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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 19, 2022

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: Before we open the doors, the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton will lead us in the singing of the national anthem.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION AND LADIES' AUXILIARY

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am deeply honoured to rise today to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Newmarket Royal Canadian Legion and Ladies' Auxiliary. For 75 years, they have created support programs that let veterans know help is available, and they continue to hold Remembrance Day ceremonies honouring the memories of those who made the ultimate sacrifice. These are the hallmarks of their contributions, which have made Canada and our communities of Newmarket and Aurora great places to live.

Their history of making a difference began during the First World War when they responded to the request to help wounded warriors returning home. That support for veterans continues to this day. Let us celebrate their achievements, their long history of support and their willingness to contribute to our community.

I thank all members of the Milton Wesley Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion for all that they do. May the next 75 years be as rewarding to them as their organization has been to our community.

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SHAELYN YANG

Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a former member with a son serving in the RCMP, my thoughts and prayers are with the family of Constable Shaelyn Yang and with RCMP members across Canada. Every day, we ask our sons and daughters, our husbands and wives to serve and to keep us safe, and we pray that they come home.

A cold and devastating quiet spread across our nation yesterday with the news that one of our own had been killed in the line of duty. Constable Shaelyn Yang, an RCMP mental health and homeless outreach officer, was killed during an altercation while protecting a city employee at a homeless camp in Burnaby, B.C. This is a senseless loss.

Shaelyn Yang was a loving wife, sister and daughter. Shaelyn's colleagues describe her as kind and compassionate, embracing her role with devotion to help those struggling with mental health and addiction. Our nation has suffered an immeasurable loss. May her memory be the inspiration for each of us to act on issues important to Constable Shaelyn Yang. She will never be forgotten.

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• (1405)

[*Translation*]

QUEEN ELIZABETH II PLATINUM JUBILEE AWARDS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 1, I was pleased to hold an awards ceremony to present Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee awards at École Béatrice-Desloges in Orléans.

[*English*]

During the event, I had the honour to recognize 113 citizens of Orléans from all walks of life for their exceptional contributions to our community, and their contributions beyond its boundaries. In appreciation of their services to better the community, the recipients were awarded with the Platinum Jubilee pin of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, which pays special tribute to her 70 years of reign, and a certificate of recognition.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to thank Brigadier-General Nicolas Pilon for his years of service to our country, but especially for co-chairing the ceremony with me.

[*English*]

I want to congratulate, once again, the 2022 recipients in recognition of the passion and dedication they have shown to Orléans and Canada.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

LOUIS RIEL

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on October 13, 1873, Louis Riel, an iconic defender of the French language and champion of Métis rights, was elected to the House.

Louis Riel should be celebrated for his commitment to his ideals and his dedication to achieving them. He was a symbol of empowerment and a resistance movement that cost him his life. He was slain after Canada wrongfully convicted him. Louis Riel stood up to the federal government, which was trying to suppress the hopes and desires of an entire nation, the Métis nation. The Métis people simply wanted to be heard, to be recognized and to exist. There has been no relief from the injustice perpetrated against Louis Riel, as the federal government has yet to sincerely apologize for his execution.

The history of Louis Riel is intimately linked to the history of Quebec. The Bloc Québécois recognizes this. The affirmation of a nation, a culture and a language is certainly the most fundamental quest for a people seeking to achieve full self-determination.

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CENTRAIDE OUTAOUAIS

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the work of Centraide Outaouais, an essential organization in our wonderful region.

The past few years have not been easy, but Centraide Outaouais continued to set ambitious goals and make local residents' lives better.

This year, its goal is to raise \$4 million to fund 88 organizations, including Aylmer Meals on Wheels, which delivers hot meals to seniors who are sick or unable to put food on the table.

Fighting poverty is everyone's responsibility, and Centraide Outaouais's initiative shows just how tightly knit the Outaouais community is. The organization's work proves that there are solutions to the problems the pandemic exposed. I encourage everyone listening to be generous.

I would like to wish Centraide Outaouais all the best in its campaign.

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GLEN CONSTANTIN

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, coaching a sports team requires a great deal of hard work, perseverance, commitment and sacrifice, without even knowing whether all these efforts will ever pay off.

Those efforts did pay off last weekend for Glen Constantin, the head coach of Laval University's Rouge et Or football team. He set the record as the all-time "winningest" coach on the Canadian university circuit after securing his 197th career victory.

His unwavering desire to strive for excellence, year after year, has helped propel his team to nine Vanier Cup victories, which is no small feat. Of course, the players might have had something to

do with it, but without a good leader to guide them, the results could have been different.

I would like to sincerely congratulate Glen Constantin. I hope he is proud of his accomplishments. I also want to congratulate the players. Every career has its ups and downs, but one thing they must remember is that passion for the sport and dedication to the team will always win the day.

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● (1410)

[English]

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from food to art and everything in between, small business has so much to offer.

It is often said that small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and these businesses are also the very heart of communities such as Fredericton. Walking around our city, I see countless small businesses, founded by creative, innovative and tenacious entrepreneurs, that allow Frederictonians endless opportunities to support local.

As we celebrate, we must not overlook the many challenges and long-lasting impacts of the pandemic on local businesses. These challenges have been felt by business owners, employees and patrons, and as a government we must do what is necessary to support small businesses on the path of economic recovery and prosperity.

I will also take this time to highlight some of the incredible success stories in the face of adversity. One small business owner I met opened her store just months before the pandemic hit. She decided to pivot her operation to a grocery delivery model and saw her business grow and thrive. Two weeks ago, she announced the launch of a second location. That adaptive spirit is what we need to build prosperous communities.

I join my voice to those of my colleagues to celebrate Small Business Week and to encourage all Canadians to shop local.

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UKRAINE

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the war Russia commenced in February against Ukraine is unjust, unlawful and unacceptable. Now, evidence clearly shows that Putin's war is also criminal.

UN investigators, after visiting 27 towns, meeting with 150 victims and inspecting sites of destruction and mass graves have concluded, "Based on the evidence gathered so far...that war crimes have been committed in Ukraine". This includes torture, summary executions and sexual violence against children as young as four.

As the former war crimes prosecutor on the Rwandan genocide, I know how difficult the evidence-gathering exercise is, but I also know this work is pivotal to ensuring a successful prosecution. I applaud the work of the UN team thus far, and I urge it to broaden its investigations to include Iziun and Lyman, as well as the targeting of civilian locations in Kyiv this past week.

The Russian perpetrators of these horrific war crimes must be brought to justice. I reiterate that the only acceptable outcome of this conflict is a decisive victory for Ukraine, intact, including Donbass and Crimea.

Slava Ukraini.

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FIREARMS

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I represent thousands of law-abiding firearm owners. They store their firearms safely and were each approved by the RCMP to legally purchase, own and use them.

Earlier this week, New Brunswick decided to reject the Liberal government's gun grab. This is a positive and welcome move to keep limited resources focused on criminals, exactly where they belong. Liberals have the wrong policy, spending hundreds of millions of dollars, as well as diverting police officers, to confiscate legally purchased firearms from law-abiding Canadians. Worse, they expect provinces, such as New Brunswick, to pay for it.

Rural crime has exploded under the Liberals because they are soft on repeat offenders. Federal laws must focus on stopping criminals and illegal guns from entering this country, not on harassing law-abiding hunters, farmers and sport shooters who have legally purchased their firearms.

