he is doing everything he can to avoid discussing it?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am never fearful of any sort of debate, whether it is on the behaviour of the Bloc party in federal elections regarding opting in and opting out or it is on a Conservative Senate scandal. Whatever it might be, I am open to those types of debates.

We have limited time as a government given our legislative agenda, but opposition parties have opportunities. The Bloc, for example, during its opposition days, could bring up any sort of debating option it would like. If it wants to debate a specific issue, it could do that. It could use its opposition day as an opportunity, just as the Conservatives could.

However, that is not the real reason this motion is being debated today. The real reason the motion is being debated is to prevent debate on government legislation. It was anticipated that today, being a Monday, we would be debating government legislation. Typically, that is what would happen, unless it is a designated opposition day.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, my friend from Winnipeg has laid bare the reasons we are debating a concurrence motion on an ethics committee report instead of what we had planned to be doing this afternoon, which is dealing with Bill C-18. I am wondering why he has contributed to the delay tactics by offering a speech at all at this time.

• (1720)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I can appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the debates that take place inside the

House. Having been able to listen to the arguments being presented by the Conservative Party, I think it is important that the people who follow the types of debates that take place in here have a truer reflection of reality as to why things are taking place in the manner in which they are.

I truly believe that, at the end of the day, this debate will continue to take place, for the next little while anyway, not necessarily because I want it to take place, but because this is something the Conservatives want, as opposed to talking about Bill C-18. That is the reason they moved the motion. We will have to wait and see if others stand to speak.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we heard a lot from the member for Battle River—Crowfoot about the erosion of democracy and the erosion of institutions.

I am wondering if the member might be able to share with us his concerns about the rhetoric being shared about firing the Governor of the Bank of Canada and about questioning our democratic institutions. Could he share how that contributes to the erosion of public confidence in our institutions, along with some of the chicanery we are hearing from the Conservative Party right now?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member raises a valid point. We see an extreme right that seems to be surfacing or the rebirth of the Reform Party, primarily coming out of the west, I suspect, where there are a number of fairly eager individuals wanting to see the Conservatives take that far-right turn.

It is interesting that one of the leadership candidates, whom I think is a front-runner, had some very bold statements with regard to the Governor of the Bank of Canada. Without me saying it, I would suggest that members of the Conservative Party talk to the member for Abbotsford, whom I understand has been sanctioned for speaking the truth with regard to the silliness of the member for Carleton's comments. I will let members pass judgment on their own leadership candidates.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I can understand why the Liberals and the parliamentary secretary find it so inconvenient to talk about. They find it so inconvenient that in 2020, when the WE scandal broke, they ran away by proroguing the House to avoid talking about it.

My question is this.

Ethical and democratic issues are so important in Parliament. Why do we not use this debate on the ethics committee's report, even if it is not the debate that the member would have wanted, to answer these perfectly legitimate questions?

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is because, as the Prime Minister himself has indicated, despite what is coming from the Conservatives and, at times, the Bloc members, we are going to continue to remain focused on budgetary and legislative measures that ultimately reflect campaign platforms and the ideas that we hear from Canadians from coast to coast to coast. That is where our focus is as a government, and that is why the Prime Minister continues to remind all of us, in particular within the Liberal caucus, about how important it is that we continue to remain focused on issues that are important to all Canadians.

If the Bloc believes that this is the most important issue that Canada is facing today, it has opposition day motions and is more than welcome to bring it up at that point. My preference is to talk about the government's legislative agenda and the types of things that I know Canadians are most interested in, whether it is the pandemic, the middle class—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am going to take my time, because the whole day I have had the opportunity to rise a few times in order to ask where we are going with the whole situation. I think that today we understand that we have to seize these opportunities.

During my first term, I was introduced to and given the role of critic on issues pertaining to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. I was very lucky. Not only did I learn a lot, but I understood it as well. I am going to make use of my experience to increase awareness. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge those in the galleries. It feels good to see people.

I look at my colleagues here, and few of them were here during these months of debate, filibusters and misunderstandings so that we would ultimately have a report that gives yet another failing grade to the way that the pandemic was handled. It is important at the outset to recognize that when a unique event happens, we need to roll up our sleeves and say what we are doing now and where we are going.

There was a major challenge, namely the economy, but health was a challenge as well. That was an ultimate goal, that we needed to respond quickly.

I am sorry, Madam Speaker, but at this hour, I am having trouble concentrating. I am someone—

● (1725)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the hon. member very briefly.

[English]

I would ask members to take their conversations out to the lobby, please.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Madam Speaker, I usually have notes, but I have pulled out my report, which is now a year and a few months old. Here it is with the highlights.

Of course, we must acknowledge the work that was done with the ultimate goal of helping all Quebecers and Canadians to get through the pandemic. That said, some of the things that were done warranted review. This review, which took several months, concerned a grant that, at the beginning, was very worthwhile. It was a student grant to thank young people who volunteered.

We remember that most seniors who were 60 or 70 and older had to self-isolate more than others. There were staff shortages, so young people were asked to get involved in their community. The purpose of the grant was initially to recognize the work being done on the ground to save lives or to help ease seniors' feelings of loneliness. The rationale for the program made sense.

However, when we saw that the program had been put together astonishingly quickly, we wanted to take a look. We quickly realized that there was no call for tenders. I am a businesswoman, and I have been dealing with projects all my life: I am well aware that the bigger the project, the longer it takes to consider it, to receive bids, and to choose carefully. However, this program was put together so quickly that the tenders were not there.

We then decided to dig deeper. That is why the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics looked into how and why this contract was awarded to WE Charity. The first reason given by the government was that it was unable to manage the program because of the need to quickly respond and reward these young volunteers during the summer months. It was a rather extraordinary summer when we had to react quickly. We had no idea what was going to happen the next year, either.

There were two previous reports from the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. I will repeat this for those who are listening and want to have the timeline of events. In 2017, we heard about the Prime Minister's family visiting the Aga Khan's island. The Prime Minister unfortunately received an initial reprimand from the commissioner. However, mistakes can be made and apologies can be accepted.

That said, members will recall the SNC-Lavalin affair of 2019. I myself suffered reprisals at the ethics committee because we wanted to take another look and dig deeper into the SNC-Lavalin report. There was pressure to hold back information about what was done in the SNC-Lavalin case. We remember the pressure put on the former justice minister, Jody Wilson-Raybould. Unfortunately, for the second time, the Ethics Commissioner found that there was an ethical failure.

Obviously, we ask ourselves questions and reflect. The more we consider the issue, the less proof we find that our executives and our leaders deserve our trust. When I meet with students, those who will take over from us, I tell them that it is important to be trustworthy. Again and again, I asked for proof that we could trust in the actions taken to manage the pandemic.

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● (1730)

I should point out that I also got lucky because it was the first time I experienced a filibuster. I spent hours at committee. Obviously, there are not hundreds of Bloc Québécois members to replace one another. I can assure the House that I remember it well, those 40 long hours spent talking about something. For anyone watching us, yes, it does happen.

Of course, in 2019 and 2020, when we heard about how this Canadian grant was being managed, without a tendering process, we dug a little deeper. We wanted to understand how such a large grant, worth \$910 million no less, could be awarded so quickly to an organization that was already known to have ties to the Prime Minister's brother, mother and wife, and this was soon proven, although that is not to say that the organization itself did not have a legitimate purpose.

Of course, any time I receive a gift or special treatment, the first question I have to ask myself is this: What is the intention behind this gift? The second question I have to ask is this: Do I have to disclose that I have received special treatment or a gift? As members, we all know the sanctions we face if we accept gifts worth over \$200. This one was worth \$200,000. Taking a moment to stop and think about it should have been the first reflex.

Of course we then went over the contract. I thought of my organizations, which struggle to provide services to the community with only a few thousand dollars. The contract that was granted to the WE Charity was initially worth \$19 million. Shortly thereafter it rose to \$43.5 million. We thought that rise was rather quick, and when we looked at the contract we wondered about the organization's ability to provide services both in English and in French, both in Quebec and in every province in Canada. The answer is that WE Charity was providing a unilingual service only. That, of course, was another concern.

On July 2, the Prime Minister defended the government's decision to entrust that organization with managing the program. According to him it was the right thing to do. On July 3, unfortunately, the then minister of diversity and inclusion and youth announced that the WE Charity would no longer be administering this student grant program. That is why we proceeded with the investigation. That is also why on July 9 and 10, we put on the table all the elements that I previously mentioned.

In fact, in all the weeks and hours that followed, at no time was anyone able to clearly demonstrate that the government had done a conscientious and trustworthy job with taxpayers' money. That was not done. The conflict of interest finally came down to this: What constitutes a friend? Can we receive, obtain, award contracts?

There was definitely reason to go further. When the government felt the heat—on July 30, as we all remember—the Prime Minister unsurprisingly denied any wrongdoing, even though he was aware that the perception of this large contract, along with its implications, could lead to questions. At that point, I explained to my constituents that when the pressure is on, we have to take a step back and find a solution. I was also introduced to the idea that if we do not know how to work through a situation, we prorogue. Proroguing is like taking a break, when we try to put everything behind us and pretend that nothing happened, so that we can start over. That

break lasted six weeks. In fact, I worked for part of the summer. As legislators, we were in the process of building up trust, but the August 18 prorogation forced us to stop everything for six weeks. Then, where do we start up again?

● (1735)

We wanted to keep going. I distinctly remember moving a motion to carry on with the House's routine proceedings while at the same time having a special committee, which would have been a great way to not waste time. I think we have been wasting too much time for months. We could deal with a whole lot more social issues than we are at this point.

The Liberals were responsible for 27 irregularities. I also have to say that, on the ethics front, we looked into the purchase of medical ventilators. Members may remember former Liberal MP Mr. Baylis, who scored a \$237-million contract. We wanted to know how Mr. Baylis, who was in the automotive business, got into the ventilator business. The same goes for Palantir.

We had to dig a little deeper to make sure these activities followed the rules, with tenders, and that taxpayer dollars were being used appropriately. The committee tabled 23 recommendations in June 2021. We wanted to pursue the matter, but unfortunately, we encountered more reactions. It was time to call an election. Prorogation's time was up. As we all know, that is what happened.

For this reason and several others, it is important to discuss those recommendations here and now. This is about using tax dollars appropriately, making sure this does not happen again, and making it clear that everything has to be squeaky clean. Unfortunately, these three incidents, what happened in 2017, 2019 and the WE scandal, suggest that the government is not trustworthy.

[English]

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am tabling the government's responses to Questions Nos. 465 to 488.

● (1740)

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my colleague for her clear statement, which provided a timeline of events that, let us be honest, happened a very long time ago, and that the Liberals tried several times to sweep under the rug.

I would like my colleague to tell us about the wrongdoing that was seen during her committee's study and the important recommendations that came out of it. Does she have one or two recommendations that she would like to bring to the attention of the House so that we can avoid this kind of disgraceful conflict of interest in the future?

I am asking on behalf of the honest, hard-working citizens who pay taxes that end up being squandered on cronies. I would like her to tell us about it.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Madam Speaker, I said something about it right at the beginning.

How is it that if a member makes a mistake by not reporting that they received a gift or perk worth \$200 or more, that is not a violation? When billions of dollars are involved, why are there not violations?

Of course, if the violation involves a few thousand dollars, that is not a user fee. For starters, it is not enough to say that a situation needs to be analyzed, reported and publicized. It also needs to be ultimately considered a violation. That is something we discussed.

Another one was contracts awarded without a particular process, or untendered contracts. For example, non-profit organizations that collect as little as \$10,000 have to bang out endless tenders just to serve their clients. Conversely, parliamentarians in government do not have to deal with that. They are above that.

Those are two examples from all the recommendations.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is somewhat disappointing when the Bloc seems to want to follow the lead of the Conservative Party. That is what we are seeing in this situation. If the Bloc, along with the Conservatives, feels so passionate about this particular issue, why does the member believe the Bloc or the Conservatives have not used any opposition days to talk about this specific issue?

Does the member really believe the real purpose of bringing forward the concurrence report was just to try to have a discussion this afternoon on this issue as opposed to talking about government legislation, which is now very limited in terms of the number of people who are going to be speaking to it? There are going to be nowhere near as many people speaking to it because the Conservatives brought forward this motion.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to say that it is easy to say that we stand with someone, that we are joining forces with someone else, that we are voting in favour of something or that we have changed our minds. We have seen a lot of things this afternoon, but what it all comes down to is finding out what is important for us to know.

My answer to my colleague is that the Conservatives hit the nail on the head and it was important for us to see things through to the very end, so that is what we did. I demonstrated that.

What is shocking is that, at the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, which is supposed to be trustworthy and above the fray, people realized that the hours and hours of filibustering were a way of showing that the government was hiding its head in the sand. Perhaps it was really embarrassed and maybe even ashamed, like we were.

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Obviously, I will say that, so far, I have not become corrupt, and I will make sure that we do the right work with the money and that we use it wisely. Regardless of whether it comes from the government side or the official opposition side, we will be there to support anything that is important to Quebeckers and that serves their interests.

• (1745)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am fairly certain that, during her discussion this evening on this topic, the member made reference to the fact that Frank Baylis was involved with the automobile sector. That is absolutely false. I am wondering if the member can inform the House as to where she got that information, because my understanding is that Frank Baylis never was employed or worked in the auto sector.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Madam Speaker, I will do what the government never does, which is admit that it may have made a mistake.

What I was trying to do was make the connection. It may not have been the auto industry, but I do not have my notes and I apologize for that. How was it so easy for a former MP to claim to specialize in ventilators so he could secure a \$237-million contract? That is what we wanted to highlight.

I retract what I said, and the changes can be made. The point I was ultimately making was about why there was no effort to be transparent in advance.

We now have to spend time on this. I should mention that I did some research while the member was asking the question. On March 24, 2021, there was an opposition day on this topic, which might help my colleague opposite who was wondering, but I did not have that information earlier.

That said, the answer is that we are doing it, but I do not think that is enough because we worry about what comes next. Three times is already far too many. One plus one plus one is three, and three strikes is an out. That sums up our feelings about the government in 2022.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I made reference to this year and the Bloc and the Conservatives. It is amazing.

Would the member not recognize there are literally hundreds, going into thousands, of contracts that are issued by the Government of Canada? Many of the recipients of those contracts happen to be Conservatives. There might even be some Bloc members. If one cites specific individuals, what is critical is to have an independent and transparent system that allows for Canadians and businesses to be able to apply for contracts. Does she not believe there are people of all political parties who receive national contracts?

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Madam Speaker, I am pleased that the member brought up contracts because—

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The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. The hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle has the floor and is trying to answer a question. She may continue.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Madam Speaker, what we are experiencing right now has been going on for hours, and why is that? It is because it is a very sensitive subject, I admit.

The objective is due diligence when it comes to contracts. A number of experts told the committee that it is important to take the time beforehand to check things properly.

As I said at the outset, just a few moments ago, why is it that some organizations that might be struggling are accountable to no end, when the government, which has a structure that could be described as extraordinary, is able to turn around quickly and offer \$500 here or an emergency benefit there? It is a huge system.

Ultimately, there is no reason why the experts and officials in each department should not be working proactively to ensure that we have all the elements needed to make reasonable and ethical decisions.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, again, I look at it, and the member says how important it is to have a debate on this issue. If it was such an important issue, why would the Bloc not support a concurrence motion or an opposition day? Why use it strictly on a government's debate day for legislation, when we have already put in the issue of allocated time for Bill C-18? In other words, every minute we are debating this motion today—

• (1750)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to give five seconds to the hon. member to answer.

The hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Madam Speaker, I would turn that question back to the member. Why have we been working for weeks under a gag order and time allocation when we should actually be debating this in great detail? That is for him to answer. We will talk more about this later.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to this concurrence motion. Those watching at home might be wondering what a concurrence motion is. A report has been tabled by a committee in the House. Very rarely would there be a concurrence motion like this to vote on a report. It is, in my opinion and as the member for Winnipeg North indicated earlier, nothing more than a tactic by the Conservatives to jam up more House time.

What makes this particular concurrence motion even more remarkable is this. We start off with the rarity by which reports are dealt with in a concurrence motion, but this one is not even a report from the current ethics committee. This is actually a report from the previous committee. I am sorry, I should not say that. All of the work was done by the previous committee. It developed the report, put together the report, studied it, questioned the witnesses and put

it forward. All the current ethics committee that exists in this Parliament did was retable that report.

We start from a place where it is very rare to have a motion like this on a report. To make it even more bizarre, it is not even a report that the current ethics committee dealt with. It did not interview the witnesses. It did not ask questions or form the recommendations. It is going off of work that was done before. People might ask themselves why it is doing this or they might become skeptical when we accuse the Conservatives of using this as just another political opportunity. It is very clear, when we look at the games they are playing, that they are willing to go to any lengths to make sure that we cannot get government legislation through.

For those watching, what we otherwise would have been discussing right now is Bill C-18. Bill C-18 is a bill that the Conservatives, at least in their election platform, support. It is a bill that would provide supports to news outlets throughout our country to make sure they can continue to be independent. Rather than doing their job and following through on commitments they made during the election campaign to Canadians, they see no political win or political gain out of this particular bill because the vast majority of members in the House, if not all, already support it. They are looking for blood, quite frankly, and they do not see any here. That is why they say, "Rather than spend time talking about Bill C-18, a concept that we agree with, why not go after something that we can actually attack Liberals and individual Liberal members on?" That is exactly what we are seeing here with the introduction of this concurrence motion on this report that has been tabled by the committee.

One of the comments that I found very interesting, and I was surprised to hear from the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, of all people, was when she questioned the member for Winnipeg North as to why he was using time to debate this. That criticism or question might hold water if nobody else in the room was speaking to it, but Conservatives are. They are using the time, burning the day, by debating and talking about this particular motion. The question then becomes: Why would we not use our designated slots to speak to this and to tell Canadians what is going on?

I find it quite interesting that we would be accused of wanting to speak to this just because we do not want to talk to it. That is like saying that we should not be speaking to it because we do not want to be talking about this anyway. Of course we do not want to be talking about this. We want to be talking about Bill C-18, but the reality of the situation is that through their political games the Conservatives have put us in the position of having to debate this right now. We are clearly going to use that opportunity to debate it and show Canadians what is going on right now. I would expect, to be completely honest, that question to come, in a very cynical way, from my colleagues across the way, but I was surprised to hear it from the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. Maybe she has had an opportunity to reflect on it and thinks differently of it now.

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● (1755)

I would like to talk about this report specifically. I realize there are 23 recommendations in this report that were put forward by the previous Parliament's ethics committee. It put forward these recommendations. When one starts to read the recommendations, it becomes very clear how incredibly focused they are on individuals: the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's wife and people who work in the Prime Minister's Office.

We heard a Conservative member talk earlier about wanting to get certain staff to come before the committee. One of the deep criticisms was that the government would not allow staff to go before the committee to testify. Instead, the President of the Treasury Board, if I remember correctly, offered to go to the committee to speak, but the Conservatives, the opposition, were not interested in that. They wanted actual staffers to go there.

I find that very concerning. I realize that Conservatives have no issue with attacking individual people. For the slightest bit of political gain, they will take down somebody's career. We already know that. They did, after all, for the first time in over 100 years, drag someone before the House, to the bar of the House. It had not happened in 100 years, and it had never happened to somebody who was outside of the government. The Conservatives dragged before the bar the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada. That demonstrates how willing they are to take down anybody if they think they will get the slightest political gain out of it, and that is exactly what we are seeing happen here today.

When the minister who is responsible for these staffers says they are the leader, they will take responsibility, they will go before committee and they will answer the questions, that shows what a leader does. Was that enough blood for the Conservatives? No, of course it was not. They wanted to go after the staffers, the individuals who are employed by the minister responsible, which, coming from the ethics committee of all places, is extremely unethical.

In any organization, there is always somebody who is going to take responsibility for those decisions, somebody who will be the accountable one. The minister wanted to do that. Were the Conservatives and other opposition parties interested in that in committee? No, they were not. They wanted staff. They wanted individuals who do not have the same power to defend themselves, who do not have a voice in this place and who do not have a voice in the public to be the ones to go in and be berated for two hours.

The minister was not interested in doing that, which should not come as a surprise to anybody in this House. It certainly should not come as a surprise to Canadians, especially when Canadians witnessed the Conservative Party, propped up by the Bloc and the NDP, drag before the House of Commons a public service individual, the president of the Public Health Agency of Canada. Never in the history of this Parliament had that happened, and when it was done before that, it was never an individual in his position.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, they are heckling me now. I can always tell when I hit a nerve. I can always tell when the truth is starting to sink in. When someone is calling them out, we

can tell, because that is when they start to heckle, and that is exactly what they are doing right now.

When it comes back to this particular report and the committee work that was done, Liberals did participate in this committee at the time. They participated in the committee. They helped studies with the witnesses. They helped to create their own recommendations. I know that three recommendations that came from the Liberal benches, which I do not see in the same form in the report, were never adopted. I would like to read out what those recommendations were.

The recommendations from the Liberal members do not mention individuals' names or look to berate people. They look to set and develop policy. The recommendations, which were in the dissenting report, were that the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics conduct, at an earliest opportunity, a full statutory review of the Conflict of Interest Act with appropriate recommendations.

● (1800)

It seems like a legitimate thing to do. It seems like a legitimate thing to do from a policy perspective if we are generally interested in trying to fix perceived flaws in our system. That is what we would do, not talk about all these recommendations that they have in here referencing the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's wife and various other people, as well as how certain information needs to be turned over immediately. The reason I say that is that colleagues will recall that the Ethics Commissioner was already doing his own study on this issue.

Everything that the committee was demanding in the form of recommendations through this study was for no purpose other than to grandstand and put all the dirty laundry of everybody out in public, regardless of what their involvement was. They are attempts to do that. That is all this was. We know that is because the Ethics Commissioner is not going to do this to the same degree as the official opposition wanted the committee to do it. That is all they are interested in.

The Ethics Commissioner was already investigating this, and it was as if the committee said, "No, no; we're better at this. We should do all this work instead of the individual who has been hired to do this in a fair, non-partisan, unbiased way." That is exactly why this report has been tabled again.

As I mentioned previously, this is not a report generated by this particular Parliament at the ethics committee that sits now, but one from the previous Parliament. They basically just grabbed the report and retabled it so that the Conservatives could continually do this over and over and over.

The second recommendation that the Liberals put forward in that dissenting report was that the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics conduct at the earliest opportunity a full statutory review of the Lobbying Act, with appropriate recommendations.

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Again looking at it from a policy perspective, the Liberals were saying that they recognize there is concern out there, that it is possible there are flaws out there, and that this is how they would address it. They would look at the Conflict of Interest Act and look at the Lobbying Act and at ways to make them better and strengthen them. That is what proper policy from a committee should look like, not these arbitrary demands that are being made by the opposition for no purpose other than to try to shame individuals and try to keep a scandal going as long as they possibly can. That is all they were interested in.

The third and final recommendation made by the Liberal members in the dissenting report was that the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics refrain from conducting parallel investigations with any independent office into the conduct of members of Parliament, either directly or by proxy.

That last recommendation was the Liberal members saying, “Hold on a second, as this ethics investigation is already ongoing by the individual who has been appointed to look into this stuff. Maybe it is not a good idea that we do this at the same time.” It would be the equivalent of a judge reviewing a case in court while a parliamentary committee is trying to do the exact same thing on the side. They are trying to influence it. They are trying to highlight and bring everything possible to the surface so that they can try to attack individuals and personalities. They do this time after time.

This brings me back to where I started in the five minutes I have remaining. What we are seeing here today is part of a pattern. It is part of a pattern that has been developed lately by the Conservative Party of Canada, a pattern of continually trying to put up any possible roadblocks. They are moving concurrence on a report that a committee in this Parliament did not even write. They are not even doing the work before trying to move the motion here. They are just grabbing a report from the last Parliament and retabling it here so that they can move concurrence on it. We are seeing this time and time again.

As indicated by the member for Winnipeg North on a number of occasions, the Conservatives have complained, saying they want debate, that they want to debate the issue. They say, “Why won’t you let us debate these very important pieces of legislation?”

• (1805)

Then the government says, “Good point. Maybe we do need some more time to debate.” Motion No. 11 comes along, basically saying, “Let us sit later into the evening.” What did the Conservatives do? They tried to filibuster that. We had to move closure on that motion, the motion to try to set our work schedule. That is how incredibly obstructionist they have been.

Earlier today we saw a Conservative member stand up and move an amendment to the concurrence motion. He was just trying to create another vote. He was trying to burn more time. That is what is happening over and over in here. This is not about actually debating policy.

If Conservatives wanted to debate policy today and had a genuine interest in advancing the objectives of Canadians, they would be debating Bill C-18, something we know they care about because

it was in their platform, and something they had said they are pushing forward on.

However, it appears as though the Conservatives are only interested in moving it forward if they form government. As we saw, they put it in their election platform and they ran on it. We get here and say, “Let us bring this idea forward.” It should be a fairly easy one to get through, because we know the Conservatives support it, but every single time we bring it up in this House, they put up a roadblock like this to prevent us from actually talking about it.

The Conservatives are only interested in delivering for Canadians if they can be in the driver’s seat. That is not how democracy works. Democracy works, in Canada at least, with people being elected from 338 parts of the country, coming together and figuring out the best way forward. If we cannot do it through consensus, which by default we rarely ever could, then we vote on it. Then we move on. We recognize that we played our role in that democratic process, that we helped advance the lives of Canadians for the better. We accept the roles that we have been given in the House.

Canadians will notice that the Liberal Party said that we accept the role we have been given in this House. We accept the role of being a minority government. What did we do? We looked to other parties. We went to the NDP to see if it wanted to work with us to advance issues for Canadians. The NDP accepted its role. It said yes. It had an interest in advancing issues for Canadians and wanted to get together and work together. That is how we got a supply and confidence agreement.

We know what the Bloc’s objective is. It is interested in being its own country. I guess, by default, it is going to be a lot harder to work with them for the interest of all Canadians, but at least we know exactly what its position is. We know exactly where it is coming from. The Conservatives, however, are literally rudderless right now. Who is driving the ship over there? I would absolutely love to know. There is no way that they can continue to operate in this way. They do not even know what their role in this House is.

I have no problem voting against this concurrence motion and I have given my reasons. I have referenced the report, but this is not what we should have been talking about today. We should have been talking about Bill C-18, an issue that would genuinely advance the interests of Canadians and make our country more independently focused for news organizations and outlets throughout the world. Unfortunately, we are not there, because the Conservatives are once again playing games.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the remarks from my colleague. One of the things that comes to mind when he talks about the Conservative Party’s motivating factor is that this issue was part of an election platform for us back in September, but we were not unique. All political parties recognized how important it was that we take on these tech giants in order to ensure that we have an industry that is so critical to Canada’s democracy, along with issues such as jobs.

It is an industry that we need to protect. It seemed back in September that all political parties recognized that fact. Now we have a government that is fulfilling one of many other election commitments. This particular debate that we were supposed to be having today on Bill C-18 was to deal with being there in a very real and tangible way to protect our news agencies, to ensure that we are levelling the field and ultimately ensuring fairer compensation so that we would have more fact-based news and protect our democracy and so many other things.

Could the member speculate as to why he believes the Conservatives are now putting up such a roadblock, when back in September they seemed to support the principle behind it?

• (1810)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I will start by saying that I hope those who tune in to the goings-on of the House recognize that normally when a government member gives a speech, it is very rare that they receive a question from another government member. However, importantly, the very first question is coming from a government member. Where are the Conservatives to ask me questions right now?

This goes back to the point that, if the Conservatives are so interested in this motion they have put forward, why are they not participating in the debate? Conservatives should have had the first question, and they never asked me a question, yet they put forward this motion today because they are so passionate about the issue. I think it proves my point that they are not interested in anything other than just being obstructionist and burning three hours off the clock, which is what we have seen today.

To the member's question, Bill C-18 is a bill that would help many smaller news organizations, in particular. I think of the Kingstonist in my riding, which is a news organization that started from a grassroots level and has slowly worked its way up. It does not have the ability or the reach to compete with some of these other organizations, but it is very good at reporting on the facts. Very rarely will we know the opinion of a reporter at the Kingstonist. It is reporting on the facts, and we need that now more than ever. We need information that is based purely on fact to be provided to the public so the public can make their own decisions as to how they feel about an issue and not be influenced by a pundit's opinion or objective on one thing or another.

Bill C-18 is incredibly important because it would provide the resources to make sure that smaller news organizations, such as the Kingstonist in my riding, will have the opportunity to continue to do the very important work that they do.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to rise on this point because I think this debate on an ethics concurrence motion is, of course, an effort at time-wasting, but some of the issues are substantive.

I never really had an opportunity to comment on what I made of the WE Charity scandal. Having attended meetings at finance committee, and having watched the Prime Minister's testimony and the testimony of his chief of staff, I came to the conclusion, for what it is worth, that the Prime Minister's Office did not politically interfere in this at all. It was Rachel Wernick, as a chief public civil servant, discovering that the Prime Minister's favourite pet project to

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deliver the program for youth was not yet up and running, and civil servants who I think were embarrassed to tell the Prime Minister that the youth service corps was not up and running, who scrambled to find something to cover for an announcement that had already been made. It was the civil servants who came up with the WE Charity as a possible way to deliver the program. That was my conclusion from watching the evidence.

However, I still think we should have been able to get to the bottom of it so all Canadians would have some assurance that we knew what this was. Also, the fact that it got called the "We Charity scandal" points to some other issues that I think are important, and one of them is that we really do need to amend, reform and modernized Canada's charity laws.

This is a roundabout way of saying that I had some thoughts on the matter, but I have never had a chance to get them on the record, and for that I thank the Conservatives for raising this concurrence debate. However, my thanks are rather overwhelmed by my frustrations that we are not debating Bill C-18.

• (1815)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opinion of the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands as to what the results were. The Ethics Commissioner, in his investigation, came to the conclusions that he did, and that was it.