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MÉTIS NATION

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in October 1873, Métis leader Louis Riel was elected to this House. Riel was never allowed to take his seat, but his election continues to resonate with the Métis. Riel inspired generations of Métis leaders who fought for the nation and its citizens.

The Métis Nation of Saskatchewan marked a milestone achievement with the transfer of the Batoche National Historic Site from the federal government this past summer, a pivotal step toward reconciliation.

I would like to recognize the representatives of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, who will be hosting a reception for MPs today, and to thank them for their unwavering commitment to the future of the Métis nation, Métis in Canada and the advancement of all indigenous peoples and rights holders.

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JUSTICE

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our system of bail in Canada is broken. It is just not working.

Statements by Members

This government's failure to address Supreme Court of Canada decisions has created a catch-and-release system. This complaint is heard throughout Canada and in my home riding of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. Random attacks have become a prominent issue in cities like Vancouver and Toronto. Shockingly, the violent crime severity index is up 45% in Kamloops over the past five years. Mayors and citizens want this government to address prolific offenders.

My private member's bill, Bill C-274, addresses the issue of prolific offenders and goes a long way to ending catch-and-release. It targets the most serious of offenders while still maintaining judicial discretion.

It is time we act to make our communities safe. Will the Minister of Justice act or will he sit on the sidelines?

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● (1415)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' commitment to the 30 by 30 agenda to protect 30% of lands and 30% of waters by 2030 is having huge impacts on our outdoor community and is blocking our own access to our own public lands and waters. Instead of protection where necessary, the Liberals have adopted the ever-increasing blind closures of radical ENGOs who, DFO officials have admitted, are at the decision-making tables at DFO.

Recently, at the fisheries and oceans committee, we learned that, despite two UBC studies saying there is an abundance of chinook salmon for our southern resident killer whales in B.C., DFO closed the fishery anyway. Witness after witness testified that political decisions are superseding science.

In traditional grounds outside of Sidney, B.C., at Pender Bluffs, Washington state data has proven that southern resident killer whales are only in the area seven to 10 days a year and that moving bubble zone closures could be used when they are present. Instead, DFO closed the area permanently.

It is time the Liberals start listening to the science and the sound advice from our local environmental stewards, not the radical agendas put forward by ENGOs.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October 10 was World Mental Health Day.

We are quite vocal about physical health. We are proud to say that we eat well, exercise and take care of ourselves, but when it comes to talking about mental health, we withdraw. We are embarrassed because it is still perceived as a weakness, something that is taboo in society and sometimes even within families and among colleagues.

One in three Canadians is affected. It is not okay to have to wait months for counselling. It is not okay that family doctors do not have enough training to help their patients. It is not okay that in Quebec, there are roughly 15,000 people on the waiting list.

We would never tell a patient with a broken leg to come back in six months to get a cast. Unfortunately, even today, mental health care is reserved for those who can afford to pay for it.

We are in the midst of a public health crisis that was further amplified by the pandemic. We all know someone in our circle or in our family who is suffering. We all have a responsibility to act. A healthy population is a happy population.

[English]

The Speaker: Before we go on, I want to remind everyone that people are giving Standing Order 31s, which is something that is very important to them. I know we have a lot to say to each other, but members could whisper very quietly. It is getting kind of loud, and I want to make sure that we hear the last four very clearly.

The hon. member for Victoria.

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PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on October 15, at 7 p.m., families light candles in recognition of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day to remember these losses, as well as to acknowledge the unique grief that bereaved parents experience. It can be difficult for others to understand the magnitude of grief that accompanies these losses. The stigma and societal silence around infertility, miscarriage, stillbirth and the death of infants can make it difficult to speak out. People often feel isolated in their grief.

I recently met with members of the Victoria Butterfly Run and the Healing Hearts Foundation. They are community members who have experienced loss, organizing through their shared grief to support one another. These organizations have been doing tremendous work to ensure that families who share this lived experience do not suffer alone. Peer support and access to professional counselling for pregnancy loss and infant loss is not universally accessible. This is one of the many reasons that we need a national perinatal health mental health strategy, one that includes these families.

October is Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month. Let us come together to support the families who experience this kind of devastating loss.

• (1420)

[Translation]

GILLES BRASSARD

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a well-known fact that Quebec has genius, but Quebec also has geniuses, real ones. I want to pay tribute to Gilles Brassard.

Mr. Brassard was born in Montreal and is now a tenured professor in the Department of Computer Science and Operations Research at the University of Montreal. He is also the Canada research chair in quantum information science.

Gilles Brassard has been described as one of the pioneers of quantum computing, a discipline that could revolutionize computing in the same way that the transistor once transformed electronics.

He was a math prodigy who started an undergraduate degree in mathematics at the University of Montreal at the age of 13. His later research led to the invention of quantum teleportation, and some people believed he would win the Nobel Prize in Physics one day.

I have the utmost admiration for the great scientists who venture into areas of research that are obscure for most of us, which is confirmed every time I read a scientific journal, but that change people's lives.

I humbly applaud the genius of Gilles Brassard, and I wholeheartedly hope that he inspires the next generation to become involved in research and science. That will mean even more geniuses for Quebec.

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[English]

SHAELYN YANG

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the brave men and women who serve and protect our country and community do so knowing that, when they kiss their loved ones goodbye as they leave for their shift, in service to our country and our community they may have to make the ultimate sacrifice. Yesterday, RCMP Constable Shaelyn Yang was tragically killed in the line duty.

Constable Yang was a loving wife, mother and friend who volunteered extensively within her own community. She joined the RCMP just three years ago and acted as an officer who specialized in mental health outreach. She was described as kind, compassionate and empathetic by all who knew her. She was a tireless advocate for those who struggled with mental health and addictions.

Canadians around the country grieve alongside the fallen officer's family and friends in remembrance, but thoughts and prayers are of little comfort to Constable Yang's family, friends and colleagues. This tragic and senseless act of violence was in part caused by the lack of mental health funding and support for our homeless population, who suffer in our streets each and every day.

As leaders, we must take concrete action on mental health to prevent our most vulnerable and sick from being left on the fringe of society. We must protect those who protect us. Lives depend on it.

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WOMEN'S HISTORY

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to highlight that October is Women's History Month in Canada, and this year marks its 30th anniversary.

[*Translation*]

This is an opportunity to celebrate the women, past and present, whose achievements help make Canada a more inclusive and caring country.

[*English*]

October 18, 1929, marked an incredibly momentous day in our history when the highest court of appeals granted women in Canada legal rights as a person. This historic decision, now known as the persons case, paved the way for women to become active in public and political life in Canada.

Today we honour the Famous Five, Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, Irene Parlby and Henrietta Muir Edwards, who helped pave the way for gender equality, and those who worked to expand and strengthen these rights for generations to come.

[*Translation*]

I wish everyone a happy Women's History Month.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with sadness that we express our love and support for Constable Yang's family.

[*English*]

Constable Yang was sadly murdered while she was courageously doing her job. This has to stop. This is one of a series of murders of our police officers as part of a larger violent crime wave.

What changes will the Prime Minister make to policies to put this crime wave to an end?

● (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to the family of Constable Yang and to the

Oral Questions

community, not just in B.C. but right across the country, as we know we have seen murdered police officers in Ontario and elsewhere across the country as well.

We need to do more to step up on our mental health funding, as the hon. member before mentioned. We need to make sure that we are giving our frontline police officers the tools to be supported as they encounter difficult situations. We need to make sure they are not the only mental health workers out there accessible to so many people. Unfortunately they have been. They have been extraordinary at it, but we need to provide better support. The provinces and the federal government need to work together to fund more mental health supports.