The member talked specifically about the WE Charity and its involvement in this, but let us not forget that, at the end of the day, WE Charity supported and helped a lot of children throughout this country. However, for no reason other than political gain, Conservatives were willing to walk all over that because they thought they could get an ounce of political gain out of it, and that is what they did.

WE Charity is not a Liberal organization or an NDP organization. As a matter of fact, the provincial government of Manitoba, in multiple budgets, awarded money to WE Charity to do work in Manitoba. WE Charity was an organization that many Conservative MPs had visited, frequented, participated in and encouraged.

WE Charity only became a lightning rod when the Conservatives decided it was time to use it as one for political gain. Up until that point, the Conservatives were all about WE Charity. Both Conservative MPs and Conservative governments throughout Canada routinely built funds into their budgets to give to WE Charity to do work for them.

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the presenter from the other side for his unique viewpoint on how the facts may or may not have occurred. It is quite surprising how the government has continuously tried to cover up the WE scandal.

If the Liberals are so open, honest and transparent, then why was cabinet confidentiality not lifted in this case in order to have the real facts and everything on the table? Unfortunately, that was not the case. Could the member explain to me why cabinet confidentiality was not released?

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Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I thank the Conservatives for finally participating in the debate. I had to wait for three questions before they decided to be interested and ask me one. We listen to the rhetoric from the member talking about the WE Charity, ethics and a violation, and this and that, but I will remind him that the Ethics Commissioner determined that the Prime Minister had done nothing wrong. The Conservative member looks surprised when I say that right now. Just because his caucus members might be telling him that something was wrong, the Ethics Commissioner did not determine that.

I would encourage him to go back to read the report from the Ethics Commissioner because the Conservatives utilized a national charity that supported thousands of children, and with all due respect to my friends in the Bloc and the NDP, they were right along with them during the process. They utilized the charity, at the expense of those who would benefit from it, for political gain. The member is continuing to do it right now, even after the Ethics Commissioner came to his conclusion on it.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I love how over-the-top this is coming from the member for Kingston and the Islands, but he said there was nothing wrong. The previous finance minister was found guilty of breaking ethics in the WE Charity scandal. Just because the Prime Minister did not break the law this time, it is not like Liberals did not. Their finance minister did. How can he be so over-the-top, looking down his nose from his high horse and saying that nothing is wrong with this report when the finance minister of the country broke the ethics rules?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, it is because the previous question was about the Prime Minister. If the member wants to talk about the previous finance minister, then yes, the Ethics Commissioner came to a conclusion and the information was out there, so why do we still need this report?

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to join this debate on ethics and the role that ethics should play for the people who govern our country.

This report is about whether we should re-evaluate what happened during the WE Charity scandal but, throughout my speech, I am going to cover many ethical lapses that have happened with the government. I will also talk about some of the things that people in Regina—Lewvan and across Saskatchewan and Canada would actually like to see this chamber debate.

I have listened to a few speeches now from the members of the opposition, the members for Winnipeg North and Kingston and the Islands, and they are talking about how the government has been nothing but a blessing for Canadians across the country. They are talking about how they cut taxes for the middle class in 2015, without really having the realization of what is happening in 2022 and putting the lens on.

We are getting past COVID-19. They still want to bring it up, and they still want to make everyone across the country afraid, but if we go to every country across the world, people are moving on. It is now time for the government to move on past COVID-19 and start looking at what it can do to help control inflation and the rising cost of living, get people back to work full-time, get all Canadi-

ans the ability to travel, get rid of restrictions, and stop stigmatizing and dividing Canadians at every turn.

The Liberal government has not met a wedge issue it has not tried to take advantage of with Canadians. Liberals have not missed an opportunity to try to pit Canadian against Canadian. Whether it be western Canadians against eastern Canadians, or people who made a personal health choice to take a vaccine or not, they will continue to try to pit Canadians against Canadians. That is something that us on this side, as Conservatives, have always fought against.

We have always had a consistent message: vaccines are available for those who want to take them. We needed to get to a high vaccine rate, which Canadians did. Canadians did go and get vaccinated, but we should not penalize people who have made a different choice. They should be able to go to work and raise their families. They should be able to travel, not only within Canada but also outside of Canada as well. We have people in the country who are not able to travel within their own country. They cannot get on a plane. They cannot get on a train. That is something we should be discussing in this chamber and questioning the Liberal government as to why it continues to try to stigmatize Canadians. Those are the debates we should be having.

We should be having debates on policy and on ethics as well. That is important.

Time and again, the government has used time allocation to stifle debate. In the magical fantasy land the member for Winnipeg North has brought forward in his speech, Conservatives try to stifle debate. We try to have debate as often as we can because we believe that it actually brings forward better legislation. It has happened, a couple of times.

It has happened, a couple of times, where we have added to the legislation. I remember the early times of the pandemic in 2019. We had debates, and we made programs better. That is hardly stifling. They did try to sneak past a piece of legislation that gave them the right to tax and spend for two years completely unfettered, which, once again, shows that every time there is an opportunity or a crisis, the Liberals will continue to try to seize more and more power so that they have the ability to do whatever they want, whenever they want. That actually should be their next campaign slogan in 2025: "Liberals: we can do whatever we want, whenever we want. Just trust us. Heart over hand."

I digress. One of the things that I hear in Regina—Lewvan constantly is the fact that we need to fight the rising cost of living. We have brought forward opposition motions. We have brought forward ideas on how the Liberal government could help people out.

Over 50% of Canadians are finding it hard to put food on the table. That is not the sign of a good, prosperous, well-run government, when 50% of Canadians are unable to put food on the table. Plus, we have seen it and people have seen it, all across their provinces, that the rate of visitations to food banks continues to increase. That is a sign of troubling times ahead.

We brought forward an idea in an opposition motion a few weeks ago. Why not finally scrap the carbon tax? It continues to punish Canadians who have to drive to go to work. It punishes Canadians who have to heat their homes. It punishes Canadians who have to continue to try to buy food that gets trucked in to the grocery stores. Northern and remote Canadians get punished more because, when their food gets trucked in, the prices of everyday necessities continue to rise. Those are the debates we should be having.

● (1820)

The Liberals talk about the tax cuts they had for the middle class in 2015. They are not helping anyone anymore. The price of gas and every essential good has gone up so high that those tax cuts have gone back into government coffers. The government and the Liberals need to listen to what Canadians are saying, not just their Liberal insiders and Bay Street buddies. They need to hear how much harder it is for Canadians to get by, and it is going to get harder. Members may or may not believe this, but they want the carbon tax to go up to \$150 a tonne. Imagine being a single parent who is trying to decide whether they can put gas in their vehicle to take their kids to sports, music or drama, or whether they can buy the essential goods of food and medication if they need it. That is ridiculous. When does it end?

We continue to bring forward positive suggestions and the Liberal government continues to slap them down and bring more rhetoric forward. Time and time again we talk about people coming with questions about whether the government is doing the right thing. The Liberals continue to show that the only people they are willing to listen to are those who already agree with them.

The reason they like time allocation is they do not like debate. They do not like to hear opposing views. They show it in their actions. They showed it in their actions in February when people came to the chamber and wanted to talk to representatives about how they were feeling during COVID-19. I cannot even imagine the type of frustration some people must have felt when they came to Ottawa to try to talk to a member of the Liberal cabinet in person and they would not be heard. They were good people who came here and wanted to be listened to because it is their right. It is the people's Parliament, and not one Liberal took the opportunity to have a conversation with them. I have gone through a few conflict negotiation classes, and not one of them ever said that conflict negotiations do not include dialogue. We need dialogue to resolve a conflict.

I think the Liberals like some of the conflict that is going on right now in our country. I think they enjoy seeing the divide between Canadians, in some way. That is why this building is one of the only places that still has a mask mandate in place. We have asked constantly to see the science and have asked why we still need to wear masks just on Parliament Hill. If we go to receptions all around downtown Ottawa, we see members opposite and members from all parties not wearing masks at them.

Let us ask this question. Why is that still in place? Maybe my hon. colleagues will talk about the BOIE, but the Liberals now have a majority on the BOIE with the NDP and can vote in whatever they want, so really it is up to them to decide when restrictions will be dropped here on Parliament Hill.

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Moving on, restrictions should be dropped elsewhere. I do not know if members have been to the Toronto airport lately, but it is an unmitigated disaster right now. These are very tough times with the restrictions and some of the vaccine mandates. People would be at work today at the Pearson airport if there were no vaccine mandates, and they could be helping get rid of some of the backlogs and making air travel more smooth.

Those are some of the things we should be talking about, but the Liberals continue to bring in time allocation.

This is an opportunity to bring forward something else that is also important to people across the country: When are we going to have some confidence in our democratic institutions again? That goes straight to the heart of ethics and the ethics report. People see a decline in democracy in our country and they are losing faith. I hear it in the conversations I have in Saskatchewan with people from Regina—Lewvan. A lot of people who come to my office ask why we cannot get rid of these guys and ask what is going on in our country. Some people feel our country is a laughing stock right now because of some of the policies the government has put in place.

● (1825)

People are travelling to the States or over to Europe and they see how life there is returning to normal. When they come back home, they find that travellers from other countries who come here do not understand this because a lot of people have moved on. It is a difficult thing, because now these decisions and policies, which are really out of touch with most Canadians, are being propped by the junior party, the NDP. It is propping up the Liberals now. Technically they never won a mandate for a majority, but they stole a majority government from the mandate they got in 2021.

That is something people have a really hard time computing. They are asking how the Liberals have a majority when they never were awarded one by the voters in Canada. When they talk about the co-operation, they understand that sometimes parties have to co-operate, but how could they give a blank cheque to the Liberal government to govern until 2025 and not show what was agreed to on the blank cheque? We have asked many times for them to show the documentation of what was in the hidden deal that was signed in the back rooms of Ottawa that allows the Prime Minister and the government to stay in power until 2025. What were the priorities of the NDP?

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A lot of us who live in western Canada have seen some NDP governments, and they have had a lot of different priorities from those the federal NDP does right now. I am pretty sure Tommy Douglas would not even be part of the NDP right now in Ottawa because he would have a lot of different views, especially around fiscal policy. Some of my friends have seen some NDP governments, such as in Winnipeg, for example, that have had a lot more fiscal responsibility than the current NDP members in Ottawa have.

That comes to the crux of the argument. When we are looking at supporting the government, from my standpoint, if I was a New Democrat, I would also look at how I could support a government that has this many ethical violations. My friend from Kingston and the Islands actually had to answer the question when I said the WE Charity maybe did not say the Prime Minister was guilty, but it did say the former finance minister, Bill Morneau, was guilty of breaking ethics rules. There was also the “Trudeau Report” and the “Trudeau II Report”, which show the Prime Minister has broken ethics rules on several different occasions.

When we are talking about an ethical government, people at some point in time in the next little while are going to wonder if they can continue to vote for a government that has so many ethical lapses. I think that does go to the heart of the debate in this chamber, and it goes to the heart of the debate on what is going to happen if the government continues to have ethical lapses.

For example, we just saw another one. The Minister of National Defence gave a sole-source contract to a friend for \$16,000. That has come out in the last couple of hours. The Minister of International Trade gave a sole-source contract to her friend for \$17,000. Also, who can forget Frank Baylis's sole-source contract? There was a couple of million dollars for that one for ventilators, and he does not even have a company that makes ventilators. It goes on and on with these ethical lapses, so the question that comes to Canadians is, how much is enough and when is it enough?

Also, it does not have to just be contracts. We have seen this time and again in other areas of the government. Continuously we see it among insiders and Liberals who are well connected to the Prime Minister and to the front bench. We have seen it from the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, from New Brunswick, who has had a few questions come up about some of his appointments. I think members might remember they had to go through a Liberal donation registry before they had the opportunity to do some other things. These are some of the questions that Canadians continue to ask us, which we want to bring forward on the floor to debate, because I think there is a higher expectation of government than what the government has had.

I was an MLA in 2015, and I remember watching the Prime Minister debate Stephen Harper and talk about how sunshine is the best disinfectant. Do members remember that?

An hon. member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I heard a “hear, hear” from the member for Winnipeg North. I wish the Liberals still believed that. I also wish the Prime Minister still wanted to lead the most transparent and open government in Canadian history.

An hon. member: He does.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I heard “he does”, but he does not, because he is only the second Prime Minister to break the ethics rules not once but twice.

● (1830)

It is unbelievable for the government to say it is going to be the most open and accountable government in Canadian history and then continue to bring forward legislation that curtails freedom of speech, curtails freedom of expression and curtails what Canadians can put on the Internet on their own personal pages. How does that make it the most open and accountable government in Canadian history? People are looking for more. Something the government is really falling short on is making sure that people have hope for the future.

There are reports that the optimism of Canadian business owners is at an all-time low. If we talk to anyone in agriculture right now, we hear that people do not know how they are going to afford the inputs. This is a direct result of some of the policies put forward by the government. Let us look at what the cost of fertilizer is going to be for this year, with a 30% reduction, a completely arbitrary number, in emissions in the fertilizer industry. Basically, the only way the industry is going to get there is by lowering its outputs. Less fertilizer means that agriculture producers are going to have less fertilizer to put on their crops because they cannot afford to put more on. In turn, that means there is going to be less food available to Canadians and people around the world. That is the result of some of these arbitrary emission targets that the government has put into place.

I do not think some members of the Liberal government have thought about what the consequences are. I know a few have because, in doing the right thing, a few have voted in favour of a private member's bill that would lower the cost of the carbon tax on agriculture producers. One was the member for Kings—Hants and another member abstained. They have talked to agriculture producers and realized the impacts that these policies are going to have on the people who produce the food we consume.

Some of these ideological crusades that the government has been on for the last seven years do have real-life impacts on Canadians across the country. I am not talking about just western Canada, although western Canadians are the ones who produce the food that feed the rest of our country. It is not all of it but a lot of it. These impacts are compounding each other. Some of these policies were put in place not by malice, but maybe simply because sometimes the people who are putting them in place do not understand what is happening in agriculture in western Canada and the differences we see in our country.

There are a few other issues we can talk about. I have some time left, and there is a lot more I want to say.

• (1835)

I want to talk about the residents of Regina—Lewvan and the effects that some of these policies have had there, and some of the causes and effects of ethics. When the government makes decisions and gives some sole-source contracts, it is giving money to Liberal friends. However, it is also leaving out some of the people who are creating jobs and creating wealth in their communities.

Small business owners have had a tough time over the last couple of years. I talked to one of them, who owns a restaurant called Rock on Albert Street in Regina. He said that with how much money he has paid in carbon tax for heating and cooling the building, he could afford to hire another two staff members if he did not have to pay the carbon tax. Two people in Regina could have a job in one restaurant if there was not a carbon tax. That is something the Liberals really have to think about.

Another thing that this carbon tax is affecting in our country more than the Liberals probably realize is the budgets of school divisions in Saskatchewan. The school divisions have to heat their schools in the winter and keep them cool in the summer. Our temperature fluctuates a fair bit in Saskatchewan. It snowed on the May long weekend.

What the school divisions are seeing in their budgets, which are getting squeezed tighter and tighter, is that the carbon tax is taking tens of thousands of dollars out of them. That could be used for an EA, for another teacher or for the expense of fuel for busing. Some people do not understand how much people have to ride the bus in rural and remote communities. Fuel is also needed for heating and cooling schools. That is the equivalent to probably one or two EAs in a school division per year.

The Liberals talk about putting Canadians first and talk about having Canadians' backs. We need to bring forward good public policy to try to help out and make sure that the lives of Canadians get easier and more cost-effective. We need to control inflation and the price of living. That is what we are hearing from Canadians. I hope that when we have another conversation, we will be able to talk about the Liberals being more co-operative in the House.

• (1840)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened very closely to my colleague from Regina—Lewvan talk about how he wanted more time for debate, but he did not really debate. He stood for 10 minutes and told us why he does not like the Liberals. We hear from him often that he does not like the Liberals and his neighbours do not like the Liberals and nobody likes the Liberals, but the fact is there was a democratic election a few months ago and we are on this side and they are on that side and we have a job to do. We have a job to pose good ideas, to bring good ideas forward. He talked about important issues of affordability that are affecting our neighbours and the rising cost of living, but he did not propose any solutions or give us any ideas. He just said that it is a problem.

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He was standing in the House for 10 minutes saying the government does not have any solutions, which we do, because poverty is at an all-time low and joblessness is at an all-time low, and there are a lot of other things that we could talk about. We are going in the right direction. He did mention how the price on pollution is affecting some Saskatchewan schools. I had the opportunity to google it and I am proud to reiterate that there were 160 upgrades to schools, and the price on pollution provided Saskatchewan with upwards of \$60 million for that. My dad used to live in Regina. Saskatchewan is a small province, so \$60 million goes a really long way.

He also talked about how COVID is over and we should stop wearing masks. I am not trying to scare anybody as he suggested, but I want to remind him that in the month of May 1,700 people died in Canada from COVID, and if that says “COVID is gone” to the member, then I do not know what to say, because Canadians are still dying and a responsible government has an obligation to stand up and protect them.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I really appreciate it when the member stands and shows his incompetence once again. I actually talked for 20 minutes, not 10, so he did not listen to my whole speech. I did provide some solutions. One was to axe the carbon tax so that people could afford gas, so that people could drive to work. On schools, I love the Liberal argument so much because it shows the Liberals' complete and utter incompetence when it comes to fiscal policy. If we are just going to give the money back to the schools through a carbon tax rebate, which does not give it all back, we should not take the money from them in the first place. We should let them use it right off the hop.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am a first-time parliamentarian and I sit on the ethics committee. What we are looking at when we look at reports is precedence. From what I know, we have not studied this report, since the last Parliament was dissolved when the election was called. I only know what I have learned from the news, so it can go different ways depending on what people are reading, but we know that Parliament did not get a chance to see that.

Was the report presented to Parliament? Did Parliament get to look at those recommendations? When we talk about precedence, did we get to see how these kinds of reports can be reported to Parliament in the future and how Parliament deals with it? Are we dealing with ethics? Right now in the news we have another Liberal member being investigated. We want to look at all of these things fairly. Has the report been looked at? Is there precedence that we need to look at these reports and get them finished and put to bed?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, one of the ways the Liberals usually deal with reports when there are troubling times is proroguing Parliament or calling an election. Usually we do not get to deal with them because when it gets really difficult, what they do is cut bait and run because they do not want to see what the final results are.

I would like to see more opportunity to have this go back to committee, investigate it fully and make sure that when we see the final report, we have a good process going forward so that when the next Liberal ethical violation happens, we already have a template to make sure that we are able to deal with it properly, efficiently and in a fair, non-partisan manner.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member said “cut bait and run”. We literally went back to the electorate and said that it was time for them to weigh in, and they had the opportunity to get rid of us if they did not want us. That is what happened.

What I find really interesting about the member's speech, and I have a lot of respect for the member so it is nothing personal, is that about two-thirds into his speech he started to talk about how if the Conservatives keep reminding the public and telling the public about this and that, then eventually the public would not have trust in the government anymore and it would not elect it. That is the entire strategy of the Conservative Party. It is not about, “Hey, public, this is my idea. What do you think? Do you think you want to support us because this is a great idea for Canadians?” No. The whole premise behind everything the Conservatives do is trying to attack individuals so they can prove to Canadians why they should not vote for this side of the House, instead of proving to them why they should vote for that side of the House.

Does the member not agree that perhaps the Conservatives should spend less time focusing on trying to dig up and manufacture outrage to upset Canadians about the government, and more time actually proposing to Canadians what they would do if they were in government? Is that not what this democratic process is all about?

• (1845)

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I do enjoy the banter back and forth. If there was ever a master class to give on how to outrage Canadians, it is the Liberals'. I do not remember, but in the 10 years of Stephen Harper, how many mass blockades were there on Parliament Hill protesting government policies? Zero.

The member yells that the Liberals did not encourage them, but they did by their terrible policy. They did by stigmatizing and dividing Canadians. They did by creating two classes of Canadians. If people want to take a master class on outraging Canadians and making Canadians so upset that they would knock on the doors of Parliament to have their voices heard, they should talk to the Liberals.

Any time the Liberals want to have a policy debate on economics, any time they want to have a policy debate on world affairs, foreign affairs or the military, I would be happy to meet them anywhere for a debate on whose policies are better for Canadians, whose policies are better to lower inflation, whose policies are bet-

ter to lower the cost of living and to make life more affordable in Canada, because the Conservatives would win a policy debate with the Liberals any day of the week.

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to point out to the member that he gave an excellent speech. It was very well informed.

The member from across the way stated that, as opposition, my colleague is just bringing up all the horrible or terrible things the Liberal government has done. I find it quite surprising. Is it not the role of the opposition to actually find out what is going wrong, how we can do it better, or in what ways we could improve upon things that are happening?

Could the member from my side discuss how we, in our role as the opposition, are trying to make sure we get all the accountability out in order to inform the Canadian public as to what has happened?

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, that is a fair question. Lots of people wonder what the role of the opposition is in government.

The role is to make sure that government legislation does get better. We have some very thoughtful but maybe critical arguments on some of the legislation, for example Bill C-11. I do not think the government should be legislating the Internet and regulating what people can and cannot see. I believe in free speech. The Liberals do not. There is another example. I do not think people should have to pay a carbon tax on the gas they use in their vehicles, on the equipment they use to seed or on the machinery they use to grow food for people across Canada. I do not think schools should have to pay carbon tax on their heating. I do not think there should be a carbon tax on bussing kids to school in Saskatchewan. These are policy debates we could have.

The Liberals say, “But they get it back.” My question or comment, and Premier Wall made the same comment, would be this: If the government is just going to give the carbon tax back to Canadians in boutique tax credits, why take it in the first place? Please, why do we not let Canadians keep the money in their own pockets?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, we are the ones who got rid of the boutique tax credits. By the way, it is a tool to use in the marketplace to incentivize consumer choices; that is why we do it like that.

Let us get back to what the member said earlier. I actually really appreciated the beginning of his response to that question. He said their job is to critique legislation and to make it better. He said to look at Bill C-11, and that he did not think the government should be doing that.

That is not what the Conservatives are doing, though. The member and his party are not coming here and saying they want to make the legislation better. They are coming here and putting up every single roadblock possible to prevent anything from happening. That is not their job.

• (1850)

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, our job is to make sure that bad legislation does not pass. That is what we continue to do, because the Liberals have brought forward bad legislation a number of times and it did not pass.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join this debate on the concurrence report.

I want to say something for my constituents back home who have been wondering what this is. Oftentimes, I have to explain to residents in my riding what exactly Parliament is doing during report stage like this. It is the opportunity for any group of members in the House to highlight a particular report that is coming out of a standing committee of the House. This means that a group of parliamentarians met. They met with witnesses, discussed it, had analysts go over it and then agreed on a set of recommendations to report back to everyone in the chamber and everyone in the House of Commons. It is an opportunity to weigh in on the contents.

This particular report goes back all the way to June 2021. The reason the government was not able to respond to this report was that we had an election in August 2021, one that many of my constituents believe was wholly unnecessary because it was an election done during a national pandemic and they do not believe it was needed. It returned mostly the same results all across the country, including in my riding, so I make sure that when I rise, I thank my constituents for sending me back here for a third time and, I will note, with the second-largest vote count, once again, across all the Canadian ridings. I always lose out to my friend and colleague from Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, who has an even larger riding than I do, with even more electors to serve. He consistently gets more votes than I do.

This report goes back to June 2021. The report was on what is colloquially known as the WE Charity scandal. It is one that I have received a lot of emails about, especially at that time. I have a lot of constituents who continue to ask me about it. I probably get five to 10 emails and a few phone calls a week still asking me whatever happened with that. They always ask about the follow-up on it. What was the follow-up? What was the outcome of it? I often refer them to this report, and I have not heard back from the Government of Canada on whether it is going to act, whether it is going to respond or whether it knows about it.

That is what is happening today. This is a concurrence report debate. We are going to want to hear from members in the House of Commons on the report.

What I thought I would do today is actually go through the 23 recommendations of the report so that my constituents back home can better understand what the follow-up was from the WE Charity scandal. What did parliamentarians do? From whom did they get information? To whom did they give recommendations? I am still hoping the Government of Canada will respond to these recommendations and implement some of the findings so we can do better.

In this House, we often debate legislation and amendments. Some of those ideas are then taken up in particular committees.

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They discuss policy ideas and hear from witnesses. Experts come in from the government side, and officials try to weigh the pros and cons with parliamentarians. It is also an opportunity for parliamentarians to get on the record on particular issues they care about. I have served on many standing committees of the House, so I have some measure of facility with these particular rules and how it is supposed to work.

Then, when members write the report, they are hoping to get as much agreement at the committee level as they possibly can. It is always interesting in a minority Parliament, where the government does not always have a majority of the votes available to it. Nowadays, with this coalition agreement between the NDP and the Liberal caucus, it is a unique situation where there is effectively a majority at the committees for the government, but then the NDP also gets to pretend that it is an opposition party.

That list of recommendations is what I want to go into. I want to read them into the record, just to provide an opportunity to have that debate. I intend to report this back, through my newsletter, to my constituents on Friday so they can see there was an actual debate in the House on the WE Charity report and these were the recommendations. I can maybe provide some of my ideas and feedback on the contents.

Recommendation 1 was on cabinet decisions:

That the Government of Canada consider making mandatory, prior to all Cabinet decisions on awarding a contract or contribution agreement, an evaluation and determination as to whether a conflict of interest screen, agreed upon pursuant to section 29 of the Conflict of Interest Act by a public office holder and the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, should be put in place for any member of Cabinet, as a preventative measure to avoid conflict of interest.

This is a perfectly reasonable recommendation. I am glad the committee was able to report back. This is a committee chaired by a member of the official opposition.

• (1855)

This is infinitely reasonable. I do not see why anybody in the House would oppose having an ethics screen to ensure that decisions are being made by cabinet ministers at the cabinet table who understand where every single person is coming from and if they have any particular reasons for maybe wanting to recuse themselves from that debate. I think it is perfectly fair and it should be done.

“Recommendation 2 on decisions made in the Finance Minister’s Office” states:

That the Government of Canada make mandatory, prior to decisions made in the Finance Minister’s Office, an evaluation and determination as to whether a conflict of interest screen, agreed upon pursuant to section 29 of the Conflict of Interest Act by a public office holder and the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, should be put in place for the minister or any public office holder involved in that decision and that it conduct a review to examine how groups not registered to lobby were able to have direct access to the Finance Minister.

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That is a lot in a recommendation, I would say. Now that he is not a member of the House, I get to say something generous about the former member for Malpeque, Wayne Easter, who used to counsel rookie members, as I was two Parliaments ago, to keep recommendations short. If we want the government to listen to us and understand what we are trying to do, we should keep recommendations short. If Wayne is listening for some reason, I miss him dearly. He was a good committee chair who was very fair.

To explain this to my constituents, this is fairly simple. This is a catch-all for this growing concern that there are groups out there lobbying or advocating on behalf of a group: an association, perhaps, or a group of concerned citizens. Typically in the past, we would not require them to register as lobbyists because they were like a public advocacy group. They wanted some public good to come from their talks with a minister's office, a minister or a department. What has evolved over time is that these groups are in between. They have a pecuniary interest and a public advocacy interest. The WE Charity fell into this type of grouping, and this is where many people have concerns about how they were able to get this Government of Canada program tailor-made to their own benefit. That is where there were a lot of concerns for people.

This is a good recommendation. It is seeking clarity on how to capture that particular group so that information is provided to the public and the public can then make a judgment call on whether it is right or wrong. It would also ensure that in the future, those types of public advocacy groups know when they have crossed the line from advocacy to actively lobbying for a pecuniary interest they may have.

Recommendation 3 states:

That, given the failure of [the member for Waterloo] to reveal her 17 April 2020 meeting with Mr. Craig Kielburger, a review of ministerial accountability to committees must be undertaken.

Recommendation 3 is one of the recommendations I like, not because I have any particular issues with the member for Waterloo, but because ministerial accountability to standing committees of the House is under threat. I remember many years ago that in a certain committee, I believe it was the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, a certain member, maybe the chair occupant at the moment, wrote a letter with others being highly concerned that the Auditor General was being tasked with more and more audits and was not able to conduct them.

That is an issue I have seen consistently now across many committees: A minister is invited and either the minister refuses to come, which is typically not a direct refusal, but a refusal due to scheduling difficulties; or the minister could come only at a certain time or for a limited period; or the deputy minister, the assistant deputy minister or the parliamentary secretary is sometimes offered instead. Accountability in the House of Commons has to come from the ministers. They are at the apex of their departments. They are supposed to be the ones held accountable for the management and administration of everything that happens in their departments, and they are supposed to be held to account.

These are the most powerful men and women in Canada in our political system. These individuals have drivers and very high salaries. They make decisions that literally have serious impacts on

people's businesses, livelihoods, families and whether someone can enter or exit Canada. Profoundly, they should be held accountable and it should not be too much to ask that ministerial accountability in this Recommendation 3 be reviewed to make sure that we have only the highest standards for them.

In fact, I would say the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, PACP, has the highest standard of any committee before the House of Commons. The expectation is that only the deputy minister can come as the financial officer for the department to explain him or herself, and ministers are expected to come and explain the running of their departments and the details of what the departments have done with the monies that have been given to them, because they are stewards of the resources of the taxpayers, and that is what this whole place is supposed to be about. There was a reason we agreed on the fields of Runnymede, where the first members of Parliament met. The exact thought and idea was to keep the Crown accountable for the way it was spending money and the policy decisions it made.

● (1900)

Moving on to Recommendation 4 and record-keeping in the context of a meeting with lobbyists, it states:

That the Government of Canada implement a mandatory rule requiring, except in exceptional circumstances, that senior public office holders be accompanied by at least one staff during any meeting with lobbyists for the purpose of taking notes.