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TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are also suffering with the skyrocketing increases in the price of food. Today we learned food prices are up 11%. It is 17% for bread. Pasta is up 23%, lettuce 21% and flour 24%. The Prime Minister's solution, of course, is to raise taxes on food with a carbon tax hike that will triple the tax on the cost of transporting and producing food in the first place.

Will he reverse this tax hike so that Canadians can put food on the table?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, our solution to support families is to move forward with a GST rebate that is going to hit 11 million households. It just received royal assent last night because all parties supported it. The Conservatives actually reversed their initial opposition to our proposal in order to support it, and that was a good thing.

Now the Conservatives have an opportunity to continue to help families that need it, with dental care for kids who cannot access it right now across the country and with direct help for low-income renters. Will the Conservative leader reverse this position and support low-income families that need it?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the Prime Minister is proposing to do exactly nothing for the vast majority of struggling families, which will get nothing, and even the small minority that do get something will find it gobbled up by increased inflation.

The Royal Bank says that the average family will pay \$3,000 more in inflation and higher interest rates. These are the results of the half-trillion dollars of inflationary deficits that are driving up the cost of the goods we buy and the interest we pay. Now he wants to triple the tax on food.

Canadians are paying enough to put food on the table. Will the Prime Minister let up and get off their backs?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the leader of the official opposition wants to help Canadians, why is he not stepping up to help Canadian families give dental care to their kids? We are talking about \$1,300 over the next two years to support families that need it across the country, and we are talking about direct support to low-income renters. This is money that can make a huge difference in Canadians' lives. The reality is that not only do they not support it, but they are trying to do everything they can to block it and even kill our support for these families.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, most Canadians are not eligible for that money, and those who do get it will not be able to hang on to it for very long. According to the Royal Bank, inflation is going to cost the average family here in Canada \$3,000 next year. Canadians cannot afford to pay any more, but the Prime Minister is going to add to their bills.

Will he cancel his plans to continue his inflationary deficits and taxes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am trying to understand the opposition leader's logic. He is saying that inflation and costs are so high for families that there is no point in doing anything.

On the contrary, we are there to provide real help, like the GST rebate. We are there to help families with children under the age of 12 who cannot afford dental care. We are there to help low-income renters with their rent this fall.

Why are the Conservatives not there to help these families? We do not want excuses. We want them to support our measures to help Canadians.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, ironically, the goods that have gone up the most in price are those that we can produce right here in Canada: bread, pasta and flour. We grow wheat in this country. We should be able to deliver it to people's kitchen tables affordably, but the Prime Minister wants to raise taxes on the people who do the growing of our food and the delivering of it to our grocery stores. Even the Governor of the Bank of Canada says that "inflation in Canada increasingly reflects what's happening in Canada."

This is homegrown Liberal inflation. Why does the Prime Minister not stop raising the prices on Canadians so they can put food on the table?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear. Our price on pollution puts more money back in the pockets of Canadians while ensuring they breathe cleaner air. With cheques issued in June and just last Friday, a family of four in the opposition leader's riding has already received over \$550 from our government in climate rebates this year. This means more money for Canadians.

While the Conservative leader does not believe that climate change is a problem, we are moving forward with practical, afford-

able solutions to support families, grow the economy and fight climate change at the same time.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a friend of the Liberal Party was handed \$28 million in contracts supposedly because the land that was being leased is next to Roxham Road. However, we have found out that this is simply not true.

Instead of giving taxpayers' money to friends of the Liberal Party, why does the Prime Minister not invest that money in qualified teams at the immigration department? That way, he can ensure that desperate asylum seekers are given a decent welcome at regular crossings.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working every day to ensure that our system for asylum seekers remains robust and humane. There is no magic bullet, but we will continue to be there for people and ensure that our values are reflected in our immigration systems.

There is no question that we must continue to work on the issue itself, alongside the United States, to find a lasting solution.

We will continue to be there, representing our values and welcoming people in a responsible manner.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, not so long ago, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister would consult one another before announcing a position. At one point, there was talk of bringing workers in via Roxham Road, cheap labour, essentially.

If the government is worried about the workforce, there are people out there who are on their way to becoming highly skilled workers and who want to come here. The people I am referring to are francophone African students, but his government is discriminating against them on the basis of race.

I would like the Prime Minister to explain that to me.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have zero tolerance for racism or discrimination of any kind, including systemic discrimination.

We are looking at the impact of our programs and policies on racialized clients to ensure that they are fair and equitable to everyone who wants to come study in Canada.

The department has to enforce immigration procedures fairly and without discrimination, and I know the minister is working on this matter.

*Oral Questions**[English]***THE ECONOMY**

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all New Democrats, I want to express my condolences to the friends, family and colleagues of Constable Yang over the horrific killing that was experienced in Burnaby.

[Translation]

The new inflation numbers released today clearly show that the cost of groceries continues to go up. Families are struggling and workers are facing enormous challenges.

It is clear that the Liberals and Conservatives have done nothing to tackle this “greedflation”.

When will the Prime Minister take action to support families?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the coming weeks, 11 million Canadian households will receive the GST credit that is being sent to them, which will help enormously. Some families will receive nearly \$500, and this credit is going out to 11 million households. This is making a big difference, and it was possible because the Conservative members changed their minds and decided to support our proposal.

Now we are hoping to get dental care for low-income families and assistance for low-income renters passed. We are asking all parties in the House to join us in speeding this up and delivering real help to Canadians who need it.

• (1435)

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the new inflation numbers are deeply troubling. We see the cost of food continue to rise and set a record at 11.4%. We know that the Liberals and the Conservatives do not have the courage to take on greedflation, but we do. We forced everyone in this House to support our motion to tackle greedflation, and we know that the PR stunt from Galen Weston is not good enough.

Will the Prime Minister implement our solutions to support families now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know Canadians are struggling with the rising cost of living, which is why when we came back to the House this fall, we immediately brought in measures to double the GST credit for six months for close to 11 million households. That was something that, fortunately, all members of this House supported, including the Conservatives, who reversed their earlier objection to our proposal and then supported it.

Now we need all parliamentarians to come together to make sure we are supporting families that need to pay for dental care for kids under 12, and to move forward on direct supports for low-income renters. All parliamentarians can stand together and do that.

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TAXATION

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's failed policies and direct attack on

our responsible energy sector has caused higher prices and a cost of living crisis in this country. Groceries went up 11.4%. Gas is up 13.2%. Utilities are up 12.8%. We have out-of-control spending and cancelled and blocked energy projects in Canada, and the Prime Minister's carbon tax is causing unjust inflation.

Will the Prime Minister stop punishing Canadians and cancel his plans to triple the tax on groceries, gas and home heating?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know Canadians are struggling with this global inflation crisis caused by the end of the pandemic, by stresses on supply chains, by the illegal invasion of Russia in Ukraine—

The Speaker: I am just going to interrupt the Right Hon. Prime Minister for a moment.