I am a great lover of the access to information system. I believe it is broken. I filed an ATIP, I remember, with the Department of Defence in 2020 and I had to launch complaints in order to obtain documentation. Back in June, the Privacy and Information Commissioner found that 13 or 14 of my complaints were justified in order to release access to information documents. Those notes are taken by staff. Those notes taken by public servants in such meetings would be available. They are not transitory documents. They would be available for an access to information request that is dutifully filed by a member of the public, a member of Parliament, a senator or whomever. I think it is the minimum to expect: that public office holders can make information available to the public on request obviously through, in shorthand, the ATIP system.

There are 23 recommendations. I do not know whether I will be able to go through all of them. I do have a Yiddish proverb. I will come to that and explain how it ties in to all of this, too. I will just move on to a few of the other recommendations that I have highlighted for myself because I think these are the ones that some of my constituents have raised with me before.

Recommendation 13, regarding compliance with orders from the House of Commons, states:

That the Government of Canada comply with orders of the House of Commons and not block testimony of key witnesses in studies relating to conflict of interest and lobbying.

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While this is a good recommendation, I would expand that recommendation even farther for the committee. The House of Commons is supposed to be the highest political body in the land. The Government of Canada, which is represented by the cabinet ministers here, is held accountable by the House, including the members of the back bench on the government caucus side. Their role as well is to hold the government to account.

To their credit, some of the members have, I know, held the government accountable for decisions made. That can take on many different forms. It can be critiquing the government, heavily criticizing it in a very negative way. It can also be offering up amendments and offering up solutions. It can be voting down certain measures. It can be abstaining on certain measures to make a point. It can be public advocacy. It can be with petitions. There are any number of ways to achieve that goal, but I have seen now in the House the government defy the House of Commons, and at times obstruct the House of Commons. It even obtained documents, as with the Winnipeg lab situation in the last Parliament.

I think it is critically important for constituents in Alberta, but also across the country, to know that the elected officials they send actually do productive work for them: We actually fulfill a constitutional function on their behalf, which is accountability. That is what this place is for. It is to demand accountability from the government, receive and obtain it back. I could actually expand this recommendation far more broadly to include many more things.

Recommendation 15 is on the use of new technology. I often get residents back home asking me about the House of Commons. The way and manner in which we conduct business seems a little archaic to them at times. Recommendation 15 states:

That the Government of Canada refrain from using any new technology that has the potential of violating the privacy rights of Canadians until it has been examined by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada and given the parameters of use.

I think that is a very reasonable one. Since the time of this report, I think there have been more concerns raised by members of the public on how the government obtains their private information, how it uses the information, how it shares it across departments and how international organizations may obtain and use Canadian-obtained information on our citizens. Where does it go, how is it used and what is the purpose?

I think more transparency in this situation would make people feel far more comfortable knowing that they can track what the government is tracking on them, and know what the government knows about them. I think that is entirely reasonable as a safeguard recommendation, so that is what I wanted to highlight to constituents back home.

Another recommendation I wanted to highlight is Recommendation 20. On oversight and accountability during emergencies, it states:

That the Government of Canada establish oversight and accountability mechanisms specifically designed to ensure rapid and transparent allocation of federal funds during emergency situations.

This was far before the protests in Ottawa, and far before the illegal blockades at our borders. This was way before any of that happened. This was specifically dealing with emergency situational

spending, and there was an attempt by government ministers to allow themselves two years of unlimited taxing and spending during the pandemic.

• (1905)

We had to meet on Easter Saturday in order to discuss and debate the bills. I remember debating Bill C-20, in a previous Parliament, that had such a complex mechanism in it for the allocation of funds. I even asked the minister during the COVID-19 special committee that was meeting in the House about it. I could not make heads or tails of the bill, and I asked the minister to explain it to me and take as much time as he wanted, because I honestly could not grasp how the bill was going to function. I had accountants in my riding asking me questions on the emergency relief programs and how they were going to work. This recommendation is absolutely critical.

We saw, in the House of Commons, the government try to direct funds, and not go through all the accountability measures during an emergency. On one side, we have to account for the fact that it was an emergency and the government was trying to ensure the safety of its citizens during a global health pandemic, but I think that the right question to ask is: How could we do this better? What could we do differently? That is what this recommendation is asking. It is asking for a specific design to ensure rapid and transparent allocation of federal funds during emergency situations.

I am not as well versed in the estimates as I should be, but the member for Edmonton West is, indeed. He is far more interested in them than I think most members of the House of Commons are. He has a finer knowledge of where the money goes, and there are many people who would rely on his expertise. I think that is fair to say. However, that is where accountability happens, and the estimates are quite a Byzantine process that is hard to understand for many. I often have questions from constituents who ask me: "How is this government money spent?" I usually refer them to the Public Accounts of Canada, and then I call them and we have a walk-through over the phone on where they can find the spending details. I think it is reasonable, and something the government should be working on, to make not just the budget side, which are the proposals on how to spend, but the accounting side, accounting for how the money was spent, and informing Canadians of where the money went.

A good example that I can give members is that there was a promise a few budget cycles ago, I think it was in budget 2019, to spend \$1 billion on rare disease programs. It was in two tranches of \$500 million over two fiscal years. I still cannot figure out where that money went and where it is going. I have been here almost seven years, and I am still trying to sort out where that money is going. I tend to file some Order Paper questions to discover where the money in this particular situation went.

Lastly, I want to raise Recommendation 23, because it talks about contracting. It states:

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That the Government of Canada provide an independent organization, such as the Office of the Procurement Ombudsman, the powers necessary to proactively review departmental contracting processes, including their use of sole-sourced contracts.

That has become even more important now that we have found out that the Treasury Board has been allowing people to slice contracts to under \$25,000 to allow themselves the opportunity to sole source them under that limit. We are not allowed to do that. The Treasury Board has been very clear that we are not allowed to cut contracts in two just to fall underneath the \$25,000 limit. One minister is writing an article today and being published.

“One who wants to know is better than one who already knows.” I will admit that this is a Yiddish proverb. I have gone through the contents of the report that we are debating today, and I would like to know if the government is going to actually implement the recommendations. Which of these is it going to implement, and which is it going to review? The report was dropped in the last Parliament and resurrected in this Parliament, and now we can have an opportunity for debate and for a vote. I want constituents to know, back home in the riding of Calgary Shepard, that this is part of the representation and work that I do on their behalf.

The WE Charity scandal, I think, shook the confidence of Canadians in the government's ability, specifically cabinet's ability, to deliver on major government programs. It shook their trust in the government. A series of scandals led to that particular one, and I do not think that the government has recovered from that loss of trust. It is one that will go on into future governments as well. It is a shaking of trust in our institutions when we should be shoring up our civic institutions, strengthening bodies such as Parliament and strengthening standing committees of the House. We should be ensuring that members of Parliament have the resources they need to hold the government to account, whether that is through better measures in the House: better tools, such as Order Paper questions that are maybe reported faster, or that have an obligation for a response from the government, and a clear response would be even better. It could also be through more obligations to release more documents publicly, and more obligations, as listed in this report, to oblige the government so that we can know. This is where I think the proverb is most important. It is better that we all know.

With that, I will take my seat and I will be happy to take questions.

• (1910)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his intervention today, and particularly for focusing on some of the recommendations that he thought were important.

There were some other recommendations that never made it into the report. They were part of a dissenting report that I think would have been equally, if not more, beneficial for policy creation. That was specifically with respect to the committee conducting, at its earliest opportunity, a full statutory review of the Conflict of Interest Act as well as the Lobbying Act.

Could the member comment on whether he thinks that looking at those particular acts would be more beneficial in ensuring that is-

sues raised in committee and raised in the public were properly, and more efficiently and effectively, dealt with?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for referring to that dissenting report the committee agreed to and sent to the House of Commons. I will refer to recommendation 11, though, which is on the powers of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada. It is “That the Government of Canada introduce legislative changes to the Lobbying Act to give the Commissioner of Lobbying real powers to investigate, issue fines and impose lobbying bans to those who disregard the Act.”

I think it is much better than that other recommendation, which was asking for a review. Here the committee agreed to direct the government, saying, “Do these things. This is a good idea. Change this part so the Commissioner of Lobbying has some teeth and can actually do their job and prevent future wrongdoing.”

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Calgary Shepard for giving a shout-out to the vital estimates process. It really is the reason Parliament exists. In a lot of ways it goes back to King Edward saying “What touches all should be approved by all”.

With regard to the part of the WE scandal that was particularly odious, I am glad he brought up ministerial accountability. In the Treasury Board rules, the President of the Treasury Board is the guardian of the public purse. He or she should be the person caring for the public purse and making sure the rules are followed. In the WE scandal, the government ignored what is called the official language analysis. That is when a government program that has an interchange with both the English population and French population in Canada has to go through the official language analysis to ensure that the service can be delivered in both official languages. This is not a suggestion. It is a rule.

We heard from the President of the Treasury Board that they ignored this official language analysis in order to push through the money for the WE organization. I would like to hear what my colleague thinks about accountability and transparency when the very person in charge of guarding the public purse turns a blind eye to assist in a program that would benefit friends of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I regret that the member caught your eye, because that member is from Edmonton, and after the 5-4 beating on May 26 that the Calgary Flames took, I do not find it very fair to let him speak.

He is absolutely right. If we have Treasury Board rules that are set out, we have to abide by them. That is the whole point of having them. When we have a situation of cabinet ministers allowing government programs to be not subject to particular rules, there is very little accountability when this happens. Rules are simply being suspended ad hoc without information being provided to the public, to the House or to members of Parliament so that we can decide whether this is the right decision to make. This is the whole crux of the matter. There was so much internal waiving of the rules on an ad hoc basis that it created the perception that there was this massive scandal brewing within the government, and then it exploded into the public, and rightly so.

The member for Edmonton West is correct that this should never have happened in the first place, and Treasury Board directives must be followed by the government.

• (1915)

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Calgary Shepard for his speech.

I was listening to him carefully, and at one point he talked about the fact that we are here to work seriously on legislation for the real world. We are talking about the WE Charity scandal, a very important issue that we should have dealt with over a year ago. That was delayed through what I would call questionable political gamesmanship. It is a good thing that we are talking about it.

I would like to ask a two-part question. First, in my colleague's opinion, after these three hours of debate, what will we get as an outcome, as accountability from the government and as changes in the future?

Second, although we are dealing with an important issue, does he not think that it is a shame that we dropped the debate on the important bill that we were supposed to deal with today and on which the NDP-Liberal coalition slapped a gag order on us earlier? The people who were supposed to speak today will not. This has happened a few times in the last few weeks. I have a feeling that June is going to be a long month.

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on this.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, the member for Berthier—Maskinongé just asked two questions.

First, I hope that, after these three hours of debate, we will end with a vote on this issue so that the House can say, on behalf of Canadians and Quebecers, that what we ultimately want is for the government to take this report and its 23 recommendations seriously and follow through on them.

Second, it is not the job of the official opposition or the Bloc Québécois to facilitate the passage of government bills. That is supposed to be the job of the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons. It is entirely his fault if the government does not manage to pass all the legislation it wants to before the end of June. It is his responsibility. I do not believe it is up to us to facilitate the passage of legislation that, sometimes, is not well written. Our job at committee and in the House of Commons is to ensure that each

bill that reaches third reading stage in the House is a bill in which we have confidence.

[English]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague the hon. deputy House leader brings up a very important point about debate in this place. What I see and what I have referred to today as you were in the chair is a decline in democracy. It seems as though bills are being rushed through. Very important pieces of legislation are being rushed through this place without proper debate and without proper input on behalf of members of the opposition. This decline in democracy that we are seeing is very real, as things are moving straight to committee rather than being debated in this place.

I remind members that there are millions of voices represented in this place. There are millions of people who sent members of Parliament here to be their voices. I wonder if the member can comment on his perception of what we have been seeing throughout our institutions, which is a decline in democracy.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I entirely agree with the opposition House leader. That was an excellent question, and I could not have done it better myself.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings on the motion at this time. The question is on the amendment.

• (1920)

[Translation]

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

[English]

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I would like 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 Tuesday, May 31, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

* * *

INSTRUCTION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC) moved:

That it be an instruction to the Standing Committee on Finance that, during its consideration of Bill C-19, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures, the committee be granted the power to divide the bill into two pieces of legislation:

(i) Bill C-19A, An Act to amend the Department of Employment and Social Development Act and other acts, containing divisions 26, 27, 29 and 32 of Part 5 and Schedule 3 of the bill,

(ii) Bill C-19B, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures, containing all the remaining provisions of the bill.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, here we are again, and it is ironic that the last question we heard from the House leader was about not having an opportunity to debate issues. We just went through the process of listening to a concurrence debate for three straight hours in the House, for nothing more than for Conservatives to prevent any form of legislation coming through and being adopted by the House.

What were we supposed to talk about today? I realize we only have a few short minutes remaining in our official day today. What were we supposed to debate today? It was Bill C-18, a bill that the Conservatives, at least in their election platform, support. It is an idea that they brought forward and that they ran on. They were interested in helping independent small news organizations throughout the country when it was an election. Once they were elected but realized they were not going to form government, they suddenly no longer had an interest in advancing this objective for Canadians.

I hope that Canadians are watching this today, because they are now seeing not one but two motions introduced into the House for no reason other than to purposely obstruct the business of the House and to make sure that debate on Bill C-18 cannot continue today, which is just remarkably ironic. The irony is literally oozing through this place right now, after the member for Barrie—Innisfil just stood up and asked his deputy, “Oh, tell me more about why it is we do not have the opportunity to debate in the House. Why are they rushing through all this legislation? Tell us how important it is, deputy.”

What was his response? His response was, “Oh yes, what an incredible question the opposition House leader just had there. He hit the nail on the head. Are we not all so great?”

Do we see what is going on here? I hope that Canadians are tuned in to this today, because what we are seeing is, time after time, Conservatives obstructing any way possible to get any legislation through the House.

They are laughing right now, but we are talking about a piece of legislation that they put forward in their election platform. They ran on it, and now that it is before the House, an opportunity to pass a piece of legislation that everybody will agree on because it is in the best interest of Canadians, what are they doing? Routinely—

• (1925)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The member for Barrie—Innisfil is rising on a point of order.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, we would like a vote on the motion, and then we can get to government business after that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is a matter of debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, by the way, to the member for Barrie—Innisfil, I want to extend my best wishes to his former colleague, the Liberal candidate Jeff Lehman, who is running in Barrie in the upcoming election on Thursday. I send best wishes

to Jeff. I hope he is successful in the provincial election and that he becomes a good Liberal MPP representing the city of Barrie, providing representation that I know is so badly needed right now in Queen's Park.

To that member, I would hope that he would extend that congratulations—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, this member should know that this place is the federal Parliament for the country and not the provincial parliament for Ontario, so I think—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is not a point of order.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I guess that one stung a little. I apologize. I will get back to the subject at hand.

What is happening in the federal Parliament right now is that the House leader for the opposition is not doing his job. Because, quite frankly, the Conservatives are leaderless other than him right now, his job—

An hon. member: Thank you. I am the leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, finally the member for Barrie—Innisfil has informed Canadians that he is leading the Conservative Party of Canada. It certainly is interesting to know that because Canadians have been wondering, as have I and so many other people, but to know that the member for Barrie—Innisfil is now the de facto leader of the Conservative Party of Canada truly is eye-opening and refreshing. It certainly would explain the hostile nature of the House and the way it is deliberating.

Back to my point, the job of the House leader for the Conservative Party, the official opposition House leader, is to coordinate his MPs to make sure they play a constructive role in developing better policy for Canadians, which will impact their lives and make their lives better, and the one policy we want to talk about so much is a policy that they ran on in the last election. They ran on the supports in Bill C-18, but they were not interested in—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. There is some yelling on this side of the House and some participating when there should not be, and I would just let members know that there will be 10 minutes of questions and comments, so if they have any thoughts or questions, they can jot them down, and they will get an opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, what I was saying was that the Conservatives' job here is to help inform policy and to make policy that is better for Canadians. What do they have before them? It is not only a policy the government feels would be better for Canadians, but a policy that the Conservatives ran on, a policy that they are interested in and a policy they saw as beneficial, at least during election time. Then, they lost the election, and suddenly they are no longer interested in these policies for Canadians that they ran on.

The opposition House leader instructed his MPs to put forward a concurrence motion earlier today, which burned three hours of House time. We have spent three hours debating a concurrence motion of a report that this Parliament's ethics committee did not even produce. It did not do the research. It did not study it, and it did not create the recommendations. The Conservatives literally grabbed the report from the last Parliament and retitled it as their own in this one, then they moved a concurrence motion on it, which is rare on its own, let alone on a report that was not even from a committee in this Parliament.

After the opposition House leader did that, he asked the question earlier through the member for Calgary Shepard about more debate time and wanting more debate, notwithstanding the fact that they had already filibustered the motion we had to give them that.

Members might remember Motion No. 11. That motion was about giving the House more time to debate issues, because the Conservatives were concerned that they were not getting enough time, but then they filibustered Motion No. 11, which was to give them more time. Now, the member comes forward and moves another motion still within the motions proceedings we are in during the daily Routine Proceedings, just to kill more time.

If it is, indeed, true, and the member for Barrie—Innisfil is the de facto leader of the Conservative Party now—

An hon. member: You are the only one saying that.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, no, I am not the only one saying that. As a matter of fact, I said it earlier. I will respond to their heckles, if they want—

• (1930)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. Again, if members have questions and comments, they should wait until it is the appropriate time.

The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, the member for Kingston and the Islands fully knows well that the leader of the Conservative Party—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but that is not a point of order.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, earlier I was giving my speech in the House and I said that it appears the member from Barrie—Innisfil, the opposition House leader, is the leader of the

party. He said, "Thank you. I am the leader." He said that. I only picked up on his own words.

An hon. member: I said I was House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, was he being facetious? It is quite possible, but I would suggest that he only be serious in the House so we make sure we have all the right information.

That is what he has done here. He has now introduced another motion in an attempt to burn more time, so that we cannot debate the important issues that Canadians have. It is ironic. Now they are heckling me and asking me to stop talking, but the irony is that this is the same individual who, only moments ago, asked why we could not talk more. He said that we need to talk more and that we need more debate.

The incredibly rich hypocrisy from the member for Barrie—Innisfil and Conservatives generally speaking is absolutely breathtaking. I see the games they are playing and the manner in which they are conducting themselves, and they are not interested in anything that is their job.

When I was in an exchange in the previous debate with the member for Regina—Lewvan, he even said that they were going to keep bringing forward issue after issue in the hope that Canadians would eventually get to the point where they say they do not trust the government. That really stuck with me because it highlighted what the Conservative objective and agenda is here. It is not to do their job.

The Conservatives' job as Her Majesty's loyal opposition, as they like to call themselves, is to make—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, it is not yet time for questions and comments. I would ask members to respect the fact that there is someone else who has the floor who has been recognized. If they wish to be recognized, they can either wait for questions and comments, or wait for the next time I call for debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I say that they like to call themselves that because they want to assume the role, but they do not know how to do it. It is a pretty basics politics 101 course to figure out what the job of the opposition is. It is not to put up roadblocks and to prevent things from coming through.

There was another really interesting part that came out of the previous debate with the member for Regina—Lewvan. When I asked him if it was not his job to make policy better and said that all he was doing was putting up roadblocks to stop legislation from getting through, his response to that was that they could not let bad legislation go through. That is not how it works.

Adjournment Proceedings

They are entitled to their opinion on the legislation. They are entitled to put forward their ideas. They are entitled to try to make the legislation better, but at the end of the day, the way that democracy works is that, if the majority does not agree with them, then we move on. That is how democracy works. However, the Conservatives do not know what the role is in the House. Their role is not to be obstructionist and to put up a roadblock in front of every single issue. Their role is to come forward and to propose ideas, and to try to convince others, a majority in the House, that their idea is better, and to advance that objective.

As I said earlier, the irony here is that the issue we are talking about right now, Bill C-18, the one the government has tabled to actually discuss, the one the Conservatives keep filibustering, is an issue that they ran on in the election. It is an issue that they support. Even the issues the Conservatives support, they are refusing to let move through.

I find it extremely—

• (1935)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 7:36 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.

The hon. member will have eight minutes the next time this matter is before the House.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

ONLINE NEWS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-18, An Act respecting online communications platforms that make news content available to persons in Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is on the amendment.

[English]

Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of amendment to House]

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division or that the amendment be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. House leader of the official opposition.

[English]

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, that is correct. I am the House leader, and I request a recorded division.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, May 31, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise to follow up on a question I raised earlier this month with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety. I asked her why she had contradicted her minister on the subject of the closure of the slaughterhouse or abattoir at the Joyceville penitentiary. She made no attempt whatsoever to actually answer this question, so here we are again this evening.

Let me explain where the contradiction lies between the responses given by the parliamentary secretary and her minister. It starts with the minister's response on April 8 to a question posed by the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, who said:

...the prison farm in Joyceville, Ontario, is also the home to a provincially inspected abattoir that serves eastern Ontario farmers.... The facility operator will be retiring....

Will the Minister of Public Safety offer that licence to another operator, or will the abattoir be closed?

To which the minister responded *inter alia*, “my hon. colleague raises a specific issue with regard to licensing. We are engaging with him, and we will continue to do so.”

By contrast, the parliamentary secretary told the House this on May 18, “I have been there”, in other words, to Joyceville, “and to my knowledge, there is no slaughterhouse.”

In question period on May 20, two days later, I pointed out that the parliamentary secretary's comment, “would appear to contradict the response given on April 8...by her minister, who stated that the existing slaughterhouse would remain in operation.” At the least, it was a matter of dialogue.

I then asked the parliamentary secretary this question: “Has the parliamentary secretary just announced that the slaughterhouse has been shut down and will not be reopened?” After all, that is what she appears to be saying.

The parliamentary secretary responded to this by saying, first, that I have only just started asking questions on this issue recently; second, that the Harper government was mean-spirited on corrections issues; and third, that the rehabilitation of prisoners is good for the community. All of that is no doubt very important information, but none of this helps us to learn whether the slaughterhouse at Joyceville has shut down and will not be reopened, which was the question.

Therefore, I will ask it again, but this time I will use the words employed by my colleague from Leeds—Grenville back in April. Will the Minister of Public Safety offer the licence at the Joyceville penitentiary to another operator or will the abattoir be kept permanently closed?

● (1940)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank both you and the member opposite for the opportunity to speak about this important issue. This evening, I wish to address a few points that have been made recently in the House pertaining to the penitentiary agricultural program, commonly known as the prison farms.

To start with an issue that has been brought up a number of times, I will reiterate, first, that at this time, Correctional Service Canada does not possess any goats, and there are no contracts for the sale of goat milk.

Second, after the last exchange with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, she asked for more information on the rehabilitative nature of the employment programs run by Correctional Service Canada. She was informed that research undertaken by Correctional Service Canada, dating back to at least 2014, demonstrated rehabilitative effects and positive reintegration outcomes for offenders who participated in these programs, as they were able to develop meaningful skill sets. These findings also noted that offenders who were able to find employment in the community were less likely to reoffend. The statistics are very clear. In fact, offenders who find jobs in the community are three times less likely to return to custody for a new offence.

Third, I want to address an allegation that was raised the last time the member opposite spoke during Adjournment Proceedings. The allegation made was that CORCAN is slave labour. I want to be very clear: Offender employment programs operate under the principle of free consent and do not occur under the threat of penalty. In accordance with the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, inmates receive pay for participation in correctional, education and employment programs, which contribute to their rehabilitation and reintegration into the community. An inmate's level of pay is reviewed at least once every six months, and their pay level may be adjusted based on the ability to meet the requirements of each pay level.

I wish to advise the member opposite that throughout the pandemic, Correctional Service Canada also took steps to ensure inmates had more funds on hand to keep in touch with their loved ones. This was done by temporarily waiving food, accommodation and telephone deductions.

These operations are being implemented in accordance with applicable provincial and federal government legislation and practices, and in accordance with industry standards. Canada, as a founding and active member of the International Labour Organization, also continuously works to meet its strict obligations that pertain to prison labour.

Adjournment Proceedings

I will also address the nature of these operations. CSC continually re-evaluates its operations based on consultation with stakeholders and sustainability.

Lastly, on the issue of the abattoir, offenders who participate in the employment program through on-the-job training in any area do so voluntarily. This includes the abattoir, where inmates can choose to apply to participate in vocational training. This is not mandatory. Each time the lease is up for renewal, CSC considers the options relative to continued operation and does so regularly. It will continue to engage with appropriate community members and stakeholders.

I should remind the member that there are many farmers in his riding, in the riding of Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes and indeed in my riding who rely on this abattoir. Disrupting the operation of it will seriously impact their livelihoods.

● (1945)

Mr. Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, that is very refreshing. It is actually a substantive answer, unlike the random insults we got from the parliamentary secretary. I appreciate that. I am not sure all the information is correct, but I think the member has answered the question. It sounds like the slaughter facility will remain open. For that, I thank him.

With regard to the comments about slave labour, I have some responses made by inmates to a prisoner feedback form that was circulated. Some 56 responses were received. Inmates were asked about the for-profit model that was being considered for the prison farm. One inmate responded, "Shutting down CORCAN will also shut down federally sponsored slavery." Another one said, "They presently are slave labour for one company or another. Inmates do not want a for-profit model."

I will ask the member another question, and I appreciate the fact that he is giving me some substance here. Is it the case that a for-profit model for the prison farm is absolutely off the table?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the member that he is not to point out that he has a survey. He lifted the survey up as he was speaking. I want to remind him that he can read from the survey, but he cannot point to the survey.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, if the member cherry-picks his data and just goes after one survey response or another survey response, I am pretty sure he can get any answer that he wants. However, if he looks at those survey responses in their totality, he will see that, overwhelmingly, the program has demonstrated that it serves inmates well.

I would encourage him to watch the documentary, much of it filmed in his riding, called *Til the Cows Come Home*. It was made during the previous Conservative government and is about what they were doing to prison farms that many inmates relied on so heavily. In that documentary, he will also hear testimony from inmates who talk about the positive contribution the program gave to their rehabilitative process.

Adjournment Proceedings

HEALTH

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, for months now, my Conservative colleagues and I have risen in the House to ask the government to lift the federal mandates. Since February, the government has voted down three different opposition motions, and maybe four today, calling for a plan to end federal mandates, including just this afternoon. When I asked a question on May 5 about federal mandates and federal public servants, I was told that the government “followed advice from public health experts” and that when “circumstances change, we adjust these measures”.

I will remind members of the House that Canada’s chief public health officer was saying back in February that all existing public health measures needed to be “re-evaluated” so that we can “get back to some normalcy”. Countries such as the United Kingdom, Spain and Denmark have removed restrictions and mandates, yet here in Canada, four million Canadians are still not able to take a domestic flight, travel by train to see loved ones and just do what they please.

Canadians who are able to travel are living a nightmare with delays at border crossings and airports. Planes are sitting on runways hours on end as travellers have to deal with slow processing times due to glitches and delays with the ArriveCAN app. The Liberal government’s outdated COVID-19 protocols and continued use of this app are not only causing extreme delays and missed connections, but hurting the aviation and tourism industries, the very industries that were hit first and the hardest when the pandemic struck.

Recently, I surveyed my constituents about the ArriveCAN app and over 80% say it should not remain in use. I hear on a daily basis about how federal restrictions and mandates are causing travel delays, which are hurting businesses in my riding now and will continue to hurt businesses as people are choosing to yet again delay travel plans for not wanting to deal with airport headaches. Why is the government persisting with its political theatre, which is having severely negative impacts on the well-being of Canadians who are just trying to live their lives?

When the vaccine mandate for federal public servants was implemented, it was said there would be a review after six months. It has now been seven months and the review has not taken place. How long does a review take?

To conclude, the government has repeatedly refused to provide evidence that supports the continued enforcement of these mandates, which leads us to simply believe these are punitive and vindictive measures aimed at dividing Canadians. Why is it that Canadians can pack themselves into a sporting arena and go to restaurants, movies, live theatre and music concerts, but the very small number of unvaccinated federal public servants are still not allowed to return to work? Why are unvaccinated Canadians still not able to travel, and why is the Liberal government not able to explain why?

I will end on a very quick note. On Saturday, I attended the May Day festivities at Bradner Hall. It was the first time in three years it had the event. When I was there, like many of my constituents and people who live in the Fraser Valley, I met someone who worked at one of the federally regulated trading facilities at one of our ports. I

asked the community member if the federal government had ever imposed a vaccine mandate at a federal port. He said no, the government did not enforce its own policies at federal ports. The answer is really quite simple. The government did not impose its own mandates at federally regulated ports because it knew the impact it would have on the flow of goods in our country.

Here again is another example of the hypocrisy of the Liberal government as it relates to mandates. There is one set of rules for travellers, another set of rules for public servants and another set of rules for people working at ports. Why can the government not just lift the mandates, let people live their lives and provide some consistency? Our economy needs it and Canadians need it.

● (1950)

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are fortunate in Canada to have a world-class public service. Whether on the front lines of our communities, from a home office, from a laboratory or in many other workplaces, federal public servants across the country continue to provide Canadians with the critical services they rely on and have not wavered since the start of the pandemic. Indeed, the federal public service is an incredibly diverse workplace.

[Translation]

As the employer of the federal public service, the government is responsible for creating safe working conditions for public servants no matter where they work.

An employer has an obligation to protect its employees. That is why, as the country’s largest employer, we led by example to better protect the health and safety of public servants during the COVID-19 pandemic. That included mandatory vaccination.

[English]

Last October, we implemented a policy requiring that all public employees of the core public administration, including the RCMP, be vaccinated. This requirement applies to all employees, whether they are working remotely or working on site. It also applies to contractors who require federal access to federal government work sites.