We started off really well, but now we seem to be sliding. I want to remind everyone that there are questions being asked. Members are being heckled, as is the Prime Minister or whoever is answering. Please try to have some respect for each other.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister, please continue.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, that is why we are moving forward with direct supports for families. We know that even though the Leader of the Opposition came out in opposition to our GST credit for Canadians when we first announced it, members of his caucus told him they would support it and eventually they reversed their position. Will members of his caucus now tell him they should support dental and rental supports?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that Canada is falling apart under the Prime Minister and it is more unaffordable than ever. The average rent in Canada is now over \$24,000 a year, and \$500 rent cheques will not even pay for one week of rent right now. Because the Prime Minister does not think about monetary policy, it has never been more unaffordable to buy a home in Canada. Massive rate hikes have pushed home ownership costs to 60% of median household income.

Will the Prime Minister take responsibility for his unjust inflation and cancel his plans to triple the carbon tax on groceries, gas and home heating?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am having a hard time understanding the logic the Conservative Party seems to be putting forward today. They seem to be saying that because our help for low-income renters is only \$500, they may as well get nothing. Maybe the Conservatives do not know this, but giving \$500 to low-income renters will make a huge difference for an awful lot of people as the winter approaches.

That is why we are there to support Canadians who need it. It is inexplicable to me that the Conservative Party continues to stand against delivering \$500 cheques to families that need it to pay their rent before Christmas.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are some facts for the Prime Minister: 100% of Canadians are going to suffer the consequences of inflation; 80% of Canadians are worried about their finances because of the rising cost of living; 72% of Canadians think they are paying too much tax.

The cost of food has gone up 11%, the biggest increase since 1981. As a result of the Liberals' inaction, inflation continues to climb. As we learned this morning, it is now at 7%.

Why does the Prime Minister want to make life even more difficult for people by further reducing their paycheque on January 1?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I completely agree that Canadians are going through a tough time. That is why we are proposing direct help for families, low-income renters and families with children under 12 who cannot afford the dental care that their children need.

It is inexplicable that the Conservative Party has decided not to support these measures that will benefit Canadians and help people. Why do the Conservatives not want to help Canadians who are in need right now?

We are there to do that. Why are they not?

• (1440)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is because no one believes this Prime Minister anymore. That is the reality. He has lost all credibility with regard to public finances. Mario Dumont reminded us this morning that the Prime Minister promised in his inaugural speech that interest rates would remain low forever.

Today, there are young families that could lose everything because of the Prime Minister's inability to manage Canada's public finances. That is the reality.

Will he cancel the January 1 tax increase on Canadians' paycheque, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we see that there is a serious disconnect in the Conservatives' approach to the economy. We were there to help families in need during the pandemic. Despite the Conservatives' objections, we were able to help millions of families.

Economic recovery was strong after the pandemic. We are proposing to do exactly the same thing now: help families with the cost of living, provide assistance to low-income renters and help

with dental care expenses. The Conservatives are still trying to put up roadblocks and not help these families. We cannot make heads or tails of their economic approach.

As for us, we will be there for Canadians.

[English]

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the current cost of living crisis is caused by the government's reckless and irresponsible spending. Canadians cannot afford basic necessities anymore. I recently received emails from people all over the country, telling me that for the first time ever they could not afford to buy a turkey and even some food items for a Thanksgiving dinner.

Canadians are suffering. Will the current Prime Minister show some compassion for Canadians who are struggling and cancel his plans to triple taxes on gas, home heating and groceries?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this supposed preoccupation of the Conservatives with the cost of living would be slightly more believable if not for the fact they are standing in the way of delivering \$500 in extra support to low-income renters between now and Christmas and standing in the way of giving \$1,300 in extra access to dental care for families with kids under 12 who need that support. We know that low- and middle-income families could greatly benefit from that help. Why are the Conservatives not standing up for those families?

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister knows that the policies proposed by the Liberals will not reach the majority of Canadian families, yet Canadians are making immense sacrifices just to get by. People are even rationing food. Amy, a first-time mother in my riding, recently wrote to me in desperation. She was worried about not having the basic necessities to raise and care for her baby. The Prime Minister's obsession with taxes is taking away the ability of average people like Amy to afford basic supplies and keep warm during the winter. When will the Prime Minister stop punishing Canadians and cancel his plan to triple—

The Speaker: The hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to Amy and families like hers across the country who are dealing with the rising cost of living. However, we also know that Amy will now have access to significant savings in child care for her little one. We know that our move to get down to \$10-a-day child care, to see child care costs slashed in half across Ontario and indeed across the country, will make a huge difference in her ability to afford the other things that are necessary for her family.

My question is this. If the Conservatives are so filled with compassion for those families, why are they standing in the way of support for families and even in the way of—

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

Oral Questions

• (1445)

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in January, the Prime Minister decided to invoke emergency measures during the trucker protests without any attempt at dialogue and, as we have learned, without anyone asking him to. In so doing, he exacerbated the crisis rather than resolving it.

Would he admit, at his convenience, that his actions were either very heavy-handed or politically motivated? If he did it for political reasons, what were they, for heaven's sake?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we invoked the Emergencies Act in a responsible, targeted and time-limited manner that fully respected the fundamental rights and freedoms of all Canadians. We did so because the situation demanded it. I am very pleased that a public inquiry is now taking place to allow all Canadians to see what we were seeing, namely, that these illegal occupations were a real problem, not just for the residents of Ottawa and people across the country, but for our economy and for the well-being of our democracy. We did what we had to do, in a responsible way.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure Canadians see it that way. I think that, instead of swearing an oath to the King, we should get with the times and swear an oath to the truth. If people here told the truth a little more often, that would completely change the work we do in the House.

In the space of a few days, the government granted 28 million dollars' worth of contracts to a friend. The government engaged in racial discrimination against African students. The government imposed emergency measures that were in no way, shape or form necessary.

Does the Prime Minister often lead the House down the garden path?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is talking about oaths and royalty, but, at this point in time, our priority and that of Quebeckers is the cost of living. We will continue to focus on that, and we will do it with legislation that helps people pay their bills. Our proposed legislation will put hundreds of dollars back in the pockets of Canadians, give children the dental care they need and help families pay the rent. That is what we will keep working on for all Quebeckers and all Canadians.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a programmer has shown that the ArriveCAN app could have been designed in a single weekend for less than \$250,000, but the Prime Minister paid \$54 million for an app that did not even work and forced more than 10,000 people to quarantine unnecessarily.

Will the Prime Minister provide a list of all the companies that were contracted to develop that app, which did not even work?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservative Party continues to play political games, we on this side of the House have been working hard to protect the health and safety of all Canadians throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, including with the ArriveCAN app.

The figure quoted obviously includes a lot more than just the initial design costs. It includes additional services, IT call centre services, updates and future costs.

We will continue to deliver value for Canadian taxpayer dollars while protecting them around the clock.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Well, Mr. Speaker, it is good to know, but no surprise, that the Prime Minister thinks that \$54 million is just a petty matter. A programmer demonstrated that the ArriveCAN app could have been designed in a single weekend for less than a quarter of a million dollars. Instead, the Prime Minister paid \$54 million. Ten thousand people were wrongly sent into quarantine by that app when they should not have been, and many of the contracts went to companies that have home addresses as their headquarters.

Will the Prime Minister supply Canadians with a full list of all the contractors who got the money?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians well know, since day one of the pandemic we were focused on providing them the support and the safety necessary in this unprecedented time, despite the political games the Conservatives chose to play throughout the pandemic. Obviously, the amount cited includes far more than just the initial development of the app. It includes services like cloud storage, IT call centre services, upgrades and future costs.

On this side of the aisle, we will continue to put the safety and security of Canadians at the centre of everything we do, both in unprecedented pandemics and in regular times.