[Translation]

Employees who have to travel to a federal workplace need assurances that every possible measure has been taken to ensure their health and safety. A fully vaccinated workforce not only makes workplaces safer, but also enhances the safety of the communities in which these public servants live and work. Vaccination also builds better protection for Canadians who access government services in person, including the most vulnerable members of our communities.

[English]

Vaccines are the best way to bring this pandemic to an end, and public servants have stepped up, with 99% of the federal core public administration attesting to being fully vaccinated. We recognize that some public servants are not able to be vaccinated, whether because of a medical contraindication, on religious grounds or on another prohibited ground of discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act. These employees can request accommodation, but this is not new.

[Translation]

Employers are required to ensure that they do not discriminate on a prohibited ground and, at the federal level, the Canadian Human Rights Act has been in effect since 1977.

Since that time, the public service has implemented robust processes to review accommodation requests, as evidenced by the Directive on the Duty to Accommodate and other instruments and guides.

Accommodations related to the vaccination policy continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the facts and circumstances that may be unique to a specific individual or workplace.

• (1955)

[English]

When it comes to a request for accommodation, managers are not making these decisions on their own. They are supported by experienced human resource professionals who receive policy guidance from the office of the chief human resources officer and are supported by legal and privacy advisers. I can assure the House that there has been no discernible impact on the government's operations or on the services Canadians receive every day.

From the beginning of the pandemic, we made a commitment to Canadians that we will protect their health and safety. We have in place measures to protect workers and our communities. As circumstances change, we will adjust these measures. We have always followed advice from our public health experts. We have committed to reviewing this policy every—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member's time is up.

The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, I have a couple of points for my rebuttal.

Adjournment Proceedings

First, the member for Hull—Aylmer mentioned that there was an obligation for federal public servants to be vaccinated if they wanted to continue working, because the government said it is the most effective way to keep people safe. However, it did not have an obligatory vaccine mandate for federal inmates, so the people it was purporting to protect still had to service a population in our federal institutions that was not vaccinated. That is hypocrisy. I know for a fact that correctional officers right now are covering their badges because they are so ashamed of the government they are working for. They are in protest about the poor services the government gave them because of the very issue I just raised.

Second, the member did not respond to my point about ports. The Government of Canada never implemented a vaccine mandate at federal ports because it knew the economic consequences that would have. It was not a public health decision at the ports; it was an economic decision.

Can the member please comment on that?

[Translation]

Hon. Greg Fergus: Madam Speaker, I would be very pleased to repeat the point I made during my speech.

[English]

The federal government has required vaccination for the entire core public administration of the federal government.

[Translation]

We believe that the most fundamental responsibility of any government is to ensure the health and safety of its citizens. As the largest employer in the country, we have an obligation to ensure that public servants work in a safe and healthy environment, whether that is in an office or service centre, at the border, at home or elsewhere. A fully vaccinated workforce results in safer workplaces and safer communities across the country.

[English]

This policy is about public health, and the overwhelming majority of public servants have stepped up and have been vaccinated. Public servants are responding to the need to make sure that Canadians are safe and healthy during the pandemic, and the government will continue to protect its employees.

HOUSING

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am rising today on adjournment proceedings to talk to the defence minister.

I asked on May 2 about the state of housing for our military on our bases and the fact that the housing shortage in Canada was so bad that in Bay of Quinte, on our air base, CFB Trenton and 8 Wing in Trenton, we have 360 families on a waiting list for housing on the base. It is a big problem.

Adjournment Proceedings

On the weekend, I took my children to see *Top Gun 2* or *Top Gun: Maverick*. It is one of the greatest movies of all time, following the first one. I will tell members, there is no secret, it was really good. It is a story about the military in the U.S. and naval aviators. For me, it was very nostalgic but also a great movie to talk about the military in general. My kids absolutely felt the need for speed.

Who is not feeling the need for speed right now are military members who are waiting for housing. Right now, in Canada, we have about 8,000 military families waiting for housing on their bases.

Just to talk about how important that is, it is not only members of the military. We talk about military families and how important they are. It is also their wingmen: their spouses. The spouses, a lot of times, are finding that if they cannot find jobs, or if they are unable to fit in with the community, they also cannot find homes. What we are finding, when it comes to the military, is that we are having trouble attracting and retaining talent, and it is really a ballistic housing crisis that is forcing these people into a sorry state.

Let me just tell members that when it comes to our military, we have to look after our men and women first and foremost. We have to ensure that not only do we have good pay and good benefits for military members, but we have to also really look after the backs of the people who look after us abroad. Housing is paramount.

I know that in budget 2022, there was \$8 billion slated for military spending. My specific question is this. There is \$15 billion that is uncosted so far. How much of that \$15 billion, not just the \$8 billion, is going into housing on bases?

Really, when it comes to those families and the bases, and I have talked at length to our colonels and some of the generals for our military, the first priority is families and to ensure that when they are posted to a base, they have a slot.

The buildings are called PMQs that house families on bases. They can be for multiple families and they can be for single families. We are finding right now that because of the shortage of homes, families who have several children are being forced into single PMQs. We are finding that state to be a big problem. Additionally, because of the lack of housing, we are finding it hard to attract talent to our air bases.

Right now in Canada, we are short 10,000 military members for our Canadian Armed Forces. That is for members and reservists. The housing crisis is also having a detrimental effect on attracting those key personnel. People are choosing not to go to certain areas if they cannot afford the homes there. If people sell a home at CFB Cold Lake and move to CFB Trenton, or if they are going to Pembroke or some other base, that house they sold is maybe about \$400,000 or \$500,000, but they have to then afford close to \$1 million to get a house on that next base. A lot of families are saying that it is just not possible for them to do that.

The answer is going to be putting money that we had for planes into people. That means ensuring that we have money that goes into that base.

As the saying goes, there are no points for second place, so for—

• (2000)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence.

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, military members and their families are our top priority and we are taking steps to ensure that they are in fact supported. We know many Canadians are deeply concerned about housing, and in many ways a life in the Canadian Armed Forces amplifies this issue.

CAF members move frequently, and when they are posted to a place where housing is more expensive, it can be extremely challenging for them and their families. This is why the Department of National Defence is improving access to housing for our members.

In 2021-22, we began allocating \$40 million per year for 10 years to be invested in the DND residential housing program. Starting in 2022-23, DND has allocated an additional \$15 million per year for three years. This means that in 2022-23, we will be investing \$55 million in residential housing for CAF members.

This includes renovation projects to ensure the existing 11,540 housing units are functional and suitable. Some of this funding will go toward constructing new housing units at bases and wings over the next several years. In addition to improving housing access to members, the Canadian Armed Forces is offering them a number of benefits for relocation anywhere in Canada, including reimbursing legal fees and real estate fees.

If members who have to move encounter challenges selling their old houses or finding new ones, or their family needs more time to adjust, a CAF member can proceed unaccompanied to the new location and lodging will be paid for up to six months, or longer if authorized by the CAF. If the residence cannot be sold, the CAF will also cover some expenses for dual residences up to six months.

Most importantly, we are listening to our members and their families. The CAF is conducting surveys continuously during the active posting season to gather feedback on how the relocation experience can be improved.

Through budget 2022, the Department of National Defence also announced an increase of \$8 billion in funding over five years for the Canadian Armed Forces on top of our planned SSE investments, and we are updating our defence policy to ensure it continues to be relevant in the evolving defence and security environment.

In February 2021, we increased military members' rates of pay to ensure alignment with the increase received by the federal public service. In addition, to ensure the post living differential allowance effectively supports CAF members and their families and addresses affordability concerns, the Department of National Defence is reviewing that policy.

We will always seek to support the people who choose to serve their country with a robust compensation and benefits framework. As part of the CAF reconstitution plan, we are making sure that we are doing everything we can to take care of our people. This involves rebuilding the CAF's effective strength, transforming defence team culture and emphasizing the physical and mental well-being of our people.

For example, through national initiatives like Seamless Canada, we are making sure CAF members and their families are not facing the challenges that come with posting out of province or territory alone. Supporting our families is central to having a strong, healthy and modern military. We are continually exploring ways to ensure CAF members and their families have what they need to live in uniform.

• (2005)

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, those are great promises but we are not delivering. On May 5, there was an email passed around from a senior officer at a base north of Vancouver letting family members of military know that Habitat for Humanity was an option for those family members looking for housing. How bad is it that the military is offering Habitat for Humanity housing? That should be going to families that need actual housing. Our military members are being forced into that scenario.

At the end of the day, it is great that we have committed. I will admit that for CFB Trenton, there was an announcement two weeks ago for some money to build 60 new homes of the 360 we need, so that is great. That is committed money. We have had that from the government. We need action.

I am going to ask again. I know we have the funding announcement. On what date are shovels going to be in the ground to build those homes committed from the budget? Is that going to be done by the end of 2022?

Mr. Bryan May: Madam Speaker, affordable housing is at the top of many Canadians' minds, and we recognize this includes Canadian Armed Forces members. That is why we have committed to constructing more housing units for CAF members, and why there are services and benefits in place to assist personnel as they relocate.

In order to meet increased operational requirements for military housing, the Department of National Defence is working with stakeholders to align resources and acquire additional housing. The CAF is continually looking at ways to improve compensation, benefits, policies, practices and services so that we are compassionate and responsive to the needs of our members and their families.

People are at the core of our military. It is important that they have the support they need so that they can best defend Canadians at home and uphold peace around the globe. We are not only ensuring operational effectiveness this way, but we are also ensuring that

CAF offers an appealing career path to help us retain the best and brightest personnel in service to Canada.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 81(4), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been withdrawn. The House will now resolve itself into a committee of the whole to study all votes under the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND OCEANS—MAIN ESTIMATES 2022-23

(House in committee of the whole to consider all votes under Department of Fisheries and Oceans in the main estimates, Mrs. Carol Hughes in the chair)

The Deputy Chair: The House will now resolve itself into committee of the whole to study all votes under Department of Fisheries and Oceans in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

[English]

Today's debate is a general one on all votes under the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The first round will begin with the official opposition, followed by the government, the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party. After that, we will follow the usual proportional rotation.

[Translation]

Each member will be allocated 15 minutes at a time, which may be used for both debate or for posing questions. Members wishing to use this time to make a speech have a maximum of 10 minutes, which leaves at least 5 minutes for questions to the minister. When a member is recognized, he or she should indicate to the Chair how the 15-minute period will be used, in other words, how much time will be spent on the speech and how much time will be used for questions and answers.

Also, pursuant to order made earlier today, members who wish to share their time with another member shall indicate this to the Chair. The Chair will receive no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent. When the time is to be used for questions and comments, the minister's response should reflect approximately the time taken to pose the question, since this time will be counted in the time originally allotted to the member.

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● (2010)

[English]

Pursuant to order made Thursday, May 19, 2022, the time provided for the debate tonight may be extended beyond four hours as needed to include a minimum of 16 periods of 15 minutes each. I also wish to indicate that in committee of the whole comments should be addressed to the Chair. I ask for everyone's co-operation in upholding all established standards of decorum, parliamentary language and behaviour.

We will now begin tonight's debate.

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

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Chair, who makes the final decisions at DFO?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Chair, I make the decisions.

Mr. Rick Perkins: In January, at the FFAW, you said that your goal was to leave as many fish in the ocean as possible, and—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member has to address all questions to the Chair and not directly to the minister.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, in January, the minister said at the FFAW that she would leave as many fish in the ocean as possible, that was her goal, and to grow as many plants as possible, and that fishermen could find another job.

Could the minister please inform this House what job she was speaking of?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I think that is a complete misconstrual of what I said. What I have said is that my goal is grow the seafood and fish industry, and for that we need to have abundant stock.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, DFO executive-level positions have increased 158%, rising from 65 to 173 during the time of this government. What could possibly justify that excessive growth?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, this is a department that manages a great number and complexity of issues, as well as conflicts among different stakeholders, and I am very proud of the work that my officials and the leaders do in this department.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, in 2019-20, the department met 56.3% of its goals and paid out \$4.6 million in bonuses to its staff. That is 94.7% of the staff receiving a bonus for 56% performance. In 2020-21, the department met only 57% of its targets. Is that what this 158% growth of executives was done to manage?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I think the member is asking questions about previous years. I was appointed in 2021, and I have had excellent service from the leaders of the department.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, in 2021 the achievement was 57% under this minister's leadership. Was that success?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I do find this line of questioning a bit rich, when the previous government cut the department's budget significantly.

Mr. Rick Perkins: You are responsible for the department, not previous governments, minister—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member has to address all questions and comments through the Chair.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, under the current government, the science budget for the fisheries side of DFO, which is the side that deals with stock management, has declined by 3%, while the environmental ocean side has seen its science budget increase by 65%

Is this why 80% of stocks in the critical zone do not have a recovery plan?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, we are working on recovery plans for all stocks under the precautionary principle, and the department is committed to restoring the abundance, viability and diversity of stocks so that we can have a strong fish and seafood industry.

● (2015)

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, 80% without a plan is not a strong performance.

Is the minister going to cut the southwest Nova Scotia herring quota by 63%?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, we have not made decisions on the stock mentioned by the member. When I have the science and we can—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, when will this announcement be made? The season is about to start.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, could the member please repeat that question?

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, when will this announcement be made, since the season is about to start?

The Deputy Chair: I am not sure if we heard it correctly, because there was a problem with the sound. I am sorry; I will not dock the member that time.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, I would like to ask the minister when this decision will be made with regard to herring quota, since the season is about to start.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, the decision will be made when the science has been assessed and the decision options have come to me. I will make that decision.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, has the minister read the Supreme Court's Donald Marshall decisions I and II?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, yes, I have.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, if so, then the minister knows that as it says in the government's mandate letters, this is the most important relationship. Can the minister tell the House whether the Marshall decision applies to Canada or just to Atlantic Canada?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, the Marshall decision was respecting the Mi'kmaq community in Atlantic Canada, and it was based on a peace and friendship treaty signed—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, Marshall I states that the indigenous right to participate in the unregulated fishery of 1761 is a right to participate in the regulated fishery of today. Why, then, for at least the last three years, has the DFO allowed out-of-season lobster fishing in southwest Nova Scotia?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I am not clear which fishery the member is referring to. The Supreme Court ruling was that the Mi'kmaq communities have a right to moderate livelihood fisheries and food, social and ceremonial fisheries.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, it was the lobster fishery in southwest Nova Scotia. They were fishing out of season in the summer. Will that happen again this summer?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, many of the indigenous people are doing FSC fisheries, which they are entitled to do.

We do have enforcement personnel for—

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, former DFO and CMP officers testified at the House of Commons fisheries committee that 90% of the FSC fishery in southwest Nova Scotia is an illegal commercial fishery. Why does the minister continue to allow that to happen?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, no illegal fishing is acceptable, and we are working with the provinces and the RCMP to ensure that compliance enforcement is in place.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, why did DFO instruct CMP officials during the lobster crisis, and the year after, to not go on the water and just observe if they were enforcing the law?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, keeping the peace is also part of our responsibilities, so it is not in anyone's interest for there to be conflict.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, CMP does not enforce the law under this minister.

Bill C-68 in the last Parliament amended the Fisheries Act to say that all DFO agreements needed to be published in the Canada Gazette before they are signed. Is the minister aware of this?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, could the member clarify what he is asking a question on?

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, do I get more time, since she wants clarification?

The Deputy Chair: No, it just keeps going.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, Bill C-68, a bill passed in the last Parliament, requires the government to publish any agreement in the Canada Gazette before it is signed. Are you aware of that?

The Deputy Chair: Are you aware of that?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I am.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, the government has not published in the Canada Gazette the three rights and reconciliation agreements, either before or after they were signed. The government has had three years to do this. The government refuses to re-

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lease these agreements. Why is this minister ignoring the Fisheries Act and breaking the law? What are you hiding?

The Deputy Chair: Again, I want to remind the member to address all questions and comments to the Chair. He may try to not use the word “you”.

The hon. minister.

● (2020)

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, gazetting is not required for rights and reconciliation agreements.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, there is no exception in the law in the section of the Fisheries Act. It does not say that indigenous agreements are not published; it says that all the agreements the government signs have to be published in the Canada Gazette. Why is the minister ignoring the law?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, RRAs are not subject to that.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, the minister needs to get new lawyers, I believe.

The DFO human resources department has grown by 66% under this government, with 833 full-time equivalent employees alone. With not enough science on the fisheries side, why would DFO increase employees in the department by 66%?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I can say that we at DFO are very committed to equity and inclusion measures. We want to make sure that our workplace is safe for all of our employees and that it is inclusive, so that probably means more—

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, do temporary moderate licence-holders for lobster agree not to fish out of season?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I did not catch the question. Could he repeat it?

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, do temporary, moderate-livelihood licences for lobster have a condition that requires them not to fish out of season?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, yes, they do.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, at the parliamentary committee the deputy minister said that they do not. Who is right, the deputy minister or the minister?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I will stick with the answer I gave.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, Nova Scotia first nations now hold more than 10% of all licences but represent only 2.9% of the population. What percentage of licences need to be held by first nations to satisfy the Marshall decision?

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Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, the Marshall agreement does not set a limit, so when nations come forward and request to have access to a moderate livelihood fishery in a particular fishery, we, on a—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, the Chrétien government created the Marshall response initiative and spent more than \$600 million buying licences for boats and first nations. Did this not satisfy the Marshall Supreme Court decision?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, we will continue to work to satisfy the Supreme Court decision.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, if the Marshall response initiative did not satisfy the Marshall decision, then why did Prime Minister Chrétien call it the Marshall response initiative?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I will just go back to the fact that relations with indigenous Canadians and reconciliation are of a high priority.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, how many prosecutions have occurred from DFO investigations for out-of-season fishing in the Maritimes?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, we can get that detail—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, when the minister makes a decision to reduce the allowable catch of a species, as the minister has done recently in several cases, does she consider science in the decision-making process?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, yes, I do consider science. It is the foundation.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, in considering the science, does the minister ask questions about the science?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, yes, I do, with great interest.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, the minister recently decided to shut down the commercial Atlantic mackerel fishery. Two primary sources of science used by DFO to understand the science are stock catch data and spawning biomass.

Can the minister tell us what temperature the water in the gulf needs to be for Atlantic mackerel to spawn?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, what I can tell the member is that this stock had been in the critical zone and the stock numbers had been declining for a number of years. By putting a hold on it, I am aiming that we increase the abundance.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, the minister does not know the answer to that question. The water needs to be between 10° to 13°.

Can the minister tell us what the average temperature has been over the last decade when DFO does its spawning science for Atlantic mackerel?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, what I can tell the member is that the department is very committed to doing the science about mackerel, which happens every two years. We follow that closely.

• (2025)

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, I guess this is why the department is failing in its targets. Eight degrees is the answer. It is 8° when DFO does its science on spawning biomass, when mackerel only spawn in waters of 10° to 13°.

Is the minister surprised to learn that the science that is being presented to her presents a picture of a low spawning biomass when DFO does its science because mackerel are not spawning?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I really appreciate the member's recognition of the importance of science and his keen interest in the science of mackerel allocations.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, wow. I guess the minister knows a lot about the science when she shuts down a fishery.

Has the Minister read the 2005 Supreme Court decisions known as the Bernard and the Stephen Marshall cases?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, no, I have not.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, I am surprised. The Marshall decision narrows the definition of the right to hunt, fish and gather. Can the minister tell members how the decision did that?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, what I do know is that indigenous communities have been left out of fisheries for many decades, if not generations, so I am proud to be—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Chair, Chief Justice McLachlin stated in the Stephen Marshall case that the right to hunt, fish and gather is limited to the things that first nations hunted, fished and gathered in 1761 when the treaty was signed.

Since the minister did not know that, can the minister explain to me why the minister decided to expropriate 14% of the commercial elver quota—

The Deputy Chair: I will allow the hon. minister to respond. There are only two seconds left.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I am pleased to have been able to provide moderate lively fishery in the elver fishery for those who were asking for it. With the co-operation of the non-indigenous harvesters, we were able to utilize the—

The Deputy Chair: Unfortunately, the time is up.

Resuming debate, the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

[Translation]

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Chair, it is my pleasure to rise in committee of the whole to present the items in the 2022-23 main estimates for Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard.

[English]

Today I am seeking \$3.98 billion in planned spending. This amount represents a decrease of \$396.2 million in total planned spending compared to the previous fiscal year. This variance in spending is attributed to a combination of factors, including the evolution of existing programs and the completion of other initiatives, as well as some recently introduced programs.

To be more specific, these main estimates include an increase of \$589.8 million that is earmarked for a number of key initiatives. This includes \$176.7 million in new funding for the Pacific salmon strategy initiative; \$149.5 million in new funding for the small craft harbours program; \$126 million in new funding related to marine conservation targets; \$40.1 million to help conserve Canada's lands and fresh water, protect species, advance indigenous reconciliation and increase access to nature; and an additional \$97.5 million for other initiatives.

It is important to note that these increases have been offset by \$986 million in spending decreases in other program areas. This includes a number of planned funding profile changes related to indigenous programs, the five-year oceans protection plan, the department's response to the Big Bar landslide, Canadian Coast Guard fleet projects, the Trans Mountain expansion project, as well as other select programs.

This \$986 million in spending decreases also includes \$140 million in savings, which is attributed to a program that supported self-employed Canadian fish harvesters who were impacted by COVID-19. The original intent of this program was to provide immediate financial assistance to harvesters affected by the pandemic so their operations could begin or continue during the 2020-21 fishing season. Now that this program has met its intended objectives, we are in the process of drawing it to a close.

I want to take this opportunity to address one of the key reductions in planned spending for the 2022-23 year compared to the previous fiscal year. I am referring to the \$468.4-million decrease in planned spending on some indigenous programs within my portfolio. It is important to note that this type of planned spending varies each year based on the status of ongoing negotiations and other influences. The main factor underlying this year-over-year change is related to the successful ratification of significant reconciliation funding agreements in 2021-22.

To be more specific, my department transferred approximately \$300 million to indigenous groups to support their fisheries access, vessels and gear, as well as collaborative governance. Of this funding, \$290 million represents one-time payments. As members know, my department plays a central role in advancing reconciliation with indigenous peoples, and I am very proud of the progress we have made to date, while acknowledging we still have much

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work to do together. As we chart a fair and equitable path forward, DFO will continue to negotiate and implement fisheries reconciliation agreements and treaty-related measures to advance reconciliation through the fisheries.

I want my hon. colleagues to know I am committed to working with indigenous partners across Canada to find mutually acceptable outcomes on a broad range of files related to fisheries and aquaculture, oceans planning and conservation, habitat protection and restoration, scientific research, and marine safety and environmental protection. By working together toward shared goals, I am confident we can better manage our ocean and marine resources in ways that are collaborative and respectful of indigenous values and communities, as well as their treaty and cultural rights and their aspirations.

I also want to take a few minutes to talk about the Pacific salmon strategy initiative, which will receive \$176.7 million in additional funding through these main estimates. Pacific salmon are some of the most iconic species in Canada. They hold immense social, cultural and economic significance for many coastal and inland communities throughout British Columbia and the Yukon, but unfortunately these stocks are also facing serious and unprecedented challenges and declines as a result of a number of complex risk factors.

Urgent and coordinated action is necessary to not only protect and stabilize Pacific salmon stocks, but also to help them recover. That is why budget 2021 set aside \$647.1 million over five years, plus \$98.9 million in amortization to preserve and rebuild Pacific salmon stocks. This historic investment is being used to conduct research, open new hatcheries, restore habitat, launch the Pacific salmon secretariat and the habitat restoration centre of expertise, and engage with first nations and fish harvesters on the west coast.

● (2030)

[Translation]

To reverse the decline of Pacific salmon stocks, additional funds from the main estimates will be used to advance the Pacific salmon strategy initiative and support ongoing efforts and activities with our many partners.

Before I conclude, I would like to highlight some of the investments in budget 2022 that will help Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard fulfill their mandate.

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Chapter 3 of the budget includes a section called “Protecting Our Lands, Lakes, and Oceans”, which includes dedicated funding for my department. Most notably, it sets aside \$1.1 billion over nine years and \$74.5 million in ongoing funding to renew the oceans protection plan.

Additional funding is earmarked for a zero plastic waste initiative, of which my department will receive \$41.1 million over five years to help reduce plastic pollution in the marine environment. This includes \$10 million for the ghost gear program so our partners on the water can continue removing lost, abandoned and discarded fishing gear from our oceans to keep fishing ongoing. It will also go toward testing new and innovative fishing gear to help reduce gear loss.

Finally, budget 2022 provides \$44.9 million over five years, beginning in 2022-23, and \$9 million in ongoing funding for my department to meet Canada's commitments to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. In April, our colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services and the member of Parliament for Niagara Centre, who has worked very hard on this matter, made this announcement and can attest to the fact that it was very much welcomed news indeed.

I am confident the funding outlined in these main estimates, coupled with the investments contained in budget 2022 and budget 2021, will help my department implement the initiatives I have just highlighted and fulfill our broader mandate on behalf of the Canadians we are so proud to serve.

• (2035)

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Chair, it is great to be here in the committee of the whole.

Fishing is the lifeblood of our rural coastal communities from coast to coast to coast. It is the main driver of local economies. Whether it is bait, gear or simply grabbing a coffee on the way to wharf, it drives jobs directly and indirectly.

I have been on the wharves in every area of my riding of Cape Breton—Canso, chatting with the hard-working fishers, whether it is in Whitehead, Baxters Cove, Chéticamp, Glace Bay Harbour, Grand Étang and all points in between. People like Jetty Boudreau, Lauchie MacKinnon, Herb Nash, Bobby Trucker, Gord McKinnon, Carla Samson, Leonard Leblanc, and the many fishers in the three first nation communities that I serve in Potlotek, Paqtnekek and We'koqma'q, understand the need to pass the knowledge on to future generations and know how to preserve the species for the future.

I am always impressed by how much homegrown innovation comes directly from all of our rural communities. I think of a company in my riding, Louisbourg Seafoods, through whose constant and progressive innovation is able to provide hundreds of rural jobs to Canadians, which are steady and predictable employment for its staff, their families and the communities that I serve and that we serve.

With that in mind, can the minister please speak to her experiences as minister with the hard-working folks of this industry, and in particular her vision, her vision to continue to support rural coastal economies, but in particular the blue economy?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, as the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, my role is to support and grow the fish and seafood sector. To do that we need to have abundant and vibrant fisheries. In DFO, we are thinking every day about how we can make sure we have the science, the partnerships and the discussions with all of those affected, whether it is the harvesters or the indigenous communities, so we can allocate out fisheries in a way that is supportive of the communities, the fish processing sector and our very important seafood sector, and to do it in a way that builds on the health and abundance of our fisheries even as we protect and restore the abundance of those that are challenged.

There are many hard-working people in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. This is the work that they get up excited to do every day on behalf of the Canadians who live in the small and rural communities and work in the fish plants, on the ships at sea and on the wharves, so I want to use this opportunity to thank not just my officials, but also those who do this very hard work out on the oceans and in the fish plants.

Mr. Mike Kelloway: Madam Chair, I spoke of the Atlantic coast and I spoke, in the last question, of coast to coast to coast, but I would like to speak a little bit about, and the question will be on, the Great Lakes.

Among my colleagues in the House and at committee, I've been reminded and actually learned a lot about the importance of the Great Lakes and, more specifically, the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission. As the member for Niagara Centre has reminded me, the economic, environmental and socio-cultural significance of the Great Lakes is extremely profound.

The Great Lakes contain 20% of the planet's fresh surface water, and they are the basis of billions of dollars of economic activity. They are essential to the well-being of communities on both sides of the border. Ecologically, they support numerous species, providing drinking water for many and supporting thousands of jobs.

The Great Lakes Fisheries Commission was established by the Great Lakes Fisheries Convention of 1954 between the United States of America and Canada, for the purpose of protecting and supporting the Great Lakes fisheries, particularly to control the invasive sea lamprey; to conduct scientific research that was needed; and to ensure the management overall of the Great Lakes fisheries.

Could the minister speak to the important investments we are making in the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission and how we are supporting the binational partnerships with the United States of America?

• (2040)

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, we are privileged, as Canadians, to live in a country that has the Great Lakes area as part of our country. We share the Great Lakes with the United States. The Great Lakes have almost 20% of all the fresh water on this planet, so this is an amazing resource. The Great Lakes are critical in so many ways, for providing fresh water to citizens, for providing recreation, whether it is boating, swimming, paddling and even hunting and fishing. The Great Lakes are also a huge source of economic value. The wine region, the Niagara wine region, is so successful because of the microclimate around the Great Lakes.

One of the challenges with the Great Lakes, of course, is that there are some invasive species that do not belong there, that have proliferated and that need to be addressed. A primary one is the sea lamprey. The Great Lakes Fisheries Commission is a collaboration between the United States and Canada. We have a formal treaty between the Department of State and Global Affairs Canada to—

The Deputy Chair: The time is up.

Continuing with debate, we have the hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Chair, I am pleased to speak this evening.

On March 30, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard closed the herring and mackerel fishery in the Gulf of St. Lawrence with no prior notice that would have enabled fishers to pivot and come up with a plan B.

When did the department first observe a drop in the biomass of spring herring and mackerel?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Chair, unfortunately, the abundance of these stocks has been on the decline for many years. This decision was not made lightly. We gave it a lot of thought, because I understand the repercussions it has on fishers who use these stocks as bait.

However, it is very important that we manage these stocks so that they can grow for fishers, their children, and their grandchildren in the future.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Chair, a leading scientist at the Université du Québec à Rimouski told us that he observed a significant decline in the resource more than 10 years ago, even 20 years in some places. Why did no one sound the alarm sooner to provide a bit of clarity to the fishers, who are currently feeling helpless?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I would like to thank my colleague for her question.

We reduced this stock over the past 10 years. It went down little by little, but unfortunately, it was not enough to allow them to grow. That is why I closed—

• (2045)

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

Business of Supply

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Chair, how is it that no one in the department had the foresight to assist fishermen, knowing that the resource is in decline? How is it possible that no one had the foresight to consider the people in this equation?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I would like to thank my colleague for her question.

Many fishermen harvest other healthy stocks, such as lobster. Very few of them fish only herring and mackerel. We helped them by including them in the scientific fisheries to—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Chair, I would like to know whether the minister believes that just closing the fishery is enough to restore the stocks, since the mortality rate from fishing for this species is about 6%.

I am wondering whether she believes that closing the fishery will be enough to restore the resource.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for her question.

This fish is a food source for other very important stocks, such as cod. I realize that fishing is partially responsible for some of the pressure on this stock, but it depends on the stock. If we can increase it, and I hope we can, we will—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Chair, did the minister receive the unanimous motion tabled on April 7 by the Quebec National Assembly calling for compensation for the financial losses incurred by fishers affected by the closing of the fishery?

Is the minister aware of that unanimous motion from the Quebec National Assembly?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, yes, I am aware of that motion. We are currently reviewing it.

At the same time, there are stocks all across the country that sometimes have to be reduced or increased. A decision is usually—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Chair, will the minister respond to the motion adopted by the Quebec National Assembly?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, we will review it and will, of course, respond.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Chair, it is quite surprising that the government has not already done so. Could the minister give an idea of the timeline? When does she plan to assess how much compensation should be paid to these fishers who are facing a black hole, who no longer have EI, who are waiting in limbo and whose families are running out of resources and money?

Business of Supply

Some fishers and families are in dire straits. It is not true that all fishers also fish lobster. Many fishers in the Gaspé earn their living solely from herring and mackerel. I would like to know whether she plans to do something quickly.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, no, there is no timeline.

We are very concerned about people who are losing their jobs because of the decline in the fisheries. I know that it is very difficult, but Fisheries and Oceans Canada generally does not compensate all fishers when there is a decline, nor does it claw back money when there is an increase. We are looking into this and will respond.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Chair, it is very interesting to hear the minister talk about a plan that may come to fruition in the medium term.

It is a bit like agriculture. Because the climate for agriculture is unpredictable, there are all sorts of tools for overcoming certain difficulties, such as those caused by climate change.

Could the minister come up with some kind of aid, such as compensation, quota transfers or emergency funds, and finally offer a plan to help fishers who are victims of sudden and unexpected decisions made by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans?

• (2050)

[English]

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I would like to mention the fish harvester benefit that was made available by our government when there were concerns due to COVID that the fishers may not be able to go out and earn their living on the oceans. Close to \$150 million was paid out to fish harvesters who were self-employed and did not have access to other benefits. In a situation like that, we stood up a program very quickly, and I know that fish harvesters appreciated that. When there are reductions in stock and—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Chair, at a parliamentary committee at the National Assembly of Quebec, Quebec's department of agriculture, fisheries and food revealed that DFO and its minister did not notify the Quebec government before suspending the mackerel and herring fishery, even though they are supposed to. We in Quebec would like to know why.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, we discussed this at the Atlantic Mackerel Advisory Committee with all the partners involved in the file.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Chair, we will stick to small fish. It will do me good to speak about something other than capelin, but I will come back to that.

What statistics did the department use to make its decision to suspend mackerel and herring fishing? Does the department have data from fishers outside Quebec? The fishers in the pelagic fishery in Gaspé say they are pretty much the only ones to report their catches. What does the minister think of the fishers' statement?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I would like to say that I understand just how difficult the fishers' job is. I worked outdoors as a tree planter year after year, come rain or come snow. I under-

stand very well just how difficult the work is, and I always think of those who do this incredibly difficult but important work.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Chair, I will repeat my question. What data did the DFO use to make this decision? Did they use the figures provided by fishers in the Gaspé pelagic fishery, who stated that they are the only ones to report their catches? Did the department use those figures when it decided to close the fishery this year?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, the decision was based on research conducted by the department.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Chair, what are the minister's thoughts on the public statement by her colleague, the Minister of National Revenue and member for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, who, on April 12, told a local Gaspé media outlet I will not name that she condemned the closure, which she even called unacceptable?

Who is right: the minister or her colleague from Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I just want to say I too feel that disappointment when I have to close a fishery, but it is for the long-term good of fishers, communities and fish stocks.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Chair, does Fisheries and Oceans Canada's science branch include sociologists and economists who participate in the decision-making process?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, yes, several experts discussed these decisions.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Chair, are they sociologists, economists or essentially scientists who are more specialized in biodiversity?

• (2055)

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, there is a wide range of experts and it depends on the situation, the fish stocks and what data needs to be collected.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Chair, in closing on this subject, what can the fishers hope for as they listen to us today from the Gaspé knowing they have no more work? Given that the fishers who depend on the herring and mackerel fisheries will have nothing to eat tomorrow, what can they hope for from the minister and her department as we speak in the House right now?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, we have Service Canada programs and the provinces have programs to help people who are facing hardship. We will always try to create opportunities for fishers, but we cannot do that—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Business of Supply

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Chair, what role does local knowledge play in the decisions made by Fisheries and Oceans Canada? Is there a place in all this for the local people, the fishers, their views and their observations? They are the ones out there doing the work.

What role does the minister think this local knowledge plays?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, we have advisory committees for each fishery, and we always listen to fishers and people who have information about the fisheries.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Chair, my last question has to do with capelin.

I had to intervene seven times. I had to reach out seven times to make the department listen to two small-scale capelin weir fishers and understand that they were not negatively affecting the resource, even though the fishers themselves had sent numerous letters and emails without ever receiving a response.

Their MP had to intervene seven times to get the suspension lifted at the end of the month.

Can the minister explain why the department is not doing more to listen to people on the ground when it matters?

[English]

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I am happy to say we heard the member of Parliament and we took action. We had a discussion with all of the stakeholders on the capelin fishery. That fishery started five days ahead of planned, and we are now considering the April 1 opening date that the member and the two weir fishers have requested. I think the department and I have been very responsive, and I am happy to have done that.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Chair, I cannot help but feel deeply concerned about the lack of vision and new commitments in this year's budget to protect the marine ecosystems and to support communities that rely on our fishing industry. We need real leadership and bold action, and I cannot see that in this year's budget.

I would like to use my time today to ask the minister questions. Wild Pacific salmon are a fundamental part of our ecosystems on the west coast. Wild salmon populations have declined by 70% over the last century in B.C. Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have failed this vital species.

It has been over a year since the government announced its Pacific salmon strategy initiative. Beyond long-term fishing closures, the government has been silent about how it is helping the salmon populations. Wild Pacific salmon are facing a crisis. Can the minister confirm how much of the \$35 million budgeted last year for the PSSSI was spent?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Chair, we actually have \$176.7 million this year for the Pacific salmon strategy initiative, to do the very important work of restoration, conservation and stewardship, and harvest transformation, as well as standing up some organizations that will focus on wild Pacific salmon on the coast.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, why should Canadians be confident that this funding will be spent if fundamental parts of the program still have not been established after an entire year of this program being implemented?

• (2100)

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I would say that I am as anxious as the member is that we take action to restore wild Pacific salmon. I will say that there are some—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, could the minister confirm how many projects have been initiated under the conservation and stewardship pillar of the PSSSI since it was launched last year?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, it is very important for us to do this collaboratively, which means consulting with all of the partners and moving forward together. That is just what we are doing. We are engaged in that.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, could the minister please clarify how many projects have been initiated under the salmon enhancement pillar of the PSSSI since it launched over a year ago?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, we could get the exact numbers to the member, but I can say that work has started. We have been funding, through the SRIF program, everything from science to restoration work. That work is ongoing.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, it will achieve its goals through collaboration across government, partners, stakeholders and interested parties. Dr. Brian Riddell of the Pacific Salmon Foundation said he has not been able to participate in any consultations around the PSSSI.

Ms. Charlotte Whitney from the Central Coast Indigenous Resource Alliance indicated that the department has provided no information about how the program would be implemented alongside first nations research and traditional knowledge.

When will Canadians see any forward movement from this program if DFO is not ready to consult with key scientific institutions such as the Pacific Salmon Foundation?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I would say that most organizations always would like more in consultation. I think that is just the case.

We do consult with a whole range of organizations, and certainly I was happy to announce a whole lot of money for new science of understanding the salmon runs with the Pacific salmon initiative just a few months ago.

Business of Supply

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, does the minister agree that the department is doing enough to consult with first nations when DFO still has not shared with indigenous communities where their knowledge and expertise will fit within the PSSI?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, consulting with stakeholders is at the foundation of what we do at DFO, because we know we get better results that way. We are consulting with first nations.

We have briefed Dr. Riddell from the Pacific Salmon Foundation—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, based on the lack of real action to implement the PSSI, will this be another lost year for wild Pacific salmon and habitat restoration efforts?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, this will be a very active and productive year on behalf of our wild Pacific salmon, just as it should be.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, there are many factors contributing to the decline of wild salmon, but it is indisputable that open-net salmon farming is having a detrimental impact on our wild salmon.

The government has promised to take action in its past three mandate letters. Why are we not seeing real funding being committed in this year's budget?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, we are working on a responsible plan to transition away from open net-pen salmon aquaculture. I have had many consultations with indigenous communities, with industry and with environmental organizations. We need to do this in a responsible—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, does the minister agree that the fact that DFO is still reviewing applications for expansion to aquaculture facilities raises serious doubts about the government's commitment to remove open-net fish farms from B.C. waters?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, what I will say is that we are utterly committed to developing a responsible plan to transition away from open net-pen salmon aquaculture in British Columbia. We need to do that because we—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, across B.C. fish farm licences are up for renewal at the end of June. Will the minister's decision on these licences coincide with a clear plan about how the government will meet the promises of removing these facilities from B.C.'s waters by 2025?

• (2105)

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, we will do a responsible set of consultations as we develop the plan. People deserve no less.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, is the government committed to having meaningful transition supports available to indigenous and rural workers who will be impacted by the removal of fish farms from B.C.'s waters?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, the plan is under development and the plan will consider what kinds of mitigation measures are appropriate.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, I am hearing from first nations that are worried about this transition taking place without a robust consultation and the resources they need to support their communities.

Can the minister point to concrete steps that the government has taken to fund a just transition for these communities, and if there are none, when will we see them?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I just want to reinforce that we are still in the process of developing a plan so it is not clear what, if any, just transition will be necessary. We are in the process of consulting with all potentially affected stakeholders so that we can develop a responsible plan, and that is what we will do.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, last year's Oceana Fishery Audit highlighted that one-third of all of Canada's fish stocks remained uncertain due to insufficient data.

When will DFO ensure that all of Canada's stocks have sufficient assessments completed?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, that is an important priority for us and we are working on developing a precautionary principle-based approach to all of our stocks, and many of them have been completed.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, the government has recognized that plastics pose a significant threat to our oceans, as mentioned in the minister's intervention.

Can the minister commit that polystyrene products will be included as pollutants in the oceans protection plan?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I did not catch the word that the member was asking about. Which product is it?

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Polystyrene.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Polystyrene products are part of removing plastic waste from the waters.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, in the wake of the MV *Zim Kingston* cargo spill last year, we heard countless stories of the government failing to collaborate with indigenous communities and local experts.

Can the government commit that the expanded oceans protection plan will include an integrated and timely response that works in collaboration with these groups?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, this is a great opportunity for me to congratulate the Canadian Coast Guard and its partners, including indigenous communities, who were part of the very fast and effective response to the *Zim Kingston* accident.

Business of Supply

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, owner-operator licensing in the Atlantic means independent harvesters and communities benefit from our fishing industry. However, corporate concentration of processing facilities threatens their ability to get a reasonable price for their catch.

How is the minister working to ensure this budget supports independent harvesters and the communities that rely on them?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I am assuming we are talking about the east coast. We have some very clear rules that any of the inshore companies have to be 100% Canadian held and offshore companies need to be 51% Canadian held.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, fish harvesters on the west coast have felt the negative impacts of corporate ownership and anonymous licence holders without a strong owner-operator licensing model.

When will the government ensure that our west coast has a beneficial licence model?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, we have reviewed the fisheries and oceans committee report on this matter. We are undertaking a study of the beneficial ownership of all of the players on the west coast so that we can analyze that and decide what steps need to be taken.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, last year's flooding in the lower Fraser, and in British Columbia as a whole, could have devastating impacts on already threatened salmon species. When the PSSI's senior director Sarah Murdoch testified to the fisheries and oceans committee, she said that DFO was not looking to reallocate resources from the PSSI to help with salmon habitat restoration in the wake of last year's flooding.

Does the minister agree that this emergency event is worth allocating funding towards?

• (2110)

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I will agree it was a very concerning event. I am on the cabinet committee on emergencies, and I have had a chance to bring up the concern around fish habitat on a number of occasions. I will continue to have my eye on that ball, and we will need to do restoration.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, how many projects has DFO helped to support in the wake of last year's flooding in British Columbia?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, the flooding was a huge cost and a huge tragedy. The lead ministries are other ministries, not DFO, but we have been at the table to bring forward our concerns and to check what the impact was on the spawning grounds and hatcheries in that area.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, I believe that answer would be zero, but perhaps the minister can clarify if that is not the case.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, we also had Canadian Coast Guard assets on standby to assist during the flooding.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, does the minister think B.C. will be able to build back better if DFO is not willing to help invest in fish-friendly infrastructure and habitat restoration?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, as I have said, we have \$747 million for the Pacific salmon initiative, and we will use that where it will do the most good.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, it has been a year since the PSSI promised to develop a centre of expertise. When will that keystone program be created?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, we have a five-year program, and piece by piece we are working with partners to make sure we are doing this in a collaborative way.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, does the minister agree that as the climate crisis becomes more urgent, our programs like the PSSI need to be adaptive and able to respond quickly? Why can the PSSI not be there when salmon need support the most?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I could not agree more with the member that we need to factor climate change into everything we do on the coast. That is why nature-based solutions are so important, and I think ocean source solutions—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member has the floor.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Chair, Watershed Watch and SkeenaWild recently published a report estimating that last year Alaskan fishers caught an estimated 650,000 B.C.-bound sockeye salmon while Canadian fishers caught as few as 110,000.

Does the minister agree that first nations, commercial fishers and recreational fishers should be forced to keep their boats at dock while so many B.C.-bound fish are being caught in Alaska?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, it is very important that our Pacific salmon are not overfished. I have heard the concerns about potential Alaskan overfishing, and that has been forwarded to the Pacific Salmon Treaty commissioners. They will be reviewing that.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Chair, it is great to participate in the committee of the whole this evening. My remarks will be centred around the Pacific salmon strategy initiative that the minister and our government are undertaking.

Business of Supply

I would be remiss if I did not say that one of the reasons I wanted to speak this evening and ask the minister questions is that when my parents immigrated to Canada in the early 1960s to Prince Rupert, British Columbia, my mother, her four sisters and my grandmother all worked at a cannery in Prince Rupert, in a very vibrant fishing community. In high school and then in university, I worked at J.S. McMillan Fisheries. I understand very well the fishing industry. I think about going for picnics along the Skeena River as a kid and fishing. I used what is called a kitimat and bait to fish for various types of salmon at that time. It brings back very fond memories for my family, particularly my grandparents, who are no longer in this world and are in another world, and my parents, who are at home watching this evening.

I want to salute my mother and her sisters, who for many years were filleters and worked in canneries. It is very rigorous and hard work done manually, and they did it to provide a better future for me, my first cousins and siblings. They have my utmost respect and gratitude. We had many folks come from the east coast during that time, and a lot of my friends came from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, moving interprovincially to work in Prince Rupert, especially during the summertime. It is a fond part of my childhood memories and will always be a part of me.

I am pleased to speak today about the efforts our government is taking to protect wild salmon populations. By way of background, the five most common species of Pacific salmon, which give me a big smile, are pink, chum, coho, chinook and sockeye. While the department responded to declines in coho populations two decades ago with strong management measures, the more significant declines in many southern British Columbia chinook and sockeye populations in recent years call for immediate and bolder actions.

Let me state clearly that Fisheries and Oceans Canada is committed to the long-term health and sustainability of our rich fishery resources. I am confident that Fisheries and Oceans Canada's launch of the Pacific salmon strategy initiative, or PSSI, in June 2021, as well as its ongoing work with first nations, harvesters, stakeholders and the Governments of British Columbia and Yukon, will help us address the top priority.

The PSSI is a \$647.1-million investment that addresses the steep declines in Pacific salmon through a series of immediate and long-term measures organized under four pillars: conservation and stewardship, salmon enhancement, harvest transformation, and integration and collaboration. This will include significant new investments in habitat restoration, integrated ecosystem planning, hatchery capacity and science to inform decision-making. This is the largest, most transformative investment Canada has made in Pacific salmon.

The PSSI, among other initiatives, is aimed at protecting Pacific salmon and will integrate and leverage other recent investments, while at the same time ensure that our actions are designed to meet clear biological objectives and discover innovative ways to improve the resiliency of our Pacific salmon fisheries. The department is taking a long-term approach to stabilizing, restoring and rebuilding salmon stocks and the habitat that is critical to their survival. The approach of the PSSI is built on coordination, partnerships, best available science and, as I have just said, significant new financial resources through the PSSI. Fisheries and Oceans Canada will look

to indigenous communities, British Columbia and Yukon partners, harvesters and other stakeholders to join us in this strategic and targeted approach to address the challenges currently facing Canada's Pacific salmon.

I wish to salute my friends and their parents who were trawlers, gillnetters and seiners and who went out into the waters in the Pacific Ocean while we were in high school and university. I remember the conversations I had and the rich experiences I was able to gain through my friendships with those individuals. I am still in contact with many of them today.

Funding for the PSSI is already being used to implement immediate and long-term solutions. Under PSSI's conservation and stewardship pillar, we are investing new resources in science, in additional salmon habitat monitoring and assessment and in integrated planning and habitat restoration. We are ensuring that our priority-setting is informed by available science, which we will also use to help us evaluate how well our management actions are working so we can adjust more nimbly.

As we know, Canadians across the country are feeling the impacts of climate-related extremes first-hand, from devastating wildfires and flooding to heat waves and droughts. Not surprisingly, these events are also having a significant impact on Pacific salmon populations. To respond to this, we are supporting integrated salmon rebuilding and ecosystem planning processes that incorporate improved climate science, salmon conservation priorities and the interests of our partners.

● (2115)

We have committed an additional \$100 million toward doubling the size of the British Columbia salmon restoration and innovation fund, a fund that is delivered in partnership with the Province of British Columbia. We are also creating a new salmon habitat restoration centre of expertise to provide expanded technical expertise and resources to help first nations and community partners strategically direct and deliver salmon habitat restoration, informed, of course, by science. An important aspect of the PSSI is a strong focus on strengthening collaboration with the Province of British Columbia and the territorial Government of Yukon by strengthening current governance structures and better aligning our respective Pacific salmon priorities.

Under the PSSSI salmon enhancement pillar, we are modernizing current hatchery programs, focusing on how salmon hatcheries can directly help conserve, restore and enhance priority salmon populations. We are also enhancing our scientific and technical support for hatcheries to ensure that we can support the broader objective of conserving and rebuilding Pacific salmon stocks. Initial planning and consultations are under way to construct new DFO and community-based hatcheries so that key populations of concern can be protected and rebuilt in areas within British Columbia that currently have no significant hatchery capacity.

Through the PSSSI harvest transformation pillar, Fisheries and Oceans Canada took steps last June to introduce additional restrictions and closures in commercial salmon fisheries to further protect stocks of conservation concern. We intend to implement this more precautionary approach for the longer term.

Since then, we have begun work with Pacific salmon harvesters to transform how these fisheries are being managed. This includes recognizing that the Pacific salmon commercial fishery must be smaller and more resilient, and that it needs to employ more selective fishing methods and approaches to reduce bycatch of weak wild stocks. To this end, the new Pacific salmon commercial licence retirement program, which we will be launching in the coming weeks, will give commercial harvesters an option to retire their licences for market value, helping us to right-size the commercial fleet.

The department has also been meeting with first nations to better understand how harvesting for food and for social and ceremonial purposes has been affected by declining salmon returns, or salmon runs, as we used to say. DFO will also be discussing the economic impacts related to communal commercial salmon licences, which are held by many first nations in British Columbia and Yukon. DFO will be working together with first nations to explore options, such as shifting to more selective fishing gear and harvesting non-salmon species.

The department is modernizing how recreational salmon fisheries are managed by improving fishery monitoring, data and management tools. For example, DFO will be consulting broadly in the coming weeks about developing a framework for implementing additional marked selective fisheries in the future.

Lastly, the activities under our fourth pillar, integration and collaboration, will develop our all-important collaboration with indigenous partners and stakeholders even further. The challenge before us is a long-term one and will require all hands on deck.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada cannot do this alone. The last six years have been the warmest on the planet. The recent widespread floods and landslides in British Columbia are another major setback to wild Pacific salmon stocks. Our efforts to protect, recover and rebuild these iconic species are even more important now. Our government is making generational investments to protect and restore Pacific salmon and their ecosystems by working in partnership with indigenous nations and other governments.

Moving on to my questions, as I mentioned, the last six years have been the warmest on the planet. When we take this into account, along with recent floods and landslides in British Columbia,

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it is clear that we must prioritize the protection, recovery and rebuilding of these iconic species. Pacific salmon need our help, and the \$647.1 million announced in budget 2021 will guide a strategic and coordinated long-term response to these issues.

Can the minister please explain how the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard are hoping to stem the decline of Pacific salmon stocks and populations and protect and rebuild these stocks?

● (2120)

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Chair, I would like to thank the member for the story of his family early on and their connection with fisheries and for his concern about wild Pacific salmon. They have been such a high priority for British Columbians and for this government, and this is even more critical today given the complex challenges facing the species, including, as he mentioned, climate change, changes in land and water use, and B.C.'s year of floods, fires and slides.

The PSSSI will include habitat, hatcheries and harvest approaches to conserve and restore Pacific salmon. The department is continuing to work to ensure that new and ongoing investments, activities and Pacific salmon programming are properly aligned with other partners to achieve maximum and key results. In particular, programs and actions will be implemented to respond to the historic declines of the Pacific salmon by putting in place conservation approaches and plans to prioritize Pacific salmon populations and support their recovery.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Chair, Pacific salmon have social and cultural significance for many Canadians, and they are economically vital to many local communities. This iconic species is experiencing drastic population declines due to a combination of climate, habitat and harvesting pressures. Bold, transformative action is needed now to stabilize, protect and rebuild west coast salmon stocks for the ecosystems and communities that depend on them before it is too late. Many Pacific wild salmon are on the verge of collapse, and we need to take bold and ambitious action now if we are to reverse the trends and give them a fighting chance at survival.

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The PSSI is a comprehensive initiative that will build on and support the years of work and wisdom that grassroots organizations, indigenous communities, scientists and others have already put into effect to protect and recover Pacific salmon. Can the hon. minister please explain the funding strategy of the PSSI?

• (2125)

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, with this total five-year funding envelope, \$346.4 million is vote 1 funding, which means it is dedicated to program operations across all four pillars, including climate change science, stock assessments, fisheries monitoring, a new habitat restoration centre of expertise and enhanced collaborative processes with first nations, the B.C. government, Yukon and key partners.

Second, \$274.5 million is vote 10 funding, which includes grants and contribution investments in the B.C. salmon restoration and innovation fund, the new Pacific salmon commercial licence retirement program and other activities.

Lastly, \$125.1 million is vote 5 capital funding to build new conservation-based hatchery facilities in the upper Fraser watershed, retrofit DFO and community hatcheries in key geographic areas and acquire key scientific equipment such as mass-marking trailers.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Madam Chair, icebreaker and offshore patrol ship delays are causing massive increases in costs and threaten our Arctic sovereignty and security, putting all Canadians at risk. The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimates that the polar icebreakers announced by the government would cost \$7.25 billion, or over \$3.6 billion each. In 2013, the estimated cost for one heavy icebreaker was only \$1.3 billion.

Continued delays by your government are costing taxpayers billions. What date have you been given for when these heavy icebreakers will be added to our Coast Guard fleet?

The Deputy Chair: I will remind members that they are to address questions and comments through the Chair and not directly to the minister.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Chair, I am proud of our Coast Guard fleet renewal program. The member's government, a previous government, did nothing to renew the fleet, and many of these ships are well past their shelf life. I am proud that three major fishery science vessels have already been produced and that many more are under way.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Chair, the minister is actually announcing the previous Conservative strategy around shipbuilding, so I thank her for that plug.

An Order Paper answer delivered by the government stated that the cost of the Coast Guard Arctic and offshore patrol ships would be \$750 million per ship. Your colleague, the Minister of Public Services and Procurement said—

The Deputy Chair: I want to remind the member that he is to address all questions and comments to the Chair. He may want to refrain from using the words “you” or “your”.

The hon. member.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Chair, the minister's colleague, the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, said that \$750 million would be an estimate. Who is telling the truth?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I think the key question here is, are we delivering on our promise to renew the fleet? Yes, we are.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Chair, the question for the minister was specific. Irving just testified that the amount would be considerably less than the \$750 million, so again, who is telling the truth?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, the truth of the matter is that there was no renewal of the Coast Guard fleet nor the defence fleet for 10 years under the previous government.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Chair, what is taking so long?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Chair, I rise on a point of order. The member just said, “Why did it take you so long?”

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Chair, I said specifically, “What is taking so long?”

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, there have been delays that tie into COVID, as well as supply chain issues.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Chair, when will the contracts for the two Arctic and offshore patrol ships for the Coast Guard be signed?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, they will be signed when those negotiations are complete.

• (2130)

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Chair, B.C.'s public fishery represents \$1.1 billion in revenue and supports 9,000 direct jobs. When I asked the minister in committee if the minister would work with our angling community, she said that she would. She has since broken her promise. Why is she determined to shut our province's fishing communities down with continued unnecessary closures?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I will say I did meet with the angling representatives. I have a lot of respect for their position. I cannot open an integrated fishery management plan in—

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Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Chair, who specifically in the fishing community did the minister meet with?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I am happy to get the member a record of the several meetings I have had.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Chair, if the minister had actually met with the fishing community, one would think it would be first-hand. It is easy to remember the fishing community. Believe me, I know a lot of them in B.C., and they are certainly unforgettable.

A study funded by the minister's own department recently found that the numbers of chinook salmon in the Salish Sea during the summertime are four to six times more abundant for southern resident killer whales than in northern resident whales' feeding grounds. A lack of prey for southern resident killer whales has been used by the minister's predecessor as the reason for shutting down our public fisheries. This has now been clearly debunked. When will the minister's department start making science-based decisions when it comes to keeping our public fishery open?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Madam Chair, I have a lot of admiration and respect for the recreational fishery industry. I know it is a huge economic driver as well. Fundamentally, we need to respect the science of the salmon stocks, and that is what we are doing.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, the minister's recent decision to reject the sport fishing advisory board's chinook salmon retention proposals is again a broken promise. Why is the minister refusing to work with our public fishery community to ensure science-based decisions are made?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, when I met with Owen Bird and his colleagues, I was very interested in their proposal. Unfortunately, it would mean opening an integrated fisheries management plan, which would have meant consultation broadly before I could do so.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, let me get this straight. You were actually given scientific advice that you could manage—

The Chair: The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Chair, I recognize that you are just sitting in the chair as of now, but both this Conservative member and the previous Conservative member have used the term “you” numerous times, and the member just said it again.

Perhaps they need a time out to go back and rewrite their notes or something, because they keep reading the term and the phrase “you”. Perhaps you could stress to them that they are to speak through the Chair to you because I doubt that they are asking all of this of you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I thank you for the intervention and I appreciate that.

I will remind folks here tonight to refer questions through the Chair and make sure that we do not address people directly.

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

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, through the Chair, why did the minister reject the sport fishing advisory board's two very modest chinook salmon retention proposals for portions of PFMA 17, 18, 19, southeast Vancouver Island and 28, Howe Sound, for the months of April and May? Why?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, one primary reason is that to change an integrated fisheries management plan that has had many stakeholders involved, I would have needed to consult with all of them again, and there was not time to do that for opening in April and May.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, in a letter to the minister dated May 10, the Public Fishery Alliance stated, “We have never before experienced this level of Departmental inertia and unwillingness to resolve fundamentally basic fisheries management issues.” What is the minister doing to address this?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I reject the premise of that question, actually. The department has used a very thoughtful approach in gathering information from many stakeholders to propose decisions to me.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, for years I have heard from our public fishery experts in British Columbia, who say their efforts to consult with DFO and provide reasonable solutions for the fishery are being stonewalled by Pacific regional director Rebecca Reid and senior staff.

Who ultimately makes the decisions for the Pacific region, the minister or Rebecca Reid?

• (2135)

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, most fisheries management decisions come to me to make, and I make them as the minister.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, it seems as though the minister's staff are the ones who are running the show at DFO. At the same time that the minister told me personally that she was considering proposals, the DFO salmon team openly stated they would not discuss any proposals from the sport fishing advisory board related to chinook retention in April and May of 2022.

Again, who is in charge of DFO, the minister or Rebecca Reid?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, actually I have already explained that opening a fishery plan midstream means re-consulting with all of the stakeholders, and there simply was not time to do that in the time available to open it in April and May.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, with respect, that is exactly the minister's job. It is to manage the fishery, and she simply is not doing that.

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In July 2020, the minister's predecessor, Minister Jordan, committed Canada to the United Kingdom's global ocean alliance agenda to zone 30% of Canada's coastal waters as "protected" by 2030. This is in addition to the existing government commitment to zone 25% of Canada's waters by 2025 and the extension into terrestrial public lands. The proponents of this European agenda advocate elimination of all extractive use of these regions, including recreational and commercial fishing.