• (1450)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, creating a \$54-million app, well over budget, that could have been created in a weekend for under a quarter of a million dollars does not protect anybody's safety; nor does an app that sends 10,000 people wrongly into quarantine. However, the strangest thing is that there are these roughly dozen companies that got the contracts to supply this app.

The Prime Minister does not want to give all of the names of the subcontractors who got that money. I challenge him now: Will he commit to supplying this House with the list of all the subcontractors who got the money? Who got rich?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians well remember that during this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, we had a government that was stepping up to do everything we could to keep them safe and keep them protected. That is exactly what we—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am just going to interrupt for a moment, if I can have members' attention. Order. I just want to remind the hon. members of the role of the whip. Sometimes, if members look to them, they will be giving them instructions. I believe some of the whips are gesturing in a way that means to calm down.

The right hon. Prime Minister, from the top, please.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, Canadians well remember that when this unprecedented pandemic hit us, as a country, we pulled together. We had a government that stepped up to work with other orders of government to deliver all the protections we possibly could for Canadians in an unprecedented time. We were there to have Canadians' backs. While Conservatives were peddling vaccine misinformation and refusing to follow public health directives, we stepped up and made sure Canadians had all the tools to deliver safety for them. That is what we will continue to do.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they stepped up to put money in the pockets of their friends. We do not forget the WE Charity.

Someone got rich here. Someone designed an app that did not work, that sent 10,000 people wrongly into quarantine, and that had home addresses as the headquarters of the companies that received the money. Many of the subcontractors are still secret. If the Prime Minister will not tell us the identity of those companies, then maybe the genius who spent \$54 million on an app that could be designed in a weekend could please stand up now.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our focus throughout this pandemic was being there to support Canadians. Before the member of the opposition criticizes me again for that, we spent billions, tens of billions, hundreds of billions of dollars to support Canadians through this pandemic with direct income supports and with supports for small businesses. We did that because we knew that being there for Canadians through an unprecedented difficult time would ensure that our economy would come back faster after it. That is exactly what happened. We were there for Canadians, while Conservatives can criticize us every step of the way.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the CLC put out a report by Jim Stanford that highlights some serious concerns with the Bank of Canada's approach to inflation. It lays out two mandates that the Bank of Canada must follow: one, to keep inflation in check, and two, to encourage maximum sustainable employment.

Given the fact that the increased interest rates of the Bank of Canada will not address the root causes of inflation, they are cer-

tainly going to create a self-induced recession, which will result in massive job losses. Does the Prime Minister agree with the Bank of Canada's approach?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we support the integrity and independence of our institutions. Canada has a long and storied history of strong institutions, from the Supreme Court to the Bank of Canada, that manage in counterpart with the work that is done in this House to serve Canadians. We will continue to defend the integrity and the independence of those institutions, unlike, apparently, multiple parties on the other side of the aisle.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, New Democrats have a rich tradition of calling out institutions that end up exploiting or hurting people. It is clear that the Government of Canada sets the mandate. Now, this very same Bank of Canada's governor has stated to employers that they are discouraged from increasing wages to keep up with inflation, which is ludicrous because there is absolutely no evidence that high wages have in any way contributed to inflation. In fact, wages have not kept up with inflation historically.

Does the Prime Minister agree with the Bank of Canada's discouraging employers from increasing wages to keep up with inflation?

• (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me to pause right now to salute and thank all the union leaders across the country who have been strong in fighting for better wages for their workers, working in partnership with the government in an unprecedented way to ensure that we are growing the middle class and helping the people working hard to join it.

We will continue to make sure that we are working with labour, that we are working with bargaining agents, that we are working with workers to ensure that they are getting paid well for the work they are doing, so that they can support their families and their communities. We will do so in a way that Canadians expect us to.

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recently learned the good news that over 2.5 million Canadians have now been lifted out of poverty since 2015, yet some of my constituents are still concerned about the rising cost of living.

What are the latest actions our government is taking to help my constituents and all Canadians make ends meet?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Calgary Skyview for his question and for his hard work.

This week our GST credit top-up received royal assent, meaning Canadians will receive more support this fall as a result. Even as we fight climate change, we are putting more money back into Canadians' pockets. A family of four in the member's riding has received over \$800 in climate action incentives so far this year.

Unlike the Conservative approach of Bitcoin and buzzwords, we are talking about real action to make life more affordable for all Canadians.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, something has gone seriously wrong in this country. There has been a 32% increase in violent crime over the past seven years, and Canadians are feeling the impacts across the country.

The fact is our neighbourhoods are less safe now than they were seven years ago when the Liberals first formed government. The Prime Minister is failing to act to protect Canadians. Why?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the House what will not make our communities safer: moving back on gun control.

We have moved forward with strong measures on interdicting assault weapons and on freezing the market on hand guns. These are things, unfortunately, that Conservatives continue to stand against. They want to make assault weapons available again to Canadians. They want to make hand gun purchases available once again to Canadians.

We are going to continue to stand for stronger gun control even as we invest in communities, even as we support our police forces and even as we stand forward to create a safer Canada.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there were over 124,000 additional violent crimes last year compared with in 2015. The Liberal approach is clearly failing Canadians. Crime is on the rise, and it is Canadian families who pay the price.

The Prime Minister and the federal government have the real responsibility to act. The buck stops with them. They cannot just stand by and be passive observers. The time for action is today.

When will the Prime Minister take decisive action to protect Canadian families from violent criminals?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely encouraged to hear Conservatives bringing up questions like this, because it means maybe they are going to support us in our strengthening of gun control measures. Maybe they are going to finally stand behind us in our banning of assault weapons, which are no longer free to be bought, sold or used anywhere across the country.

We are moving forward on a freeze on the purchase of handguns across the country. If the Conservative Party is deciding to support that, that is good news for communities across the country. We are going to continue to stand with families. We are going to continue to stand against domestic violence. We are going to continue to be

Oral Questions

there for communities that need support in the face of rising violence.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Monday at the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, Liberal members worked very hard to protect their Liberal donor, winner of a sole-source contract lottery worth \$28 million for his land in Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle.

Now, Radio-Canada is reporting that the Prime Minister is refusing to disclose the value of the secret contract and the identity of the lucky owner of the land that is located directly at the entrance of Roxham Road.

Can the Prime Minister tell us who owns the land at Roxham Road and how much the contract is worth?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know how important our immigration system is to Canadians. It is an upstanding and robust system that ensures the growth of our economy and our communities. It is important that we carefully monitor this system and ensure that the values we all share as Canadians are supported as we welcome asylum seekers. We will always go about this properly. We will always ensure that the rules are being followed. We will always be there to welcome those who are fleeing violence and terror in the world, in accordance with our values.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we can see, the Prime Minister is not answering the question. My question has nothing to do with asylum seekers. The question is clearly about a contract. We know about the contracts awarded to Mr. Guay in the Lacolle sector. Just two kilometres away, there is a sector known as Roxham. The crossing is located on a piece of land and the Government of Canada is paying who knows how much to who knows who.

Can the Prime Minister tell us who owns the piece of land and how much we, the taxpayers, are paying for this little piece of land?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure all members of the House that contracts pertaining to Roxham Road were awarded by public servants according to our principles and all the rules in place.

The rules are always followed when awarding contracts and we will always ensure that that is the case.

*Oral Questions***NATURAL RESOURCES**

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister announced that Canada will fast-track energy projects to export more oil and gas to Europe.