What is the minister's plan to conduct a transparent science-based process that includes regional and national stakeholder interests before declaring vast areas of public waters off limits to public access?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, the marine protected areas prevent certain industrial activities that affect the seabed floor. Otherwise, there are no constraints that have already been defined in the negotiated MPAs that we are involved with.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, what specific actions is the minister's department taking right now to implement the Cohen commission recommendation number 30 for a mark selective fishery?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we are considering a mark selective fishery. Part of the budget was to increase the supplies needed and the trailers needed for that fishery.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, for more than one and a half decades the public fishing community, especially in B.C. and especially in the lower Fraser, has been advocating selective sport fishing regulations that would allow recreational fishing that was selective for certain types of salmon while avoiding endangered salmon and sturgeon. The technique is known as bar rigs, which has been known to be highly selective. Under the federal Fisheries Act, the 1996 British Columbia sport fishing regulation 137 has amendments for such things as herring jigging and sturgeon gear, but it requires an amendment that would allow selective salmon fishing.

Will the minister work with the British Columbia sport fishing community to amend the British Columbia sport fishing regulations so that Canadians can enjoy this important family activity and support the key economic sport fishing sector, at the same time as protecting stocks of concern?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, the protection of stocks of concern are, of course, the number one priority, but my officials are developing a discussion paper on this matter and will be consulting with interested parties.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, we hear that mass marking trailers have been purchased and are currently in use in B.C., but only to apply coded wire tags, not doing their intended purpose.

Will the minister's department in 2023 begin the critical process of mass marking all hatchery chinook production that is designed to contribute to fisheries in southern B.C. in order to provide increased opportunity for mark selective fisheries and to assist hatchery managers in distinguishing between hatchery and wild chinook in brood stock selection?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, what we will do is prioritize the conservation of the wild Pacific salmon while making opportunities available to the sport fishery in such a way that it does not undermine the conservation of wild salmon.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, the minister has had ample opportunity to address this issue. The Cohen commission has been around for 10 years, yet the government is still planning to delay the process, putting many of our anglers at risk.

How many full-time equivalent positions are there at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans?

• (2140)

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, there are close to 14,000 permanent positions.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, for everybody out there, that was 14,000.

Total spending for Fisheries and Oceans Canada increased by 42.3% between 2016-17 and 2020-21, yet we have heard across the board that service levels are at all-time lows. Why?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, the complexity of DFO's mandate is only increasing, especially with the potential pipeline and tanker traffic. We have invested a lot in protecting the oceans through the oceans protection plan.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, over that same period we have seen full-time positions at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans increase by 30%, and the minister has already acknowledged the 14,000 positions, yet we see very little in effective enforcement in British Columbia, which is the reason gillnets are still catching threatened stocks in our waters. Why?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we are looking into the matter the member has just raised.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, further, we have seen full-time staff in the department in the Pacific region balloon, according to estimates, from 617 since 2016 to 1,949 individuals, yet we saw recently that DFO did nothing with respect to the floods in British Columbia. It was the volunteers who did the work while the executives of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans sat on their hands. With all the additional staff in Vancouver, why did DFO not lift a finger?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I am very proud of our government's response to the floods and the slides. DFO was there to ensure that the damage to the hatcheries was understood and corrected and to assess the impact on salmon—

The Chair: Continuing debate, the hon. member for Whitby.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Chair, it is a great pleasure to rise in the House tonight and participate in this discussion.

Canada is, without a doubt, a proud maritime nation that relies heavily on its oceans as a source of food, jobs, energy, raw materials, maritime trade, tourism and recreation. We are particularly proud of our robust, sustainably managed and well-regulated commercial fisheries, which are important to our economy and coastal communities, but as with all industries, there is room for improvement.

While we strive to understand just how pervasive marine pollution is, we know that a major contributor is lost, abandoned and otherwise discarded fishing gear, also known as “ghost gear”. Ghost gear is one of the deadliest forms of plastic debris found in the world’s oceans and has a damaging impact on marine animals like whales and turtles, the coastal and marine environment, and global fish stocks. It is estimated that between 5% and 30% of harvestable fish stocks are captured by ghost gear globally, which poses a major threat to human health, livelihoods and global food security. It also poses a navigation hazard and breaks down into other forms of pollution, such as microplastics.

Gear loss is rarely intentional. Ghost gear is primarily caused by gear snagging on the sea floor, entanglement with other fishing gear, severe weather conditions and gear being incidentally cut or dislodged by marine vessel traffic. Intentional discard by harvesters is less common and could be a result of potential endangerment of the safety of the crew or vessel. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing can also contribute to ghost gear.

The good news is that our government is working closely with the fishing industry to raise standards across Canadian fisheries to promote innovation, so that sustainable and economically viable fisheries can thrive, along with healthy ecosystems and marine species.

A key component of the program is working with stakeholders through the ghost gear fund. This fund is central to the Canadian approach, one that has focused on industry engagement and involvement in the solution to the decades-old issue of lost gear. It focuses on four key areas to address ghost gear, including retrieval of existing ghost gear, building responsible disposal solutions, acquisition of new fishing and retrieval technologies to support prevention, as well as international leadership to support sustainable fisheries practices in areas of high gear loss.

A challenge in ghost gear retrieval is ensuring that adequate disposal facilities are available for proper collection, storage, recycling and disposal of retrieved gear. Fisheries and Oceans Canada is addressing these challenges through the disposal pillar of the ghost gear fund.

For example, the Pacific net recycling initiative, which is led by Steveston Harbour, recycled 28,525 kilograms of nylon and poly end-of-life fishing nets in one year, diverting this plastic waste from potentially entering the oceans and landfills. This initiative benefits the fishing community, as it employs commercial fishers to strip the nets and package them for processing, with the proceeds received used to pay wages for fishers in the off-season. This provides much-needed income and supports industry buy-in to the recycling program. Additionally, this project developed a business plan that could expand the current net recycling program to all of British Columbia’s coast.

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The ghost gear fund also supported the development of Ocean Legacy’s first two ocean plastic depots to collect and process ghost gear and other marine plastics. In 2020, these depots diverted 85 tonnes of waste from landfills. Building on their success, the second phase of this project supported the establishment of localized nylon-processing capacity within British Columbia. This initiative provides critical infrastructure to capture plastic waste, diverting it from landfills and responsibly recycling items. It also furthers the implementation of pragmatic solutions to grow the Canadian plastic circular economy. Additionally, program funding has allowed 36 harbour authorities to participate in the program, creating secure storage areas for gear that could be returned to its owners when identifiable markers are still attached.

The most effective way to address ghost gear is to prevent gear loss in the first place. The third pillar of the ghost gear fund works to prevent future gear loss through supporting the acquisition and piloting of fishing gear technology.

• (2145)

The issue of lost gear is not one unique to Canada. Through the fourth pillar of our fund, Fisheries and Oceans Canada demonstrates its leadership role by providing support for initiatives that further reduce, reuse and recycle fishing and aquaculture gear on a global scale. We have supported the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute’s development of a regional Caribbean fisheries management and ghost gear action plan, and extended baseline analysis and hot spot mapping in the Caribbean.

Another successful project that Canada has supported is led by the Stand Out for Environment Restoration Initiative, which engages coastal communities in Nigeria to assist in the development of policies for the prevention and mitigation of ghost gear. They have implemented a ghost gear recovery program with a focus on offshore recovery, as well as installed six end-of-life gear recovery centres for collection, sorting and analysis of retrieved ghost gear in Nigeria and Cameroon. The collected gear is then used to create economic opportunities for fishing communities through educational workshops, using end-of-life ghost gear to produce secondary products.

The ghost gear fund has seen great success, but it is only one component of the greater strategy to address ghost gear in Canada.

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In 2020, Fisheries and Oceans Canada implemented mandatory lost gear reporting requirements in all Canadian commercial fisheries. In 2021, the department implemented a user-friendly reporting system for harvesters to report lost gear. This reporting requirement allows the department to quantify the extent of lost gear in Canadian waters and identify priority areas for targeted gear retrieval projects. The additional data on the location, fishery type and incidence of gear loss will enable Fisheries and Oceans Canada to identify other long-term measures to address ghost gear and provide a more robust understanding of the issue in Canada. Through the initial two years of programming, harvesters and other experts have provided a great deal of feedback on how to prevent and mitigate the impacts of lost gear and ways to encourage a shift to a circular economy approach for the industry.

Going forward, Fisheries and Oceans Canada will use the feedback to help inform changes to fisheries management practices, such as the need for enhanced tagging and marking regimes in selected fisheries. Additionally, knowledge gained will support regulatory changes required to modernize the industry and implement best practices in our domestic fisheries. These actions will change how Canada's fisheries operate. This is not something that can be done overnight, requiring forethought, research and consultation with harvesters, fishing industries and experts.

It is the actions currently being researched, developed and piloted in Canadian fisheries that will result in tangible, long-term solutions, allowing Fisheries and Oceans Canada to implement the tools needed to address abandoned, lost or derelict fishing gear in Canadian fisheries. All of this work is a culmination of homegrown innovation and support, further demonstrating Canada's leadership role in addressing ghost gear.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada's commitment to the health of our oceans and marine life is unwavering, and the department is committed to continuing this important work with the support of Canadian fish harvesters. The continued programming made possible through budget 2022 is good news for all Canadians.

• (2150)

As I mentioned, through the ghost gear program, Canada has become a leader in the global effort to eliminate and prevent ghost gear in our oceans. The program supports harvesters, environmental groups, indigenous communities, the aquaculture industry and coastal communities to retrieve harmful ghost gear from Canadian waters.

Can the minister explain how approved projects are funded, which are eligible, and for those interested, when they should apply by?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Chair, that brought me back to a time when I was in opposition, in the opposition lobby, visiting with some representatives from an oceans conservation organization who told me about ghost gear. It was the first time I had heard about it and the idea that this fishing gear is trapping and killing fish and even whales endlessly, because it was abandoned in the ocean.

I am so pleased to say that our government is taking action on that. The member did a great job of laying out how important that is. We have a ghost gear program. The results of this program have been very impressive so far. Approved projects are funded based on activities under four pillars: abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear; responsible disposal, like the one he saw and I have seen at Steveston Harbour; acquiring and piloting innovative technologies to do these things; and international leadership.

This will be available for a wide range of individuals, companies, businesses, not-for-profits, indigenous organizations, research institutions and other levels of government. I really encourage interested parties to apply. The applications are due by June 6 this year at 11:59 p.m. Pacific time.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Chair, the issue of losing fishing gear is not a new one around the world. With decades of old debris in our oceans and along our coastlines, our government recognizes ghost gear as an issue of national importance, which is why, in 2019, Fisheries and Oceans Canada established the ghost gear program. This program is helping to prevent, retrieve and responsibly dispose of this harmful and often unintentional consequence of commercial fishing.

Budget 2022 announced \$10 million for the fund. This support will enable the ghost gear fund to see new, exciting and successful projects completed by our partners.

This includes new projects like the DFO's support of the trial of Blue Ocean Gear's GPS-enabled, smart buoy technology in the Maritimes and Pacific regions, assessing its applicability across different wild capture and aquaculture fisheries. Blue Ocean Gear's buoys track deployed gear, monitoring location, movement and environmental conditions. Fishers also receive alerts if their traps, nets or longlines have moved beyond a threshold area, allowing timely retrieval before they become lost or entangled.

The ghost gear fund has led to amazing work with fish harvesters and associations and to technological developments, and is a clear example of the type of innovation we hope to see in this sector.

Can the minister please highlight some of the incredible results, including how much gear has been removed through the first two years of implementing this important fund?

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Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I thank the member again for his interest in this program. Since its inception, the ghost gear fund has supported retrieval efforts by third party partners, resulting in more than 1,296 tonnes of ghost gear being removed from Canada's oceans, as well as collecting over 153 kilometres of rope. This represents more than 7,000 units of gear removed from our oceans over the past two years, reducing the threat of entrapment and ghost fishing, as well as reducing the threat of entanglement to marine mammals, including the endangered North Atlantic right whales.

These efforts have been undertaken by dedicated and committed industry leaders, such as the Petty Harbour fishermen's association, which removed five tonnes of gear from Newfoundland waters. CSR GeoSurveys used sidescan sonar technology to identify lost gear hot spots and retrieve 14 tonnes of gear in the Gulf and Maritimes regions. On the west coast, the Coastal Restoration Society worked with indigenous partners to perform large-scale ghost gear removals on the west coast of Vancouver Island, removing over 286 tonnes of gear from abandoned aquaculture sites.

The ghost gear fund is helping us clean up our oceans, leading to some amazing innovation in the sector. As a former digital government minister, I love the digital solutions that are being used here. I think we can all agree in this House that this has been a huge success and will continue to be so.

• (2155)

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the minister's highlighting the incredible results of this program. It is clearly innovative and paying off for our ocean and marine coastal ecosystems, which are essential to Canada's livelihoods and a good fishery sector.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I want to thank the member for his work and his interest on this matter. We will continue to get that ghost gear out of the water for the benefit of the fish and the products that we can make from this recycled gear.

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time with the member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

Is the minister against people owning cottages to relax as a family and/or for their mental health?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Chair, that sounds wonderful. I am for cottages and relaxing with family for mental health.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Chair, cottages are outside the affordability of almost everyone.

What is the difference between owning a cottage, or going to a cottage, and owning a boat, if that is how families choose to spend their leisure time?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I enjoy boating myself. It is recreation that is important to many Canadians, and I do not know that it is an either/or between a cottage and a boat.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Chair, what does the minister then say to the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, which says that the luxury tax does not hurt the rich but rather the employees of this sector?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I understand that there are some tax increases on luxury goods to help afford things like child care for those who need it.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Chair, the PBO has estimated that about \$600 million will be lost in sales and has estimated about \$176 million of taxes might be recouped by 2023. Does the minister feel that this is good value for Canadians?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, those are projections that I will not support or contest. Having a luxury tax that helps us support low-income Canadians is worthwhile.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Chair, will the luxury tax apply to vehicles that are just for business purposes?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I think the associate finance minister may have a quick answer to that question, but the fisheries minister does not.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Chair, how can you then justify supporting such a tax if you do not know if it will apply to businesses? How will you ensure that this will not apply to rental yachts, aerial tour planes, or limousines, or can you justify that the impact of this tax will be positive for Canadians and the boating sector?

The Chair: I remind members to run their questions through the Chair.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I will reassert that having a tax on boats that cost over \$200,000, and being able to use that to defray expenses for those who need it the most, is a decision that we have made as a government to reduce income inequality.

• (2200)

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Chair, why was Canada behind on our obligation to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, in terms of the Great Lakes Commission, we have funded it to the tune of another \$9 million a year in the recent budget.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Chair, was it to ensure that this obligation was met?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, our obligation is to be a good partner with the United States in helping to protect the waters of the Great Lakes from invasive species like sea lamprey, and we have almost doubled our funding just for that.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Chair, when did the minister become aware that we were behind on our payments?

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Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, with respect to the Great Lakes Commission, we have maintained the payments that we agreed to in that agreement and now, this year, we have increased it substantially.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Chair, the payments have been increased to meet our obligations that we agreed to. We were behind for seven years, so when will the \$9 million that was just committed in this budget be paid? That same commitment was made in 2017.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I am very proud that we are providing some \$45 million for the Great Lakes Commission over the next five years. The commission does great work and will continue to do so.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Chair, does the minister believe that it is acceptable to delay the passing of the budget for the Great Lakes Commission due to Canada's lack of payment?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I am just going to reinforce what I said before, which is that Canada lived up to its commitment to the Great Lakes Commission. The U.S. partners increased their funding for the commission, and we have now brought our funding up as well. I am very proud of the work that the commission does.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: I will remind members that the hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington has the floor.

The hon. member.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Chair, there are vacant positions on the Great Lakes Commission board of directors where candidates have been put forward by Ontario. Why have these positions not been filled?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we are working to find the appropriate candidates to fill those positions.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Chair, does the minister support the transfer of governance of this commission from DFO to Global Affairs, as the industry has called for?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I think the decision on this will be taken by the Prime Minister's Office, and all the elements that are involved are in the hands of the Prime Minister's staff.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Chair, I am going to ask her to repeat that. Did she say that she is not in charge of her ministry and that the Prime Minister makes those decisions?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, the member may not understand that this is a machinery of government decision, whether it is Global Affairs Canada or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Canadian Coast Guard that is the partner in this commission partnership with the United States.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Chair, what measures is the minister taking to mitigate the impact of invasive species already in our Great Lakes?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, the funding that is provided to the Great Lakes Commission is primarily dedicated to identifying and eradicating invasive species. My understanding is we are eradicating over 90% of the sea lampreys, and we have kept on top of that challenge.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Chair, how does the minister intend to alter ballast regulations to minimize the amount of invasive species now being released through ballast water?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we work in partnership with the Ministry of Transportation, and it is the Ministry of Transportation that has regulations concerning ballast and the release of ballast water.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Chair, what is the current status of the Walpole Island and Kettle and Stony Point first nations' interests with respect to indigenous fishing, either for sport or for commercial purposes?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, on that specific question and specific nation, I cannot answer, but the engagement reconciliation with indigenous communities is a high priority for our government, and we are proud of the number of fishery opportunities that we—

• (2205)

The Chair: Continuing debate, the hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country has the floor.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Chair, is 2018, the government launched a research and education campaign that provided \$100,000 over four years to Simon Fraser University to conduct research and assess the risk of invasive mussels spread in the Okanagan. It has been four years now. What are the key things that have been learned?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Chair, that is a very good question for the researchers at Simon Fraser University, and I can find their reports for the member.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, the minister should be aware this is funding from the federal government.

An additional \$400,000 was invested at the same time over three years for educational outreach. The money was intended to create new advertisements. Can the minister tell us who was the target and what the purpose of this ad initiative was?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans does a great variety of positive work on behalf of Canadians, and there are times when we advertise to let the public know the opportunities for grants and programs they can apply to.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, funding ran out last year, and I see no funding of any kind in budget 2022 to protect western provinces from invasive aquatic species spreading across Canada. Is it correct that there is no funding?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we maintain funding for invasive species. There are a number of invasive species across Canada, and we are acting to find and remove them wherever possible.

Business of Supply

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, what specifically is the funding to address aquatic invasive mussels to British Columbia from being transported across Canada?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I am proud to say we were able to intercept the zebra mussels that were coming in through aquarium imports. We work closely with several departments.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, I was not referring to importation. I was referring to being across the country. What the minister is referring to is actually mussels that were coming in through aquariums, which CBSA caught, and I am referring to across Canada.

The fisheries department refers to deleterious substances to be used to eradicate aquatic invasive mussels. Is this the best way to eradicate aquatic invasive mussels?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, the campaign that provides boaters with information about the risks and the need to clean their boats and motors so they do not transport the invasive species from one aquatic watershed to another is an important function of the department.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, is this one of the methods that should be used?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, if “this” refers to publicity to educate boaters, then yes.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, does the minister agree with purposefully putting pesticides or other chemicals into waterways?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, well, there are times when that is necessary, such as lampricides, which deal with sea lampreys in the Great Lakes.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, does the minister agree that it is acceptable to use deleterious substances to eradicate aquatic invasive mussels in waterways that are public drinking water?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we work with Environment and Climate Change Canada to ensure that any products that are utilized are safe for the use to which they are being—

The Chair: The hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, what are deleterious substances?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, they are ones that are harmful.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, is the minister's department recommending that deleterious substances be put into public drinking waterways?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, any substances that might be used are checked with Environment Canada to make sure that they are not going to be harmful to humans or to the natural environment.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, the Canadian government website defines deleterious substances as being added to any water where it could “degrade or alter the water quality such that it could directly or indirectly harm fish, fish habitat, or the use of fish by humans.” That is the definition right on the government's website, so the comment the minister just made is kind of shocking.

Can the minister give us some examples of what a deleterious substance might be?

• (2210)

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, a lampricide would be a deleterious substance.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, on the government's website, it also lists chemicals, heavy metals and cleaning supplies such as bleach, detergents and pesticides.

Does the minister believe that putting pesticides or other chemicals is the way to eradicate aquatic invasive mussels in large waterways?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I have to say, I want to acknowledge that I am very impressed by the concern the member has for what goes in the waterways.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, I am really glad that the minister is impressed with my comments. The most recent letter from the Okanagan Basin Water Board on April 8, 2022, expressed concerns. Does the minister agree with the concerns in its letter?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I am not aware of the letter that the member is referring to.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, this letter just came to the minister very recently, so then why is the DFO believing that it is acceptable to authorize the release of deleterious substances to prevent, control or eradicate aquatic invasive species?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, any decisions are checked with Environment Canada before they are taken when it comes to chemicals in water.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, the Okanagan Basin Water Board said that deleterious substances are “not an effective tool to address invasive mussels in larger waterbodies which are hydrologically connected to large river systems – like we have in the Okanagan”.

Does the minister agree with this statement?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I would say that I agree with the intent to actually manage and reduce the spread of aquatic invasive species.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, in addition, the letter notes that Okanagan lakes are a source of drinking water and past experience with chemical treatments of invasive milfoil in the 1970s has shown that “there is no social licence for this method in our local communities.”

Does the minister agree with this statement?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I would say that some people would agree with that statement and some would not agree with that statement. I acknowledge the expertise of the scientists—

Business of Supply

The Chair: Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Health has the floor.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Chair, it is a pleasure to rise in the House to talk about this important issue. Of course, my riding of Milton is part of the Great Lakes watershed. I spent a lot of time on the water in and around my region, so I have a keen interest in this issue. I appreciate the minister's time and being available to us.

I am thankful for the opportunity to talk about marine-protected areas, or MPAs for the sake of shortening that for this speech, and how vital they are to conserving Canada's rich endowment of marine biodiversity and as a nature-based solution to climate change.

Canada stands proud following the achievement of our 10% marine conservation target in 2020. It is a commitment that Canada and many other parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity have made. Over the past seven years, Canada has conserved more marine and coastal areas than at any other time in history, with almost 14% protection across the Atlantic, Arctic and Pacific oceans, up from less than 1% in 2015.

In July of 2020, Canada joined the Global Ocean Alliance, which seeks to protect at least 30% of the world's oceans by 2030. Through this alliance, we have joined like-minded countries to advocate for the international adoption of a "30 by 30" marine conservation target under the Convention on Biological Diversity at the 15th conference of the parties in September. The government remains steadfast in our renewed efforts to conserve 25% by 2025 and 30% by 2030. We have invested almost a billion dollars to establish new protected areas, to effectively manage existing areas, and to enhance our collaborative efforts with indigenous peoples, provinces, territories, local communities and others. We need to halt and reverse the loss of our marine biodiversity for many reasons, and I am pleased to outline some of those today.

Let me first describe the importance of MPAs. MPAs support healthy marine ecosystems and special features such as underwater canyons, glass sponge reefs, concentrations of corals and hydrothermal vents. These ecosystems provide a range of important ecological, economic and socio-cultural benefits, including biodiversity, improved water quality, support to fisheries inside and outside their boundaries, and new opportunities for education, research and tourism. MPAs help sustain the ecosystems, marine species and biological resources that are relied upon by sustainable industries, local economies and coastal communities, and also support cultural and recreational activities and provide a wealth of spiritual, religious and other non-material benefits.

MPAs can provide many socio-economic benefits as well. They provide a foundation for community-based partnerships and employment opportunities, and where possible they enable new tourism and recreational opportunities. As we establish MPAs, we work with partners and stakeholders to distribute any economic impacts to marine industries in a balanced manner through socio-economic analysis, consultation and collaboration. Planning our ocean spaces collaboratively is the cornerstone of our marine spatial planning efforts. By working with our partners, we can ensure that our

ambitious marine conservation goals are met while we simultaneously grow the blue economy.

The science is clear, and Canadians are clear, that we must continue taking strong and serious action on climate change. Canada recognizes that conservation is not only about achieving targets: MPAs must be effectively designed and efficiently managed over the long term so they achieve their conservation objectives. That is why, in 2018, Canada asked a national advisory panel comprised of seven prominent Canadians, including Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon, prior to her appointment as Governor General, to travel across this country to hear from politicians, stakeholders and other concerned Canadians to gather their perspectives on how to better establish and manage MPAs. It is also why in 2019, embracing the advice of this panel, Canada announced a new MPA production standard that prohibited oil and gas exploration and exploitation, mining, dumping and bottom trawling in all future federal MPAs.

Beyond supporting ecosystems and species, MPAs make meaningful contributions to the advancement of reconciliation and renewing Canada's relationship with indigenous peoples based on the recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership. Indigenous peoples are partners in conservation planning and management, and our MPAs will continue to respect constitutionally protected indigenous and treaty rights. Our government will continue to look for opportunities to strengthen partnerships with indigenous peoples, and will embed indigenous knowledge with other sciences and MPA planning and design, governance and management.

Let me tell members about the Anguniaqvia niqiqyuam MPA in Darnley Bay. This large inlet, within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, is one of the most important ecological and cultural regions in Canada's western Arctic.

• (2215)

Its conservation objectives are to maintain the habitat that supports species such as beluga whales, Arctic char, ringed and bearded seals, polar bears and sea birds. This area is also culturally important for the Inuvialuit. They have a strong connection to the land and sea that is vital to their health and well-being, and the Inuvialuit actively harvest traditional food throughout the MPA with two-thirds of the adult population engaging in hunting and fishing. Harvesting activities not only provide an important source of food, but also a means of passing traditional knowledge, skills and cultural pride to the youth of the community. This MPA was collaboratively established with the Inuvialuit and others. Its ongoing governance is with the Fisheries Joint Management Committee and the community of Paulatuk.

We are also continuing to advance conservation networks across priority marine bioregions. As we all know, our regions are interconnected and ecologically linked. Oceans are living, breathing wonders that rely on complex networks of ecosystems to survive, and through the planning and implementation of conservation networks, we can help to preserve the important ecological linkages between one area and another. MPAs and conservation networks contribute to a healthy marine environment by helping to conserve and protect marine species and habitats. They also help to protect the diversity of ecosystems upon which marine organisms depend.

Canada's vision for a sustainable blue economy supports the growth of ocean sectors that provide jobs, are inclusive, advance reconciliation with indigenous peoples and respect regional differences and needs. By creating MPAs and therefore advancing marine spatial planning, we can also ensure that regional priorities, whether those are economic, environmental or social, are reflected in our planning efforts. Marine spatial planning is a key enabler of achieving our blue economy goals, because we recognize that a sustainable blue economy depends on healthy oceans and must be supported by a world-leading conservation plan.

How will we meet this new ambitious 30% marine conservation target together by 2030? We will continue to establish new MPAs and marine refuges while effectively managing those we already have. We will continue to collaborate and build on the many meaningful partnerships already in place and will establish new ones with provincial, territorial and indigenous governments, industry and local communities. We will advance conservation in a marine spatial planning context to achieve socio-economic and cultural objectives as conservation objectives. Finally, we will ensure that our work remains grounded in science, indigenous knowledge and local perspectives.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge that the nationwide, all-hands-on effort it has taken to achieve what we have today is so important. Canada is a maritime nation, today and in future generations. Protecting the oceans is not just for the now; it is also a long-term commitment for everyone to enjoy and receive all of the benefits. It is important for everyone to learn more about protecting our oceans through MPAs and the role they play in climate action, advancing reconciliation with indigenous groups, supporting coastal communities and providing insurance for the availability of biological resources for future economic growth.

Business of Supply

Thank you, and I have a couple of questions for the minister.

My first question to the minister is about nature-based solutions for climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. Would the minister please explain the benefit of some of our nature-based solutions?

• (2220)

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the member for his evident passion and commitment to nature conservation as well as the other aspects of indigenous reconciliation and the economic benefits of such.

I love the term “nature-based solutions”, but I also think about it as ocean-sourced climate solutions. These are actions that protect, sustainably manage and restore ecosystems while providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits, and this is just what an MPA is all about.

Marine protected areas protect ecologically important species, habitats and ecosystems. They improve the health of the ocean. They strengthen its resilience against climate change impacts, such as ocean acidification, coastal erosion, coastal flooding and sea-level rise. As well, they help to grow our seafood diversity and abundance. MPAs also improve coastal defences, such as shoreline buffers and barriers to storms. They help waves disperse and protect reefs. They provide carbon and greenhouse gas absorption through protected habitats such as marshes and seagrass meadows.

The role of MPAs and a climate-resilient ocean are critical reasons why we need to conserve 30% of our oceans by 2030 and ensure their effective management through monitoring, compliance, enforcement, partnerships and stewardship efforts.

Business of Supply

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Chair, my second question is on the topic of MPAs. It is evident that MPAs and MPA networks help to conserve and protect marine species and populations, the diversity of ecosystems that marine organisms depend on and special places such as underwater canyons and hydrothermal vents. Additionally, MPA networks also help to protect important ecological links between one area and another, contributing to improved species resilience and adaptation to future pressures. In fact, resilience and healthy ecosystems help to support sustainable industries, local economies and coastal communities. In time, protected areas can be a source of young fish to disperse to other areas and a source of larger and more abundant fish for unprotected areas near MPAs.

An MPA network strategy clarifies our direction for marine conservation so that ocean users will have a clear vision of their potential access restrictions to marine resources. Depending on the important marine life that needs protection, additional activities beyond those already prohibited by the MPA protection centre may be limited or prohibited when they impact meeting an MPA's conservation objective.

Mr. Chair, this past weekend, I had the privilege of being in your neck of the woods in the province of Nova Scotia. I was in Cape Breton. I ran the Cabot Trail relay and had a blast. I did visit the member for Cape Breton—Canso. We had a great chat. I also got to run a relay race around the Cabot Trail and visited a lot of fishing communities. I know how important this legislation is to them, so I thank them for their contributions.

My final question for the minister is this. Would she explain how we determine what additional protection measures are needed within an MPA for continued support of ecosystems such as that around the Cape Breton region?

• (2225)

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I thank the member for the glowing reviews of the Cape Breton—Canso area. I think my parliamentary secretary appreciated that very much.

Marine protected areas are an important tool in supporting the local economic prosperity of coastal communities. The question is about how we decide how to protect areas within an MPA. It is by using the best available knowledge. Areas of ecological and biological significance are identified, and protection approaches are advanced, through an extensive process of consultation, engagement and scientific and socio-economic assessments to ensure that the protections will be effective. This will include members of local communities, of course.

Following this process and depending on the MPA's unique conservation objectives, activities may either be allowed, limited or prohibited. Once an MPA is established, the activities that are allowed to occur are managed in an adaptive manner that is flexible in response to ocean changes. An adaptive management approach is conducted with local partners in order to effectively protect over the long term.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Chair, it was interesting to hear the member for Milton, Ontario speak. I am wondering if the minister can let us know if the Kelso conservation area pond is being considered for an MPA.

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Chair, not that I know of yet.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, we have heard a lot of non-coastal MPs speak here tonight. I am happy to be a coastal MP and ask some questions, and I am proud to be a former fishing captain.

In the minister's first appearance before the fisheries committee, she explained how her experience in the tree planting business prepared her well to be the Minister of Fisheries. Many people in the industry found this to be a bit odd—

The Chair: On a point of order, the parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Chair, is the member suggesting that coastal MPs somehow have a superior right to debate within this—

The Chair: I think we are getting into debate and I am glad that all members have an opportunity to debate this evening.

The hon. member.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, I do not need coaching when it comes to the fishery, especially from a man from the islands near Lake Ontario.

Could the minister please explain—

The Chair: A point of order, the hon. member for Milton.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, I am very curious if the member has any idea what a watershed is.

The Chair: Let us all take a deep breath, everybody.

The hon. member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, could the hon. minister tell us how her background in planting trees prepared her to be the Minister of Fisheries?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I am happy to say I spent countless hours and days out in the wind and weather, often on the coast, doing hard work with my hands, so I have a real appreciation for what fish harvesters do.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, that is wonderful.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the northern cod moratorium in Atlantic Canada. Why was the annual northern cod survey not completed this year?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, COVID has interfered with some of the activities of this ministry.

Business of Supply

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, does the minister consider it important to know what is happening with the cod biomass?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, every fishery is important to me, especially ones that are as challenged as the cod.

● (2230)

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, could the minister please explain why the cod survey was not completed this year?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I answered that question already.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, I have information that says that the vessel was not operating, and that is why that survey was not completed. Could the minister please confirm if there was a vessel available to complete that survey?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, there are many shortages in supply chains and workforces to keep equipment going due to COVID. This was a COVID shutdown.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, that is not an answer. Why was the capelin stock assessment not completed this year?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, it was not completed for the same reason.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, I guess DFO could not charter a private vessel to go out and do the trial surveys for capelin and cod.

What science was the minister referring to today when she was referencing capelin in question period?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I was referencing the fact that the science of the assessment of the capelin fishery is under way and the decision will be taken soon.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, if we did not have a vessel on the ocean in the past year doing the capelin survey, where did the science come from?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, it comes from other fishing data.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, the minister has a responsibility to harvesters. Capelin will show up any day in 4R. When will they see a management plan?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, the fisheries management plan will be announced when it is completed. We appreciate the fishermen who have contributed data to our—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, does Canadian science rely as heavily on acoustic surveys as other North Atlantic countries, such as Norway and Iceland?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, acoustic surveys are one tool.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, one DFO official recently said that mackerel do not have swim bladders, and as such they cannot be found acoustically. If this is true, how do fishers know where to set their seine?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I cannot comment on the wisdom that fishers have over many years of a fishery.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, given changing environmental conditions, does DFO plan to modify the geographic parameters around scientific stock assessments?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, this is an iterative process. DFO is always consulting and improving—

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, I do not think it is becoming of this House to have the members making a joke out of this member's comments. I would just ask that respect be given across the way from the members in the Liberal Party to the person asking the questions.

The Chair: Order. We were doing really well here until we started into this. I do not know if it is just the late hour or what it happens to be, but we still have a couple of hours of this, so I would suggest that people just bear in and concentrate so we can get this done.

The hon. member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, mackerel fishers have reported changing sizes and spawning locations and have asked to be involved in science, to no avail. I would like to ask the minister why.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, in collecting data to make assessments, we do consult with harvesters and others.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, based on DFO surveys, fishing zone 4R has a growing shrimp biomass. Why was the quota cut this year?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, any of the allocations are based on the science and the stock abundance.

● (2235)

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, does DFO consider shrimp to be a forage fish for the exploding Gulf of St. Lawrence redfish biomass?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, my understanding is the answer is yes, and redfish are predators of the shrimp.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, shrimp fetch as much as \$2 a pound. Redfish may fetch one-fifth of that price. Therefore, what sense does it make to stop fishing shrimp in order to grow a less valuable species like redfish?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, that would not have been the reason to stop fishing the shrimp. We were setting an allocation that would protect the shrimp.

Business of Supply

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, DFO often references consultations with external scientists. Can the minister tell us which external groups or environmental non-government agencies, ENGOS, these scientists belong to?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, there is an enormous range of who is consulted because in every stock in every area there are consultations. However, I am happy to provide lists if the member requests that.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, what does influence stock management decisions?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, discussions are a collaborative process. Harvesters are part of that as well and DFO considers all of the inputs of knowledgeable people who are part of the advisory groups.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, would the minister agree that these ENGOS have a predetermined agenda in some cases?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, there is a value to the information that comes from fishers. There is a value to the perspective that comes from people who have the environment as their priority, also.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, in the minister's first appearance at the fisheries committee, the minister referenced unbiased science. Is science provided by ENGOS biased or unbiased?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, science is a method and people who appropriately apply that method to gather and analyze data and check it through peer review do science. What can I say? Some—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, I guess there is just one science. It is all objective. That is wonderful.

If the minister were a fish harvester, and her livelihood and investment were at the mercy of ENGOS with agendas to end commercial fishing, can she tell us how she would feel?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, my goal is to grow the fish and seafood sector. To do that, we need to have abundance in the stocks. Therefore, the conservation steps that we take are for—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, the people in the fishing industry feel that they are left in the dark in Newfoundland and Labrador when it comes to proposed MPAs. Weeks ago, I asked for a map of proposed new MPAs, and I am still waiting for it. Why is the minister's department not being transparent about its plans for MPAs?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, the department officials are consulting widely on their plans for MPAs on all three coasts.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, the “30 by 30” MPA policy is DFO's goal to protect all aspects of biodiversity within those MPAs: yes or no?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, there is not a yes-or-no answer because these are consultative activities. There are four key industrial usages that are not permitted, but otherwise it is about consulting with local people.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, pinnipeds consume 24 times more fish than are caught by harvesters in Atlantic Canada each year.

What is the plan to keep those MPAs from becoming buffets for seals?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we have a seal summit, which I have announced for the fall. I am happy to entertain that question at the seal summit. I will invite you right here and now.

The Chair: The word “you” is being used.

The hon. member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the minister's gracious invitation.

Does the minister know how much more productive Norway's oceans are than ours?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I do not know that there is a metric for ocean productivity. It is my job to have our oceans be as productive, diverse and healthy as possible.

● (2240)

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, Norway's oceans are 7.5 times more productive than ours and it might have something to do with its much lower pinniped populations. Recently, the minister admitted seals eat fish.

Does the minister know how much capelin that harp seals alone consume in Atlantic Canada each year?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I assume it is a lot.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, based on DFO estimates, the answer is four billion pounds per year. The fishing industry wants to know why time and money is being wasted on another seal study and a seal summit, instead of working to remove trade barriers with the EU and the U.S.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, having brought together experts in the seal science task force report, we now have a report that allows us to consider eight different recommendations. We have already announced we are acting on two of them. I look forward to exploring it further.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, so we have cut all quotas of fish in Canada to very low levels and ended many fisheries. Pinniped populations are five to 15 times higher than historic levels.

With the reduction of pinniped numbers, can fish stocks recover?

Business of Supply

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, stocks can recover if we are managing them carefully and with conservation in mind. At the same time, we will be exploring the intersection between seals and the fish that they eat.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, does the minister believe that 50% of salmon smolts entering the ocean from B.C. rivers are consumed by pinnipeds, yes or no?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, that is not a statistic that I have heard before, so I would believe it depending on the source of the statistic.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, is the minister aware of Bill C-251 and has she familiarized herself with the contents?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, yes, I am familiar with Bill C-251.

Mr. Clifford Small: Mr. Chair, will the minister support the conservation of fish stocks and vote for Bill C-251?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, Bill C-251 poses some challenges. It calls on actions that the government would have to take. It would cost \$30 million—

The Chair: That is all the time we have.

We have a point of order from the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Chair, I believe you are about a minute short because of the point of order that was going on with the member for Kingston and the Islands. I do not think it was included in that.

The Chair: As far as I know, the timing stopped during that debate. We are just going back to look at it, and I can confirm that we had stopped for that, so it was not included in the time.

Resuming debate, we have the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Chair, I hope that my Conservative colleagues from across the way will be okay with another non-coastal MP having an interest in fisheries and oceans. I hope it is not implied that Conservatives, particularly our coastal MPs, have a monopoly over this issue, but I certainly am looking forward to participating today. I would like to take this opportunity—

The Chair: There is a point of order by the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, I would ask the member to get to the relevance of whether he is from a coastal community or an inland community in his time tonight. I would ask him to clarify.

The Chair: If we are declaring whether we are coastal or not, I am a coastal member as well.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Chair, I was just extremely offended by the fact that the member would suggest that because I live on a lake that has a couple of islands on it, somehow I would not be qualified to speak on this. That is where my concern was coming from, but I am glad we cleared that up.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the work that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada has undertaken to advance one of the key commitments outlined in the minister's mandate letter. I would like to speak specifically to the actions taken to support biology-sustainable, stable, prosperous fisheries so that fish and fish habitats are protected for future generations and Canada's fisheries can continue to grow the economy and sustain coastal communities.

We all know that the long-term success and profitability of commercial fishing sectors rely on the health of fish stocks and the aquatic ecosystems in which they live. Beyond the intrinsic value of healthy fish populations and ecosystems, we also understand how important the fisheries industry is to Canada's economy and the prosperity of coastal communities. For communities across the country, fish are an important source of food and fishing activities are a key part of the cultural fabric, especially for indigenous communities, many of which are located adjacent to fishing sites. Harvesting activities are of great social, cultural, spiritual and economic importance. Indigenous peoples seek an increase in economic—

• (2245)

The Chair: I believe there is another point of order by the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, again, with respect, the member was speaking once again as though only coastal communities have relevance in this conversation. I would like him to recognize that there are many non-coastal communities that appreciate the fisheries and what they provide to Canada. Maybe he could clarify what he is talking about.

The Chair: We are using points of order for debate, and I would suggest that maybe points of order be actually used.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: That is another great ruling by you, Mr. Chair.

The commercial and recreational fishing sectors are also key economic drivers in coastal communities. Ocean-based recreational fisheries contribute approximately 2% to Canada's marine economy output and are important economic pillars. Whether they are large or small-scale operations, commercial fishing and associated businesses are often the single largest sources of local jobs in Canada's coastal regions. In 2018, the commercial fishing industry directly contributed \$2.3 billion to Canadian gross domestic product, while the aquaculture industry directly contributed \$700 million and the fish processing industry contributed \$1.2 billion. The total direct and indirect contribution of the seafood industry to the Canadian economy accounted for \$7.6 billion in 2018.

Business of Supply

Canada's commercial fishery sector is highly export-oriented, producing the country's greatest single food commodity export by value and equivalent to about 80% of production volume. Commercial fisheries also support fish and seafood processing, which are key parts of the value chain and significant employers in indigenous and other coastal communities. An estimated 20,400 individuals are directly employed in fish and seafood processing, with an additional 32,167 indirect jobs stemming from the industry. Canada's fish harvesters have responded to growing demands from markets to demonstrate that their fish products come from sustainable fisheries.

Across Canada, there are approximately 45 fisheries that are part of 32 marine stewardship council certifications, having demonstrated that they meet the criteria established by the global—

The Chair: It seems there is another point of order by the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, this is supposed the time that we question the minister about her portfolio. I have not heard a question yet. I wonder when we are going to actually hear some questions from the member.

The Chair: The tradition in this House has normally been that when government members are speaking, they get to speak and ask questions in the last five minutes of their time. I am going to wait until the 10 minutes is complete and the member, I am sure, will be asking a question.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Chair, the member certainly should review the rules around the committee of the whole and estimates, which actually provides any member either the opportunity to speak for the entire 15 minutes, asking questions, or to provide 10 minutes of a speech, followed by questions. I am sure the member knew that and he just forgot.

Canada's fish harvesters have responded to the growing demands for markets to demonstrate that the fish products come from sustainable fisheries. Across Canada, there are approximately 45 fisheries that are a part of 32 Marine Stewardship Council certifications, having demonstrated that they meet the criteria established by the global non-profit organization for sustainable fisheries. These include Atlantic fisheries such as northern and striped shrimp, off-shore scallops, lobster, Arctic surf clams, snow crab, swordfish and groundfish, Atlantic halibut, cod, redfish and herring and Pacific fisheries such as salmon, Pacific halibut and more.

Moreover, 61% of all landings from Canada's fisheries come from fisheries in the MSC program. It is one of the highest percentages among major fishing nations. The long-term sustainability and success of the commercial fishing sector is directly linked to the health of fish stocks. Growing pressure on fish stocks and environmental impacts, such as the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, pose current and future challenges for Canadian fisheries. Many harvesters will say that they can see the impacts of climate change out on the water. While some stocks in Canadian waters, such as lobster and halibut, appear to be benefiting from current environmental conditions, some commercially significant marine fish stocks in Canada are at low levels or at risk of decline.

With the modernization of the Fisheries Act in 2019, our government created new tools to continue to promote healthier marine

ecosystems and more abundant fish stocks across the country. The Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard now has the legislative and regulatory mechanisms in place to protect existing fish and fish habitat, prioritize rebuilding depleted fish stocks and incorporate indigenous traditional knowledge into decision-making—

• (2250)

The Chair: A point of order from the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Chair, the hon. member referred to threatened stocks. I just wonder if he could actually specify what the threatened stocks actually are.

The Chair: We are getting into questions and answers again. That is not really what the point of the discussion is. I also will make a quick comment here that there was a lot of addition earlier, so I guess this is just payback.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Chair, are you sustaining that point of order? Is there relevance? What is the point of order?

The Chair: This is debate. Debate is not a point of order.

The hon. member.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Chair, furthermore, are you now saying that because one person did something earlier another person can do it? What is going on here?

The Chair: I was just making a general comment.

The hon. member.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Chair, that is great. I would hate to see that kind of precedent being set by you today at almost 11 o'clock at night.

We can already see the benefits from the modern safeguards the Fisheries Act provides. Just last month, on April 4, to be precise, the fish—

The Chair: I have another point of order from the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Chair, I am concerned about interpretation. I think I heard the member earlier refer to scallops. I think those refer to potatoes. We call them scallops, if members know anything about the fishery.

The Chair: All right. We are descending into more debate than we should be. That is not a point of order.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Business of Supply

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Chair, we can already see the benefits from the modern safeguards that the Fisheries Act provides. Just last month, on April 4, to be precise, the fish stock provisions of the Fisheries Act came into force for 30 major stocks prescribed by regulation, 14 of which require rebuilding. The provisions introduced binding obligations on the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to maintain prescribed fish stocks at sustainable levels and to develop and implement rebuilding plans if these stocks become depleted.

Corresponding regulations are now in place to ensure that rebuilding plans are developed in a timely and consistent manner. The fish stock provisions and corresponding regulatory amendments have significantly strengthened Canada's fisheries management framework. They are a major milestone toward restoring and rebuilding Canada's fish stocks and supporting sustainable fisheries for the long term.

These accomplishments support the already great work that Fisheries and Oceans Canada and its partners have been doing to rebuild our fish stocks and place greater accountability on the responsible management of our fisheries for generations to come. This government is committed to restoring Canada's fish stocks to abundance so that they can continue to support indigenous peoples, harvesters, coastal communities and the overall health of marine ecosystems. Healthy fish stocks support more resilient ecosystems while improving the potential for economic returns in the long term.

When a stock has declined, conservation of the stock and concrete action aimed at rebuilding it are of primary importance. Of course, this does not come without a cost. This government recognizes that when a decision is taken to close or restrict certain fisheries so that stocks can be rebuilt, there will be economic impacts during the rebuilding period. These decisions are not taken lightly. The DFO strives to minimize the socio-economic impacts and rebuild initiatives without compromising the primary goal of promoting the rebuilding of depleted fish stocks.

In practice, this is an enormous and complicated undertaking. However, more significant and potentially long-term impacts can result from delaying action, or not taking sufficient action, to promote the rebuilding of stocks.

DFO will continue to invest in its science programming to ensure fishery decisions based on the precautionary approach continue to be informed by leading science advice on the biology of fish stocks and environmental variables affecting those stocks.

The 2018 fall economic statement announced \$107.4 million over five years and \$17.6 million in ongoing investments to support the implementation of the fish stocks provisions in the 2019 amendments to the Fisheries Act.

A large portion of this funding is supporting science activities, from at-sea surveys to the development of reference points to apply the precautionary approach to fishery decisions. Further, DFO is funding external projects to support innovation in fisheries and science that will contribute to sustainable fisheries.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and this government more broadly, continue to be firmly committed to safeguarding the long-term via-

bility of Canada's fisheries and coastal communities by ensuring the health of Canada's fish stocks and aquatic ecosystems.

For communities across Canada, fish are an important resource. Commercial and recreational fishing sectors are key economic drivers in coastal communities, with ocean-based recreational fisheries contributing about 2% to Canada's marine economy output. Harvesting operations both large and small are often the single largest source of local jobs in Canada's coastal regions.

In 2018 alone, the commercial fishing industry contributed \$2.3 billion to Canada's gross domestic product, with the aquaculture industry contributing \$700 million and the fish processing industry contributing \$1.2 billion. The total direct and indirect contribution of the seafood industry to the Canadian economy accounted for \$7.6 billion. This industry provides an estimated 20,400 individuals with direct employment in fish and seafood processing, with an additional 32,167 indirect jobs stemming from the industry.

With this in mind, it is easy to see why the fishing industry is so important to not just coastal communities, but indeed to Canada as a whole, which is why I have such a great interest in this tonight.

Can the minister please explain what she is doing to ensure the long-term sustainability and viability of the commercial fishing sector?

● (2255)

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I thought the member's comments were very insightful, especially when he was talking about this being an enormous and complicated undertaking. When we think about the country of Canada, with two and a half times the length of coastline of any other country in the world and oceans on three different coasts, it is enormous and complicated. That is one of the reasons that ministry officials work with the local harvest community and other stakeholders as they seek to translate data into conservation or fishery action.

Our government did indeed create new tools to continue to promote healthier marine ecosystems and more abundant fish stocks across the country. We now have legislative and regulatory mechanisms in place that will protect existing fish and fish habitat, prioritize rebuilding depleted fish stocks and incorporate indigenous knowledge into decision-making. Among these tools are the fish stock provisions in the Fisheries Act that create modern safeguards on fish stocks. These provisions create binding obligations to maintain prescribed fish stocks at sustainable levels and to develop and implement rebuilding plans for depleted stocks.

Business of Supply

This has significantly strengthened our fisheries management framework. It is a major step toward better restoring and rebuilding our fish stocks, which are essential to supporting sustainable fisheries in the long run. It is a virtual circle: Ensuring that we have healthy fish stocks supports more resilient marine ecosystems, and thus they provide greater economic returns for Canada's harvesters.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Chair, earlier, the minister said that the DFO scientific team included economists and sociologists. Could the minister tell us how many economists are employed by DFO?

[English]

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we could find that number out for the member of Parliament.

• (2300)

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Chair, I would also like to know how many sociologists work at DFO. In addition, are there other social science experts working at DFO and, if so, what types of experts?

[English]

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, a range of experts are working with DFO, including sociologists and others who would have the expertise to interpret the data. We have a very strong digital team as well, which knows how to use digital means to summarize and communicate the—

The Chair: The hon. member.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Chair, the minister just opened a new door with her mention of data. What we are hearing on the ground is that there is a lot of missing data regarding certain species, in particular pelagic species, and especially in the St. Lawrence. Does the minister think that DFO has enough ships?

[English]

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, it would be nice to have unlimited resources, but that is not the world we live in. We have the resources we have, and our officials and scientists work very hard to get adequate data for us to make decisions. There are gaps sometimes, and when that is clear, we find ways to help fill those gaps and make decisions based on the—

The Chair: The hon. member.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Chair, does the Coast Guard have sufficient capacity? Does it have enough vessels? Unfortunately, the answer seems to be “no”. Does DFO have a plan for rectifying this? Without measures, it is difficult to make informed decisions.

[English]

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we have a very comprehensive fleet refresh plan that has 31 votes for the large ships and dozens of smaller ships and crafts we are replacing. This was necessary because of a decade of darkness under the previous Conservative gov-

ernment, when nothing was done to modernize and update the Coast Guard.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Chair, while we are on the subject of the Coast Guard, I would like to talk about the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary.

The St. Lawrence River is magnificent. It is one of the most beautiful rivers in the world, but it is also one of the most complex and perilous to navigate. That is precisely why there are pilots to navigate the St. Lawrence River. Most of the time, it is the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary that keeps people safe in the turbulent waters of the St. Lawrence.

The Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary has a very small budget. Is the minister planning to increase its funding soon, as the Senate committee proposed in its November 2018 report?

[English]

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, the Coast Guard has been funded this year to continue refreshing its fleet, and it is a major investment in the Coast Guard. I have been very proud to see the work the Coast Guard does in icebreaking to enable fishers in constituencies such as the member's to get out early onto the water to fish.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Chair, I really want to talk about the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, which is made up of volunteers.

Does the minister know how much the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary teams have to spend in order to be properly equipped when they respond to calls?

[English]

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I thank the member for her concern over the Canadian Coast Guard, which is a very effective and proud part of this department. It is the 60th anniversary of the Coast Guard, and that is something worth celebrating.

As to details about the Coast Guard funding, we are happy to provide them should the member provide us a written question.

• (2305)

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Chair, I know many people who work for the Coast Guard on the St. Lawrence River. I share the minister's joy.

However, my question has to do with the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, whose members are volunteers. I will give the minister the answer: It costs them between \$4,000 and \$5,000 to gear up safely in order to voluntarily participate in saving lives.

Business of Supply

Does the minister know if her department's votes include provisions to support volunteers at the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, who are so essential to the survival of a great many boaters and water sports enthusiasts on the St. Lawrence River?

Again, the responders out there are often the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary volunteers. What can be done to encourage these volunteers to remain in the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary? What can be done to retain these people and keep them active? How can we ensure they do not have to spend \$5,000 of their own money to do society a great service?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the member's enthusiasm for the volunteers of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, which I share. The work that these volunteers do with local partners is very important.

Canada's oceans protection plan includes funding that will allow us to support and strengthen this initiative.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Chair, I am pleased to hear that. I hope the volunteers of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary have heard that they may get some financial support.

While we are on the subject, may I also suggest that the old Canadian Coast Guard ships be modified, refitted and offered to the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, since they do not have suitable ships either?

I would also like to talk about independent harvesters and owner-operators. Do the minister and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans support independent harvesters?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I want to thank the member for her question.

Yes, we support independent harvesters with fishery allocations and with data on both sea and fishing conditions. We have new regulations in place for independent harvesters.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Chair, the minister just said that she supports independent harvesters and coastal communities.

Does she feel that the policies and regulations that protect them are being respected?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I thank the member for her question. I believe she is talking about independent inshore harvesters.

[English]

It is the independent fishers who are in the inshore fishery, as opposed to the big commercial boats.

[Translation]

We have regulations that protect the continuity of the independent inshore fishery.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Chair, how many quota transfer violations are currently under review?

[English]

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I am having trouble understanding the interpretation. Could the member repeat the question?

• (2310)

[Translation]

The Chair: The member may repeat the question.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Chair, can Fisheries and Oceans Canada tell us how many quota transfer violations are under review at this time?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I will have to answer that question a little later. My team has to find that information.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Chair, can the minister or her team tell us if any sanctions have been put forward to prevent illegal quota transfers?

[English]

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I think the member is asking about a particular fishery. The regulations differ from fishery to fishery. A quota that is assigned to an inshore fisher may not be contracted out to someone else, nor can it be sold. That is a way to protect the integrity of the inshore fishery.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Chair, are there any sanctions for non-compliant transfers?

That was my question. I do not know if the minister will answer.

[English]

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, compliance is required under the renewed Fisheries Act.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Chair, what share of fishing licences and quotas are held by independent harvesters residing in coastal communities as opposed to large corporations or financial holdings?

What is the proportion of fishing licences and quotas?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, it depends on the fishery. The proportion is not the same for each one.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Chair, I understand that the proportion varies according to the species and the location.

I will ask another question along the same lines. What percentage of seafood landings are processed in coastal communities?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, all catch landed by independent harvesters is processed in local communities.

The Chair: There is one minute left.

The hon. member.

Business of Supply

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Chair, I am surprised by how quickly time has passed. I will skip a few questions.

I just got back from the Magdalen Islands, where I met with people who use the port of Cap-aux-Meules.

Will the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Transport Canada come to an agreement to better meet the needs of those who use this infrastructure that is critical to economic development in the Magdalen Islands?

There is a temporary wharf that appears to be permanent and that is wholly inadequate. I have watched trawlers manoeuvring around each other as they try to dock on the wharf. It is awful watching them switch places.

Will the minister commit to visiting Cap-aux-Meules, so she can see the problem for herself and realize that it needs to be fixed quickly?

The entire economy of the Magdalen Islands is at stake.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I thank the member for her invitation. I have heard that it is a very beautiful region. I would be glad to visit, but I cannot promise when that visit will occur.

[English]

Small craft harbours are very important for fish harvesters right across eastern Canada.

• (2315)

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Chair, it is an honour to rise today to speak and ask questions about issues that are top of mind for the coastal communities in my riding and the amazing marine life that inhabits the area as well.

Canada's oceans are home to 47 distinct populations of whales. Whales are a vital component of marine ecosystems, both for the recirculation of marine nutrients and as a bellwether for the health of marine ecosystems as a whole. They feature centrally in the cultures of many indigenous peoples and serve an important role in coastal communities through their iconic status and tourist appeal.

Many Canadian whale species face threats directly attributable to human activity, with 19 Canadian populations or species now listed under the Species at Risk Act, of which eight are assessed as endangered. Whale species in Canada, particularly those listed under the Species at Risk Act, face a complex and interrelated mix of threats from human activities that affect their survival and recovery. These threats include entanglement in fishing gear, disturbance from interaction with vessels, increased contaminants and decreased prey availability. Threats are becoming even more acute as a result of climate change and its impact on ocean ecosystems and whale distribution, and are likely to grow as globalization drives an increase in international marine activities.

Endangered whale species and their prey are being pushed into new habitats, which exposes them to vessel traffic in ecologically sensitive environments. For example, ocean warming has reduced the quality and abundance of the preferred prey in traditional North Atlantic whale habitat areas in the Bay of Fundy and the Gulf of Maine, creating a less favourable foraging environment. As a result,

North Atlantic right whales shifted their late spring and summer foraging grounds to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where they face greater risk of vessel strike and entanglement in fishing gear. Warmer oceans have also contributed to reduced salmon spawning, resulting in fewer chinook salmon off the coast of British Columbia, which is the preferred prey of the southern resident killer whale. In the St. Lawrence estuary, belugas face environmental and noise-based threats in their critical habitat from marine transports and other activities.

Over the past several years, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Transport Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Parks Canada have worked together to make targeted investments to address immediate threats facing critically endangered whale species, including \$167.4 million under the whales initiative announced in budget 2018. The whales initiative was the first targeted national whale fund to protect key species, and it was further supported by \$61.5 million, announced later in 2018, specifically for southern resident killer whales, and additional funds found in the oceans protection plan and nature legacy initiatives.

These investments have started a shift in the way fisheries operate, with a focus on innovative tools that protect species such as the North Atlantic right whale, while also demonstrating the role of fisheries in a blue economy and Canada's leadership in sustainable seafood. The North Atlantic right whale is listed as endangered under Canada's Species At Risk Act.

Fishing gear entanglement prevention is a priority for Fisheries and Oceans Canada. We have implemented changes to the seasonal open and close dates of fisheries to avoid interactions, and a combination of temporary and season-long fishing area closures designed to ensure that gear, including lobster and snow crab gear, is removed from the water based on right whale presence. These measures are supported by a robust monitoring regime to detect the presence of whales, including flights, vessels and acoustic monitoring. Since 2020, there have been no reported North Atlantic right whale mortalities and only one new entanglement found in Canadian waters.

To further reduce the risk of entanglement, the department is working with the fishing industry and partners in Atlantic Canada and Quebec to develop whale-safe fishing gear innovations, such as systems that fish without vertical lines to prevent whales from becoming entangled in the gear, as well as other innovations that incorporate low-breaking-strength links that are designed to fish under normal conditions and yet break if a whale should become entangled.

Trials of such gear have been under way over the past few years, and the department's whale-safe gear adoption fund is providing \$20 million in support to nearly three dozen projects this year. By supporting fishing industry expertise and leadership from entrepreneurs, we are finding ways to solve the entanglement problem and allow commercial fishing activities to coexist with whales in their habitat.

With respect to the iconic southern resident killer whales, the government has taken significant steps to address key threats to the population. The southern resident killer whale is considered to be at risk because of its small population size, low reproductive rate and the existence of a variety of anthropogenic threats that have the potential to prevent recovery or to further cause declines.

● (2320)

Principal among these anthropogenic threats are reductions in the availability of prey, with chinook salmon being the main prey item; both physical and acoustic disturbances; and environmental contamination. Actions on many of these recovery measures identified in the resident killer whale recovery strategy are under way. I have actually had a chance to see some of the science and the work being done at the Pacific Science Enterprise Centre. On April 29 of this year, the Government of Canada announced enhanced measures for 2022, for the fourth year in a row, to stop the decline of the species through management measures to the protection of salmon and minimization of disturbances from vessels.