The Liberals are exploiting the war in Ukraine to produce and sell even more fossil fuels in the midst of a climate crisis. What a real bunch of winners.

I have a guessing game for the Prime Minister. Who said the following last week, “The war in Ukraine shows that if Canada does not produce natural gas, the market will be monopolized by polluting dictatorships like Putin’s”? Was it the Deputy Prime Minister in Washington or the Conservative leader in La Pocatière?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine was a game changer for a lot of people in Europe who need energy this winter and in winters to come.

Canada is there to help deal with the global energy crisis caused by Russia. We are also working with our European partners to try to fast-track the transition to renewable energy. That is why we have invested so much in the green transition here in Canada. That is why we are welcoming foreign investors who decarbonize our energy sector so that we can be leaders in supplying energy in a net-zero world.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the correct answer was the Conservative leader in La Pocatière.

I understand that the Prime Minister might be a little confused, considering that the Deputy Prime Minister said the exact same thing in Washington. The Liberals and the Conservatives are indistinguishable.

The Deputy Prime Minister even said that Canada must expend domestic political capital to fast-track energy projects. In other words, never mind what the public thinks, never mind what indigenous communities think, never mind climate change. Canada has gas to sell.

Does the Prime Minister find it embarrassing that his new doctrine is exactly the same as the Conservative leader’s?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the past seven years, we have demonstrated that we know full well that the economy and the environment must go hand in hand. That is why we are investing unprecedented amounts in this energy transition. That is why we are helping to decarbonize our energy sources. That is why we are putting a price on pollution across the country. We want to make sure that industries and businesses make the investments needed for us to reach our 2030 targets and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

We will continue to be a leader on the environment because it is good for the economy.

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have not seen grocery prices rise like this in the last 40 years. Last week many Canadians struggled to afford Thanksgiving dinner with their families, all because of the Prime Minister’s inflation crisis.

Next week is Bandi Chhor Divas and Diwali. Can the Prime Minister please tell Canadians how much more it will take to celebrate the festival of lights under his homegrown inflation crisis?

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have heard across the country, in farms, grocery stores and community centres from one end of the country to the other, that people are facing challenges with the rising cost of living, which is why we are delivering a doubling of the GST credit for the next six months this fall and why we are pleased that Conservative MPs were able to convince their leader to reverse his initial objection to that proposal and support it.

Now, I would ask members of the Conservative caucus to convince their leader to support dental for Canadians with kids under 12 and supports for rental for low-income Canadians.

* * *

TAXATION

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what he is not telling us is that the vast majority of Canadians will not even qualify for those programs and it will just make the situation worse. The fact is that many Canadians are worried about heating their homes this winter, and too many are relying on the food bank to support their family, which is a decision no Canadian family should have to make. The last thing Canadians need is for the Prime Minister to triple the carbon tax, making everything more expensive.

Will the Prime Minister commit to stopping and cancelling his planned tax hikes on Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there we have it. The Conservative Party just admitted it is not supporting our cost of living relief measures because it is afraid they will make things worse.

Canadians do not need excuses from Conservatives. They need Conservatives to step up and support direct support for low-income renters, with an extra \$500 on top of the Canada housing benefit to be delivered to them, and support families who cannot afford to send their kids to the dentist.

These are things that will touch millions of Canadians. Why are the Conservatives not there to support them? Canadians do not want excuses; they want support.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as several of my colleagues pointed out today, the cost of food is 11.4% higher than it was last year. Prices have not gone up that much since 1981.

Canadians are struggling to buy food and clothing and heat their homes. Christmas is coming. What kind of holiday are Canadians going to have? The Prime Minister is bound and determined to take even more money off Canadians' paycheques.

Will he commit to cancelling his plans to raise taxes on January 1?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Conservative Party were really concerned about the rising cost of living for Canadians, it would support our measures to help Canadians who are struggling the most, low-income renters who need a bit more help to pay the rent this fall, and families that cannot afford dental care for their children under the age of 12.

I know these measures will not change everything, but they will definitely help a lot of families have a merrier Christmas. Why are the Conservatives refusing to help families in need?

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has been there from the very beginning to support small businesses across Canada. They are the heart of our communities and the backbone of our economy. That is why it is crucial that we all work together to give small business owners the support they need to succeed.

Can the right hon. Prime Minister remind Canadians what our government has been doing to support small businesses?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the member for Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle for her question and for all her hard work.

Canadians know who really stands up for small business. When we proposed a tax cut to help small businesses grow, the Conservatives voted against it. When we helped 1,400 small businesses in Ottawa get back on their feet after the convoy crisis, the opposition leader said he was proud of the occupiers. The Conservatives refuse to properly support small business owners, but we on this side of the House will always be there for small businesses in this country.

* * *

● (1510)

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the cost of home heating just keeps going up in Atlantic Canada. Half of Atlantic Canadians are living in energy poverty. The cost of home heating oil jumped 30% in the last month in New Brunswick. Half of Atlantic Canadians heat with oil and are facing a cold, bitter winter because of the Liberal government. Today's

numbers confirm that Liberal inflation is up again for groceries and housing back home.

With the affordability crisis devastating Atlantic Canadian families, why are the Liberals planning to triple taxes on home heating?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, all in this House are concerned about the rising cost of living faced by Canadians in Atlantic Canada and indeed across the country, so the question we all have is this: Why are Conservative politicians not supporting our cost of living relief measures? Why are they not stepping up to send cheques to the lowest-income renters, which will support close to two million Canadians who are going to have trouble paying rent this winter? Why are they not sending support to families who cannot send their kids under 12 to the dentist? We are talking about \$1,300 that is going to help families over the next couple of years. The Conservatives say they care, but they do not stand up for them.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning, media reports indicated that food prices are skyrocketing. Up by 11.4% this month, it is the largest increase in 41 years. Everything is broken, and the government's carbon tax makes the already unbearable even worse. Instead of the Liberals driving up prices and sending Canadians deeper in debt, we need less talk and more decisive action from the government now.

When will the Prime Minister cancel his plan to triple taxes on gas, groceries and home heating?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the members opposite well know, our price on carbon pollution returns more money to most Canadian families in the areas in which it is imposed. The reality is that we are stepping up to support Canadian families across the country, including with our cost of living relief package.

The question that many Canadians have is this: Why are Conservative politicians not there to support our measures to deliver help to low-income renters and families who cannot afford to send their kids to the dentist?

These are things that matter to Canadians, yet the Conservatives are standing in the way.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this upcoming Remembrance Day, veterans across Canada will be thanked for their service by being charged GST on top of a carbon tax on their heating bills, which is a tax on a tax. Heating a home during winter is a necessity.

Why will the Prime Minister not cancel his plans to triple his tax on home heating and axe his tax on tax?

Tributes

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, despite Conservative misinformation, the reality is that with our price on carbon pollution, more money is returned to 80% of families in the areas in which it is imposed than they pay in these taxes. That is a fact that Conservatives have been avoiding. As the carbon price increases to give predictability signals to businesses to continue to invest in reducing their emissions, Canadians keep getting more money back.

We are going to continue to deliver for Canadians. We are going to continue to stand up to support Canadians who need it.

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LABOUR

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to the collective bargaining process to protect workers' rights, pay and power. One of the first things we did after we formed government was to repeal Conservative anti-worker legislation that made it harder for unions to fight for workers, legislation the Leader of Opposition supported. Hamilton labour leaders tell me they were relieved and grateful that our government took this swift action.