Regarding the St. Lawrence Estuary beluga, research efforts have advanced the government's understanding of threats to this population, leading to additional protection measures such as habitat closure, slow-down zones for vessel traffic and restrictions on approach distances for this important population. Key investments to date in research, monitoring and data collection continue to enhance the Government of Canada's understanding of the north Atlantic right whale, southern resident killer whale and St. Lawrence Estuary beluga distribution, their foraging habitats and prey availability.

Our government also continues to build the marine mammal response program, which aims to assist marine mammals and sea turtles in distress. In collaboration with conservation groups and non-governmental organizations, the department supports marine mammal incident response networks in all regions under the umbrella of the marine mammal response program. We have made substantial investments in our marine mammal response program over the past several years to support a safe and timely response to marine mammals in distress, such as entangled whales, and to conduct a necropsy.

Our investments in the marine mammal response program include \$4.5 million in contributions to build capacity for safe and effective marine mammal response across Canada. In a given year, there can be close to 1,600 reported incidents involving over 2,000 animals, and many of these incidents involve species at risk.

Fisheries management will continue to evolve and adapt to protect and conserve whale and marine mammal populations. At present, some of the measures we have in place also provide benefits to other species in the same area. For example, area closures to fisheries to protect right whales also protect other whale species.

Business of Supply

Our world-class adaptive management measures, which incorporate the best available science, are developed through close collaboration between our department, the fishing industry, indigenous communities and leading scientists to protect and rebuild endangered whale populations while upholding Canada's reputation for sustainably sourced seafood.

I have mentioned that whales are an integral part of our marine ecosystems. I know that the well-being of the endangered southern resident killer whale population is a great concern to Canadians and its protection, and that our government has taken concrete action to protect this iconic species. Can the minister please speak to some of these measures that we have adopted to monitor the movements of southern resident killer whales?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I really appreciate the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country's deep interest in the health and abundance of the Salish Sea, the plight of wild Pacific salmon and the southern resident killer whales, which are, of course, an iconic part of our ecosystem.

We have certainly taken significant steps to address threats to the population through the oceans protection plan and the whales initiative, as the member spoke about. For the fourth year in a row, our government has implemented enhanced measures to stop the decline of the species. There has been a great deal of work done with indigenous groups and stakeholders to inform the development and enhancement of protection measures.

I mean, we would love to see the numbers of these creatures grow, but they are not. The numbers of the southern resident killer whale are slightly down. To build on past efforts, I had an unfortunate opportunity, in a way, as there were new fishery closures for the recreational fishery that needed to be put into place to protect key foraging areas of the southern resident killer whales. With continued measures under the oceans protection plan, I am optimistic that we can stop the decline and start to see a return of higher numbers of these whales.

● (2325)

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Chair, we recognize that protecting and sustaining aquatic species at risk is critically important to ecosystem health and thriving fisheries. I am hopeful that our efforts over the past few years to protect the endangered southern resident killer whales from fishing gear entanglements and collisions with vessels will help the population grow and rebuild.

Business of Supply

It is clear that sensible protection measures are necessary and that we must work in collaboration with other governmental departments, industry, NGOs, academia, indigenous communities and our U.S. counterparts to ensure that these whales have the best possible chance to recover.

Could the minister please explain what measures are in effect this year?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, there is a great range of measures. Not that many years ago, pleasure craft could come right up to observe killer whales in their habitat as they were foraging, feeding or just conducting their daily life activities. That was very interruptive of their feeding. We have increased the measures to keep pleasure craft and whale-watching craft a distance from the southern resident killer whales. There has been a slowdown of vessels when whales are detected in an area. There is surveillance happening so that we know when there is a pod coming through.

There is also hatchery chinook production that is intended to provide more food, because chinook are the key food for the species. The southern resident killer whales face many challenges, and they are not all of human origin. The transient killer whales from the north that overlap in habitat with the southern resident killer whales are becoming successful in taking over the northern part of the southern resident killer whale range.

We are also working with scientists from California, Oregon and Washington, through the international killer whale collective, to get the best possible understanding of the measures that we need to take, which we will continue taking to do our very best to protect these whales.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the minister for her detailed response.

I would like to shift gears a little and ask about a different matter. In 2015, folks in and around the Lower Mainland were horrified to see the impacts of the *Marathassa* bunker oil spill that occurred in English Bay. In fact, we did not find out about this spill until almost 24 hours after it happened.

Unfortunately, the shipping company that was responsible for this spill was never held accountable because of the environmental laws as written in the Environmental Protection Act. One of the main reasons we did not find the spill for almost 24 hours was that the Kitsilano Coast Guard station was shut down.

I was hoping the minister could please explain to us the importance of reopening this Coast Guard base as a mechanism to keep our ocean communities safe from such a spill ever happening again.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, indeed, the Kitsilano Coast Guard base had been shut down in a short-sighted budget-cutting measure by the previous government, much to the concern of British Columbians. Vancouver is the busiest port in Canada, and the number of recreational boaters is enormous. In my constituency alone, the Jericho Sailing Centre has 2,000 people who use non-motorized watercraft in the harbour, and yet the search and rescue base was shut down.

We made a commitment to reopen the base, which we did very soon after being elected in 2015. We expanded the base, and it is now able to serve the safety of Vancouverites on the waters.

• (2330)

The Chair: Continuing debate, the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Chair, who owns Canada's fisheries resources?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Chair, they are a public good. They are a public property resource.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, according to the Constitution, who is ultimately responsible for managing Canada's fisheries resources?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, it is the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the minister who signs off. I am responsible.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, according to section 91 of the Constitution Act, 1867, it gives the exclusive legislative authority to the Parliament of Canada in all matters pertaining to fisheries.

Considering that the common resources of Canada's fisheries belong to Canadians, who does the minister think should be the beneficiary of Canada's fisheries resources?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, it is a great opportunity for me to point out just how rich and abundant we are in fisheries resources here in Canada, with 90% of our fisheries in healthy shape, and to the benefit of the harvesters, the communities and the whole—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, how important is DFO's at-sea science to its assessment and management of fisheries resources?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, all of our science programs are key to managing the fisheries.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, the minister previously stated that she is proud of her government's delivery of Coast Guard vessels, so I would like to ask her about the new offshore fisheries science vessels the *Sir John Franklin*, *Jacques Cartier* and *John Cabot*. These vessels have been plagued with corrosion, premature wear, mislabelling and even a stop-sail order from Transport Canada since entering service between 2019 and 2021.

How much at-sea science and assessment capacity has DFO lost because of the deficient boats delivered by the Liberal government to the Coast Guard?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I want to remind the member of the decade of darkness that ended in 2015 when our government actually committed to replacing the fleet. It is the case that new ships often have challenges that need to be worked out, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Business of Supply

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, it was the Canadian shipbuilding strategy established by the previous Conservative government that started the delivery of these vessels. The delivery has been under the minister's government and you are taking credit for a shipbuilding strategy.

How does DFO manage fisheries when at-sea science data is absent?

The Chair: I want to remind members to ask their questions through the Chair.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, it is with the best data we can accumulate, and often it is from fish harvesters.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, is the minister confident the *Franklin*, *Cartier* and *Cabot* vessels delivered by her government are seaworthy and safe workplaces for the Coast Guard and DFO personnel aboard?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, they will not be out on the sea if they are not seaworthy.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, has the minister instructed the commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard to ensure the vessels delivered by the Liberal government are not sent to sea unless they are proved to be safe for all aboard?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, the ships that go to sea have gone through inspections and are safe to sail. The reality is that new ships sometimes have problems that do not emerge until they are out on the water.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, earlier the minister stated that the government is developing a responsible plan for those affected by the Discovery Islands decision, because those people deserve no less. Some British Columbians have already lost their jobs to the Discovery Islands decision, and this minister keeps telling them to just go on EI.

Why does the minister believe that some Canadians deserve no less than a responsible transition plan, but others should go on EI?

• (2335)

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, the licences that were not renewed in the Discovery Islands were before my time as minister. I have the responsibility to develop a responsible plan for transitioning away from open net-pen aquaculture.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, tonight the minister stated that there are EI programs for those having difficulties. The minister is referring to difficulties like jobs and businesses that have been eliminated by the government's decision.

Can the minister admit tonight that her government's decisions are more than difficulties for Canadians, that they are already devastating?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, what I would say is that it is a difficult situation for anyone who loses a job or a business, and I have a great deal of empathy. I would like to point out that there are more jobs than before the COVID pandemic and that our unemployment rate is at a historic low.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, what level of importance does the minister place on the work of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, it is very important work.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, earlier the minister stated that the government is studying potential steps to establish a beneficial owner licensing policy on the west coast.

Has the minister read the fisheries committee report that examined problems in the DFO licensing and quota regimes on the west coast?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I think there may be a misunderstanding as to what I said. It was that the DFO is conducting a study of beneficial ownership, and yes, I have reviewed the report.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, this report was titled "West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risk and Benefits", and it provided the government with 20 recommendations.

Has the minister included the committee's recommendations in the government's development of a beneficial owner licensing policy for the west coast?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we are certainly reviewing the recommendations and taking them into consideration.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, does the minister sign off on DFO's proposed annual budget and estimates before they are tabled in the House?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, that is not part of what I do.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, the minister does not sign off on the budget for her own department? That is shocking.

How much of DFO's budget for the current fiscal year is determined by cabinet?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I just want to go back over the previous question. I recommend the budget to the House. I do not sign off on the budget.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, how much of DFO's budget for the current fiscal year is determined by cabinet?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, it is decided by the House.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, has the minister reduced or increased the ministry's budget estimates under the direction of the PMO or cabinet?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, no, I have not.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, during the development of DFO's budget for the current fiscal year, did the minister reduce draft estimates from one DFO branch in order to meet resource requirements from another branch of DFO?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, no.

Business of Supply

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, on March 2 of this year, I provided the minister with a letter requesting that she and her officials review an attached proposal from the Adams Lake Indian Band and connect with program representatives to identify funding opportunities for a time-critical sockeye hatchery supplementation program in North Okanagan—Shuswap.

Has the minister or her department connected with the Adams Lake Indian Band, and have resources been identified for this time-critical program?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we are assessing this proposal. We are always interested in ideas that are brought forward by our indigenous nations and we take them seriously.

• (2340)

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, to date, how much of the funding announced for the Pacific strategic salmon initiative, the PSSI, has been allocated?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I can get us the exact number, but it is approximately \$165 million.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, to date, what amount of PSSI funding has been spent?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I do not have that information.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, how many full-time and part-time DFO employees are currently paid with PSSI funds?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I thank the member for raising PSSI, because it is an absolutely historic initiative that reflects the importance we place on the recovery—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, when PSSI is fully established, how many DFO employees in total will be positioned and paid through PSSI?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, 300 employees will be paid for through this program.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, what habitat restoration projects will be completed with PSSI resources this fiscal year?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we have renewed the BCSRIF program. That is an ongoing set of funding to do restoration.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, what conservation hatchery programs will be funded by PSSI resources this fiscal year?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, that is still under development, but I am pleased that the enhancements in the hatcheries and community hatcheries are a core of the pillars of the program.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, 300 people are to be employed through this program, but there are no clear answers here yet on what is going to be completed this year.

What PSSI funding is allocated to drive improved fisheries harvests?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I do want to point out that the estimates process is Parliament's ability to provide approval to the proposed budget for this year, and—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, how did the minister's department arrive at the figures of \$647 million, plus \$98.9 million for amortization, for the PSSI?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, the PSSI is historically funded for five years at \$640 million, so that is this year's component of the total program.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, it sounds like a pile of money poured out without a plan.

What evidence does the minister have that the resources and initiatives of the PSSI will increase the recovery potential for Pacific salmon stocks?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, that is absolutely our intention, and we will be collaborating with the indigenous communities, with harvesters and with others to do just that.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, that is 300 jobs but no evidence that there is going to be any improvement for Pacific salmon stocks. If the minister is unable to provide evidence of increased potential of recovery, how did she arrive at the figure of \$647 million?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, that was allocated before I was appointed as minister. However, I will say that the pillar that has to do with collaboration is extremely important in getting results, because otherwise the province, the federal government and others are working in silos. This—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, for the current fiscal year, what is DFO's budget for aquatic invasive species prevention activities?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, it is approximately \$10 million.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, what percentage of funding for prevention of AIS is allocated to waters west of the Great Lakes?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I would say that it would be less than 50%.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, why is there such inequity between the amount of funding for the Great Lakes region and western Canada?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, it is an opportunity to point out the incredible importance of reducing the invasive species growth across the country.

• (2345)

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Chair, who is the final decision-maker as to what science DFO will undertake?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, the bottom line is I sign off on the department's budget.

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Small craft harbours is a key Fisheries and Oceans Canada program and one that is important for Canada's economy because it provides critical support to the commercial fishing industry, which has annual landings valued at more than \$3.5 billion. Our government has provided the program with important resources to help meet its mandate. Our government has announced \$784 million in new funding for the small craft harbours program since 2016. This funding supports Canadians in the fishing, aquaculture, tourism, environmental, recreational, marine engineering and construction industries and strengthens the resilience of coastal and rural communities. In essence, it is the economic hub in rural and Atlantic Canada, where I am from.

From coast to coast to coast, Fisheries and Oceans Canada owns, operates and maintains a national system of harbours to provide commercial fish harvesters and other small craft harbour users with safe and accessible facilities. Ninety per cent of Canadian fishing vessels are using small craft harbours, and fish harvesters depend on these facilities not only to support their livelihoods, but also to create economic wealth in the communities they reside in. At the present time, the program is responsible for 973 harbours, 675 of which are core harbours that are considered essential to Canada's fishing industry. The remaining 298 are used less by the industry or recreational harbours.

In many communities, these forming fishing harbours now have a new calling that allows them to remain key local drivers in terms of the economy. In fact, in budget 2021, our government announced it would provide \$300 million over two years to repair, renew and replace small craft harbours. While small craft harbours remain key to the continued success of the Canadian fishing industry, DFO staff are focusing on certain areas that will require attention over the coming years. The small craft harbours program is also very successful in surpassing its objectives through its involvement in the oceans protection plan and its national strategy to address the risks posed by abandoned and wrecked vessels. This strategy is being delivered by Transport Canada and our department through the small craft harbours and the Canadian Coast Guard.

Under the small craft harbours portion of the strategy, Fisheries and Oceans Canada has funded \$1.3 million over the next five years to remove abandoned and wrecked vessels in small craft harbours. The small craft harbours abandoned and wrecked vessels removal program was implemented in 2017 and 2018 and has since surpassed its oceans protection plan target of 50 vessels removed and disposed of by 2022, with a total of 154 vessels removed from federally owned harbours. The program will continue beyond 2021-22 as part of the renewal and expansion of the oceans protection plan, which was announced in budget 2022. These positive results are contributing to strengthening the resilience of rural and coastal communities in Canada. The goal of all of this will be to further strengthen the resilience of our rural and coastal communities, which we hold dear.

Business of Supply

Before closing my remarks, I would like to point out that one of the keys to the program's success is the collaboration, indeed a strong collaboration, with the 5,000 volunteers that represent the over 560 harbour authorities that we work with across this very country. As we can see, the small craft harbours program continues to play a key role in the maintenance and upkeep of Canada's harbours. I can assure the House that our government will remain committed to supporting programs like this so that it continues to be successful in meeting its mandate.

My one question, so we can move on to the questions by the member opposite, is that in budget 2021, the government announced it would provide \$300 million over the next two years, as mentioned, to repair, renew and replace small craft harbours. Could the minister explain the progress of the program and the important, in fact critical, role it plays in our fish and seafood sector?

● (2350)

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I thank the member for Cape Breton—Canso for his very deep engagement with his community and for championing the issues, including small craft harbours in Cape Breton.

Our government and I fully understand the important role that small craft harbours play in our country. These government-owned harbours are located throughout Canada and provide commercial fish harvesters and other small craft harbour users with safe and accessible facilities. Some 90% of Canadian fishing vessels are using small craft harbours, and fish harvesters depend on these facilities to support their livelihoods.

As the parliamentary secretary mentioned, our government provided \$300 million over two years to repair, renew and replace small craft harbours. With this new funding, our government has now announced that \$784 million in new funding for a small craft harbours program has been allocated since 2016, so we understand how important these harbours are to communities. In these estimates that we are discussing today, \$149.5 million in new funding is being provided for the small craft harbours program.

We understand how important the fish and seafood industry is. It is my job and commitment to grow that industry. For that we need harbours that can support the fishers who use them, and we are working to do just that.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Chair, just by way of opening, I will say that I am basing a lot of these questions on testimony that we heard at the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. It is an excellent committee with a lot of non-partisan co-operation between members around the table, but I will not cite every witness in every specific question.

Business of Supply

I am following up on an earlier question on the climate impacts of extreme weather events and the impacts on fish habitat. We know we have impacts on and threats to Pacific salmon from flooding, wildfires and the destruction of the riparian zones that used to shield the waters to keep them from getting too hot from increased water temperatures. However, I want to focus on what we are going to do to rebuild infrastructure after the November floods in B.C. We could do it wrong and worsen salmon habitat through building dikes and dredging or we could do it right. Some of the expert witnesses suggested that Washington state is where we ought to look for excellence in its flood plains by design program, which works to reduce flood risks while enhancing and restoring salmon habitat.

Can the minister update us on whether DFO is actively pursuing a flood plains by design program?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I absolutely share the concern that it is not just the effects of the flooding, slides and fires, but how we rebuild from them. I mentioned earlier that I am part of the emergency committee of provincial and federal ministers, and each of my and DFO's interventions has been to make sure the other ministers understand the importance of having fish-friendly rebuilding. We are going to continue to press that point.

Our government provided \$5 billion to the province to help rebuild from the flooding in November. That rebuilding has to be done in a way that is fish friendly, so I am going to be asking for a report on what we are doing to ensure that.

I thank the member for her concern.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Chair, I will move to the problem of what people call aquaculture but my constituents insist I call toxic fish factories, and how we are going to get them out of the water, as the minister's government promised. Some of the witnesses who testified recently on the science issue questioned why the department, not the minister personally, obviously, has in certain sections suppressed science on viruses and sea lice. The conclusion was that it had to do with the fact that the Fisheries Act structurally has a conflict of interest in both promoting the aquaculture industry and regulating it.

Would the minister be open to looking at the new aquaculture act to eliminate that conflict of interest, have a different department promote aquaculture and have DFO protect wild fish stocks?

• (2355)

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we do have a process, the CSAS process, which provides the opportunity for peer review of science. I understand what the member is saying when she says that there has been some recent research that has come out since the CSAS report that determined minimal risk. At a certain point, when there is a body of work that has not been reviewed, I will be requesting that another peer review process take place through CSAS so that we can update our analysis of the risk to wild salmon.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Chair, moving on, I was really pleased to hear the minister say that she recognizes that polystyrene is a real problem of plastic pollution in our coastal areas, but I was disappointed to hear that it sounded like DFO is not interested in getting it out of the ocean.

Is DFO working with Environment and Climate Change Canada to improve the regulations currently under review for ocean plastics to put polystyrene's use in the marine and coastal areas on a list so that we avoid getting it into the ocean in the first place?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, this analysis and development of regulations is being done by Environment and Climate Change Canada. It is not a partnership with DFO, but I take the member's point that it is very important that polystyrene be regulated so that it is not in the ocean in the same volume that it has been, because it is very deleterious to fish.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Chair, I am moving on to southern resident killer whales. By the way, one of my constituents whom the minister will also know, the Hon. Pat Carney, has said for many years that we do not have an oceans protection plan but an oceans protection wish list. I would like to see an oceans protection plan and not just a pile of money and a list of things to do.

In relation to southern resident killer whales in my riding, the interim sanctuary zones around Pender and Saturna have been there since 2019. Nobody has ever been charged and nobody has ever been ticketed. There have been numerous violations. The local volunteers and whale-sighting groups have now established that whales are present year-round, yet this seasonal so-called sanctuary zone is only operating June 1 to November 30.

Is the minister willing to look at the new science and recognize that whales are present year-round?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I am always willing to look at new science. I am always willing to adjust our measures to reflect what we have learned, and the southern resident killer whales are a key species for us to protect. There is a review every year, and we will take a look at the enforcement concerns that the member is raising.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Chair, with the threat of ocean acidification as a result of the increased atmospheric carbon creating carbonic acid and threatening life in the oceans, is DFO currently measuring pH levels on all of our coastlines to keep track of ocean acidification?

Business of Supply

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I have seen the science around acidification and deoxygenation, as well as warming impacts, so we have a triple whammy. It is one of the reasons that it is so important that we now think about climate change as we do our marine protected area planning, because the resilience of the healthy seabed floor is important for the resilience of the whole ecology. We need to build that resilience as we face these changes under climate change, and we do monitor the pH levels of all of our oceans.

The Chair: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Chair, first I want to thank the minister and her team, and you, Mr. Chair, for being here tonight. It has been four hours.

Crab harvesters in area E, Tofino, have been at a continued significant economic loss since the April 1 trap reallocation. The government still has not responded to their requests for an independently facilitated negotiation process, a process that is imperative to help speed up the licence buyback and properly compensate harvesters for the immediate losses they face and will continue to face until enough licences are bought back.

When will the minister be responding to their requests, meet and set up a negotiation table?

• (2400)

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Chair, yes, I understand the difficulties when the crab licences were allocated due to a court decision to the local first nations. It would be great to just add some licences, but because of conservation concerns that is not possible. We are now working with harvesters and have a budget to negotiate a settlement for that capacity.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, how many licences is the minister committed to buying back to ensure that there is no net loss of traps and that the “willing buyer, willing seller” policy is adhered to?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, the member has correctly talked about our “willing buyer, willing seller” policy. The volume of traps that was allocated to the first nations is the volume that we will be buying back, and bids are currently being accepted.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, it has been a year since the Department of Fisheries and Oceans announced the \$647-million Pacific salmon strategy initiative. In that time, there has been really no genuine engagement with first nations. The Nuuchah-nulth nations especially are saying to me that to implement the PSSSI on the west coast of Vancouver Island, they need to be engaged clearly. Indeed, all the evidence to date points to the PSSSI as yet another example of the department directing long-awaited funding toward internal priorities instead of working with first nations to decide how best to allocate limited resources. Will the minister direct her staff to immediately reach out to the Nuuchah-nulth nations to establish a process for a jointly managed implementation of the PSSSI on the west coast of Vancouver Island?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, one of the key pillars of the PSSSI is collaboration. On the one hand we are being told we are not moving quickly enough, but on the other hand we are very committed to collaborating with indigenous communities and others, and that work is ongoing.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, how will the minister ensure that the PSSSI Pacific salmon commercial licence retirement program supports coastal communities and owner-operator fishers, avoids further corporate consolidation of the fishing fleet and holds industry participants responsible for supporting sustainable harvest transformation?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, harvest transformation is one of the key pillars of the Pacific salmon initiative. That means we will be consulting. We will be working with harvesters and working with industry, again on a “willing buyer, willing seller” basis.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, the installation of intensive subtidal geoduck aquaculture is proposed for the herring spawning grounds in Lambert Channel which, according to Department of Fisheries and Oceans records, are the source of 38% of all the herring spawn that has ever occurred on the B.C. coast and would support the whole Strait of Georgia marine ecosystem.

Will the minister put the protection of the spawning habitat of this keystone species ahead of the installation of industrial aquaculture and save it from the inevitable cumulative damage that would follow?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I am interested in more details on the specific facility that the member is referring to, but I want to say that conservation is our bottom line. It is our top priority.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, will the minister commit to taking a whole-of-ecosystem management-based approach? She has heard me talk about this endlessly, because we see harvests of some species impacting other species. Will she gear her department to take a whole-of-ecosystem management approach, especially with the blue economy?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, that certainly is our approach and that is something that we will be deepening.

• (2405)

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, does the minister support owner-operator?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, yes I do.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, if so, is its compliance being monitored?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, yes it is.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, will the minister tell us how many cases are under review of those that are in violation?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we will get a number for the member.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, when will the minister share what information will be public? She says she will get that to me. When will she get that to me?

Business of Supply

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I will consult with my officials and we will give the member a time when we can deliver it.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, does the minister intend to include owner-operators in the blue economy strategy?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, it will be a very comprehensive strategy and I would be very surprised if it were not included.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, that is not a commitment. I am hoping the minister can commit to that.

In terms of reconciliation, how long does the department intend to exclusively continue using the fishery to satisfy treaty rights?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I missed some of the words the member said.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, how long does the department intend to exclusively continue to use the fisheries to satisfy treaty rights?

I have spoken to the minister repeatedly, asking her to ask the minister of CIRNAC to supply funds for reconciliation so that reconciliation does not fall on the backs of a small group of fishers and it is shared by all Canadians. Maybe she can speak to that.

We have talked about it in relation to the west coast crab fishers. Maybe she can talk about whether she has had this conversation with the minister of CIRNAC.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we do get dollars for reconciliation. We have a large pot of money in these estimates that is for purchasing the boats, the gear and the licences for our “willing buyer, willing seller” policy.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, we have not seen the numbers in the budget dedicated and committed to that, but we are encouraged to hear that, especially when we are asking the minister to get to the table immediately with the crab fishers I mentioned.

Does the department fully understand the social and economic considerations for all parties when access is being sought?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, that is our process, consulting with anyone affected so we can understand all of the perspectives when there is an allocation being done.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, does the department intend to continue to expropriate access to areas where there are no expressions of interest through “willing buyer, willing seller”?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, when there are court-ordered rulings providing access to a party that does not already have access, it can be a challenge to acquire it, and we—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, has the department worked with indigenous stakeholders to see if there are any other means by which to satisfy the right?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, “willing buyer, willing seller” is our approach and we do have funds to put that into effect.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, when does the department intend to advise non-indigenous stakeholders of the amount of access being sought in the latest round of negotiations?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I am not clear which negotiations the member is referring to.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, I mean all negotiations.

In terms of corporate foreign ownership, I have been here a lot talking about sharing risks and benefits, and the report from FOPO, which we are still waiting for action from the government on.

Does the minister believe that our harvesters and coastal communities should be the primary beneficiaries of Canadian fisheries?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, with respect to the fisheries and oceans report, we have a study of the ownership so that we actually know what the landscape is on the west coast. This benefits the fisheries, the harvesters, their communities and the broader economy. This is a public good resource and fishers have access to it through licences and permits.

● (2410)

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, I think it is clear in the report that they do not want any more transfers of foreign ownership and they want to know who the beneficial owners are. Does the minister agree that we should have limits on corporate foreign ownership of our fisheries?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I will not be prejudging the outcome of our work to identify what the state of the ownership is on the west coast at present.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, in the confidence and supply agreement with the NDP, it was outlined that beneficial ownership would be a key priority. Will that apply to fisheries and oceans?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we need to make our decisions based on facts, and that is what we are doing right now. We are gathering the facts.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, gathering facts is really important, and ensuring there is a public registry of who owns the quota is critical to being able to making decisions. Will the minister bring back limits on corporate and foreign ownership-backed Pacific fisheries? The limit was 12% from the 1960s up until the 1990s.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, as I mentioned, I will not prejudge the conclusion. We are still in the process of gathering data on ownership.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, why are super trawlers given access to our exclusive economic zone when small independent owner-operators are shut down? In the Pacific, super trawlers had access to our Pacific north coast in 2021, when almost all of the small-boat salmon fleet was shut down. Maybe the minister can explain.

Business of Supply

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, the ownership structure has evolved over decades. Here on the west coast it has evolved differently than on the east coast. We are now taking a look at what the data is on who does own what, and we will be looking at—

The Chair: The hon. member.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, does the minister actually believe super trawlers should be able to process at sea instead of our Pacific exclusive economic zone? There is a current proposal right now to the department to allow this to happen. This would shutter shore processing plants and rendering facilities and actually impact communities, such as Ucluelet in my riding.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, as I said, we will not be making any changes without first understanding the lay of the land, and we appreciate the fisheries and oceans report on this matter.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, I was just at French Creek Marina, which the minister knows quite well as she travels to Lasqueti Island. They are bursting at capacity. They cannot find enough slips for boats. It is impacting our economy, our culture and our access to food security.

Will the minister meet with marinas like that and look at ways she can invest in infrastructure to support those working harbours?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, we have spent over \$600 million, in addition to the annual funding for harbours, to do exactly that. I am not aware that French Creek harbour has made a request, but that individual case can be looked into.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, we had the *Hanjin Seattle*, and we have seen the *Zim Kingston*. We have seen some marine debris spills on our coast. I have talked to the minister about creating the ecosystem service fee on trans cargo shipment units coming into Canada.

Has she spoken to the transport minister about creating a fund that can go to coastal and indigenous communities to have a tactical response plan in place so we can tackle these issues and actually

have funding in place and resources ready to go that are timely and immediate?

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I encourage the member to make a representation to the transport minister on any regulatory matter or change he is proposing.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Chair, other industries, such as forestry and agriculture, have also faced massive upheavals for the same reasons that fisheries are being forced to restructure, such as climate events and newly developed conservation policies, yet workers and owner-operators in these resource-adjacent industries have been heavily supported both federally and provincially with funding to withstand the transitions, retrain into other vocations and pay out to bridge to early retirement.

Why are commercial fish harvesters being treated inequitably compared to workers in other impacted industries? There is a man in my riding, Lee Silvey, who is a commercial fisher in Parksville. He has not gotten any support since the government shut 60% of the fisheries on the north coast. Will the minister speak about bailing out these fishers and supporting them like other sectors?

● (2415)

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Chair, I do understand the difficulty when fisheries decline, and our job is to conserve the fishery so it can regrow in abundance and be available for those who depend on it.

The Chair: That is all the time we have.

It being 12:15 a.m., pursuant to an order made on Thursday, May 19, and Standing Order 81(4), all votes are deemed reported and the committee will now rise.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12:15 a.m.)

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