Can the Prime Minister update the House on what our government is doing to eliminate the use of replacement workers during strikes and lockouts so workers have more power and fairness at the negotiating table?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Hamilton Mountain for her hard work and her constant advocacy for workers.

As a cabinet minister in the Harper years, the Conservative leader actively supported anti-union legislation, such as Bill C-525 and Bill C-377, and he is still attacking supports for workers today.

Today, our government launched consultations on eliminating the use of replacement workers during strikes and lockouts. This government will always be on the side of workers, while the Conservative leader gatekeeps Canadians out of safer, good paying jobs.

* * *

● (1515)

HOUSING

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, when I visited Kugaaruk, I was told of the consequences that housing boards face when they say no to an applicant. One decision resulted in turning away a young pregnant woman because there were no houses available. In hopelessness, she completed suicide. The housing board suffers with this decision while the government continues to fall short on meeting the housing needs in Nunavut.

When will the government finally take on the burden that Nunavummiut face every day and act on the housing crisis to save lives?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our hearts break as we hear stories like that. Obviously, it is unacceptable. That is why we are continuing to step up, including working in direct partnership with Premier Akeagok to ensure we

are delivering housing investments in the north. We know the needs are great, and we know we need to continue to step up.

We have strong programs and big investments going in, but we need to do more. We recognize that. We will be there.

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PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, MPs from all parties unanimously voted to move the Canada disability benefit act to committee, following the calls of disability advocates across the country. While this is an important milestone, nothing changes for Canadians with disabilities until the benefit is actually funded. People with disabilities living in poverty desperately need us to get this done.

Will the Prime Minister commit today to funding this benefit by budget 2023?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that Canadians living with disabilities face unacceptably high levels of poverty. We know how much important work there is to continue to do. That is why we have moved forward, over the past number of years, with historic steps in the right direction.

We agree entirely. There is much more to do. That is why we are pursuing these important measures. We are moving forward with this legislation, and we are going to continue to be there to ensure that we are supporting Canadians living with disabilities, so they can fully participate in all the ways all of us need them to be able to do if we are going to be the country that we want to be.

* * *

SHAELYN YANG

The Speaker: I understand there have been discussions among representatives of all parties in the House and there is an agreement to observe a moment of silence in honour of the fallen RCMP officer Shaelyn Yang in Burnaby, British Columbia.

[A moment of silence observed]

* * *

[Translation]

BILL BLAIKIE

The Speaker: It is with deep sadness that we mark the passing of a great man and a great parliamentarian, the Hon. Bill Blaikie.

Bill Blaikie served his constituents in Elmwood—Transcona for nearly 30 years, and for two of those years, from 2006 to 2008, he served as the Deputy Speaker of the House under former Speaker Peter Milliken.

• (1520)

[English]

The term “dynamic duo” has been used to describe the Milliken-Blaikie team. They were united in their commitment to the House, its role in democracy, its traditions and its history. I understand there were no procedures or processes too arcane for these devotees and scholars of Parliament.

At one time, I had the good fortune to serve with Bill Blaikie on the Standing Committee of National Defence and Veterans Affairs where I always looked forward to his balanced view on the issues. I also looked forward to his trademark wit and good humour. We shared many good laughs together.

[Translation]

Many of us benefited from his extensive experience in serving Canadians. Bill Blaikie was a source of inspiration to us all.

[English]

We have proof in this chamber that he was a source of inspiration to his children, who followed in his footsteps to serve the people of Manitoba and all Canadians.

I know that hon. members join me in expressing our deepest condolences to Bill Blaikie's wife, Brenda, and his entire family. Of course, we send our sympathies to his son, our colleague, the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona, for the loss of his beloved father.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer condolences on behalf of the Liberal caucus. Bill Blaikie was an individual who accomplished a great deal in many different ways. He has, in fact, been an inspiration.

When I think of politicians in Manitoba, he was second to no other in being able to transcend partisan politics. Yes, he could be partisan at times. I was at the unfortunate end of that, I must say, on one occasion in particular early in my political career, but that is for another day. There are individuals in Manitoba, whether Conservative, New Democrat, Liberal or of any other political affiliation, who look to Bill Blaikie as an inspiration, as someone who understood the principles of what it meant to be a parliamentarian.

Our first responsibility is to our constituents, and Bill Blaikie demonstrated just how important that was. In the 1993 federal election when the NDP was reduced to nine seats, he was a survivor. In fact, I believe he was the only New Democrat elected east of the province of Saskatchewan. I would argue the reason for that was that he had established himself as a constituency person, someone who understood the needs of those who worked at CN Rail and in the many different businesses and occupations of the people he served. That is why he survived back in 1993.

We often think that, if parliamentarians are in government, they can potentially become a minister, but, in opposition, the best a member can be is a critic. I would suggest that it does not matter where members sit in the House of Commons, whether on the government side or the opposition side, and Bill Blaikie demonstrated that. He demonstrated that in the roles he held in the House, whether it was as deputy leader when he came in second to Jack

Tributes

Layton back in the 2003 leadership convention or when he was the health care critic.

We all talk about the Canada Health Act of 1984 and how important that was to our nation, and still is today. Bill Blaikie played a critical role in the development of the Canada Health Act. It is what we make of the positions we are assigned as parliamentarians that determines how much we will enjoy this and how successful we are going to be at implementing it. That is something Bill Blaikie demonstrated so well.

I look to Bill Blaikie as someone who inspired many. The Speaker referred to his attitude when he was Deputy Speaker under Speaker Milliken. Many members may not know, though the member for Elmwood—Transcona would know, but after leaving Ottawa, he was recruited as the candidate for the NDP in the Elmwood riding. He won and later became the minister of conservation. In one year, four or five provincial parks were established. He loved nature. I believe he was an avid canoeist.

He was able to accomplish a great deal even when he left the House of Commons. He was a parliamentarian, first and foremost. That is when I got to know Bill Blaikie, primarily because he was also the government House leader. It is no surprise that I was part of the House leadership team back then. We had lots of discussions and negotiations and his years in opposition gave him a better appreciation even of individuals in the Liberal Party back then when it did not have party status, and I respected that of the late Mr. Blaikie.

• (1525)

There is so much more that I could say, but suffice it to say that William Alexander Blaikie was appointed to the Order of Canada in November 2020 for his lifelong contributions to parliamentary service and for his steadfast commitment to progressive change and social activism.

On behalf of the Liberal caucus, we extend our condolences to his wife of almost 50 years Brenda, his four children, his grandchildren and the many friends and family members who were touched by his life.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today and pay tribute to a former colleague and veteran parliamentarian, the Hon. Bill Blaikie, who recently passed away.

Bill was first elected to this place in 1979 and served continuously for 29 years. When I and others in this chamber were first elected back in 2004, the dean of the House was Bill, a position he held in the 38th and 39th Parliaments.

Tributes

As we know in this chamber, the esteemed roles of Speaker and Deputy Speaker are normally shared between the governing party and the official opposition. However, because Bill epitomized what being a parliamentarian meant, he was respected right across party lines and throughout this entire House. He was appointed in 2006 as Deputy Speaker, as mentioned, serving with Speaker Milliken. He made some incredible rulings and ran the House very efficiently.

Our House leader, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, was appointed at that time as Assistant Deputy Speaker at the tender age of 26 and worked closely with Bill. I have a fun fact: When Bill was first elected to the House of Commons in 1979, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was just two days old.

Bill was a devoted parliamentarian, a former House leader and a Deputy Speaker. Bill's reverence for the institutions of Parliament is something we will always remember about him.

When I first met Bill, he was literally bigger than life, towering over almost all of his colleagues, with the exception of six-foot-seven Brian Pallister, the former premier of Manitoba, who, at the time, was the MP for Portage—Lisgar. Back in those days, the direct flights between Winnipeg and Ottawa were done on either Dash 8s or the little CRJ jets. I can say that it was almost impossible for Bill to bend over enough to get into the airplane and walk down the aisle, never mind to fit into the extremely tight seating. I found it very uncomfortable, but Bill never ever complained.

It was on those trips back and forth between Ottawa and home that I was able to get to know Bill. I was surprised to learn that he had been a member of the Progressive Conservative Party. He was a young Conservative in high school and his early days in college. That is why I think he was so reasonable and he could always appreciate our side of the debate.

It was also on those trips, because of his long service and that I knew when he first started in Parliament he had a young family, as I did, I would ask him for advice on how to make sure we balanced parliamentary life with our responsibilities to our families. He provided me with very sound advice.

Bill also served as a reservist with the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada and shared my passion for a strong Canadian Armed Forces.

Mr. Speaker, as you and I both know, Bill was very proud of his Scottish heritage. He was one of the best pipers Canada had to offer and was instrumental in founding our annual Robbie Burns nights here on the Hill, starting back in 1988 with Speaker Fraser. I can honestly say that I have never seen a more passionate, better or comical *Address to a Haggis*. Bill loved performing it and we all loved watching him do it.

Following his federal career here in Ottawa, Bill was asked to run provincially and served from 2009 to 2011 as Manitoba's minister of conservation and government House leader. I got to work with him again as we dealt with overland flooding along Lake Manitoba, Lake Winnipeg and Lake St. Martin in my riding.

It was not just politics and Parliament that Bill respected. He was a man of faith. He revered God. The Hon. Bill Blaikie was also the

Reverend Bill Blaikie, an ordained minister of the United Church. He found callings in both faith and politics. After he retired from politics, Bill accepted a position as adjunct professor of theology and politics at the University of Winnipeg.

When it came to politics, as Bill said in an interview after publishing his 2011 biography, his “driving force has been the social gospel in Canadian left-wing politics”. That dynamic of persons of faith in politics, perhaps, is something that has been more common in western Canada and certainly was, once upon a time, part of the very foundation of the NDP.

Bill was keen to stress, “The church and state is different than faith and politics...you notice that where the separation of church and state is very strong and constitutional that doesn't mean there's a separation between faith and politics because that's something individuals bring. It's not an institutional connection.”

• (1530)

Bill was a worthy successor to the social gospel heritage of the NDP and its predecessor, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, which had propelled that party to many of its historical successes on the Prairies. In fact, the House leader of the official opposition told me, “If Bill had won the NDP leadership back in 2003, I probably would never have won my Saskatchewan seat in 2004.” Truth be told, if Bill was the NDP leader, my Manitoba seat would have been at risk and I may not have made it here in 2004 either. Instead, as fate would have it, Jack Layton won, which allowed our House leader and I to be Bill's colleagues in the House and, in the case of our House leader, share your chair, Mr. Speaker.

Like many Conservatives and New Democrats, we hardly agreed on everything, but we certainly respected the fact that we each believed in things and acknowledged our respective principles.

Bill Blaikie had a life well lived, a life dedicated to service and helping others, and for that we unite today in paying tribute and giving thanks.

In closing, on behalf of my Conservative colleagues, I want to express our sincere condolences to Bill's wife Brenda, his daughters Rebecca, Jessica and Tessa, and his son, our colleague, who is carrying on Bill's legacy, the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Bill will be sadly missed, but fondly remembered by all. May he rest in peace.

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to honour the memory of Bill Blaikie, a prominent figure in the New Democratic Party and, more broadly, the Canadian left.

Tributes

When I was elected in 1984, Bill Blaikie had already been the MP for Winnipeg—Transcona for five years. He was a towering figure in the NDP caucus, both figuratively and literally, as he stood at least a head taller than his colleagues. With his loud, carrying voice, Bill Blaikie got noticed. When he spoke, the House went silent.

In 2011, when I sat in the Speaker's chair to open the session and preside over the election of the Speaker as the dean of the House, I thought about him. Before me, it was Bill Blaikie who carried out that role as dean of the House. Before that, as members will recall, the Speaker was appointed by the Prime Minister.

It goes without saying that I did not measure up. Bill Blaikie was almost a giant, but I tried to have the same upright character. Bill Blaikie was the embodiment of the original NDP, a party that grew from religious roots in the Prairies. Like Tommy Douglas, Bill Blaikie was a pastor and was almost nothing like the slick urban elites who now form the NDP's base. As he used to say, he was close to the little people, those I would describe as regular folks.

In 30 years, Bill Blaikie took on just about every role within the NDP, including House leader, interim leader, as well as parliamentary leader when Jack Layton was the unelected party leader. He was also Deputy Speaker, as the House leader was saying. When the NDP lost official party status after the 1993 election, Bill Blaikie was there, like an island of stability. I will never forget his forceful interventions to get recognition for his party, which did not have 12 seats at the time.

He and I did not always see eye to eye. Bill Blaikie was a centralist. His vision of Canada did not really embrace Quebec nationalism, much less a special status for Quebec.

In all his 30 years as an MP in Ottawa, I never once heard him utter a single word in French. I once asked him why. He jokingly answered, "I have too much respect for the French language to use it with my bad accent. I will leave that to my children, who are managing quite well."

Our confrontations were always respectful when it came to ideas, values, principles. Bill Blaikie was a man of principle, a decent man, a powerful advocate, a person who was deeply respectful to those around him, and an expert on parliamentary procedure. When he had something in mind, he was so well versed in procedure that you better believe that the amendment would be adopted easily.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to offer my condolences to his political family, who owe a great deal to the man who helped them weather the storms over the years with his reassuring presence. I especially want to extend sincere condolences to his family, including his wife and children, in particular his son, Daniel, who currently serves as the member for Elmwood—Transcona, his father's former riding.

To my friend Bill, to tease you a little, I will end by quoting a great French author, Alexandre Dumas, who once said that those we have loved may not be where they used to be, but they are with us always, wherever we may be.

Farewell, Bill.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many words have been used to describe Bill Blaikie: giant, legend, pillar. He was a giant in our movement, both in physical stature, as has been alluded to, and in his deep commitment to justice. He was a legend in the House of Commons. He held a deep respect for democracy and for the people he represented. He was a pillar of social gospel, a strongly held spiritual belief that we are called to fight against greed and to lift each other up.

He was a beloved husband and father, who instilled in his children a sense of adventure, as well as responsibility to use their talents to make the world a better place. I was incredibly lucky to be able to attend Bill's memorial service in Winnipeg. It was led in the most remarkable way by his children, Rebecca, Jessica, the member for Elmwood—Transcona and Tessa.

They recounted stories of a father who would spontaneously pull the car over to put the canoe in unexplored bodies of water, sometimes with unexpected but usually safe results. He was a father who could be counted on to deliver good advice and encouragement, and a father who had a passion for social justice and a deep love of nature, qualities he passed on to his children.

Bill loved the communities he served, whether he was in the church, his party or his neighbourhood of Transcona. He knew that his community had its roots in the railway, and he was dedicated to protecting those jobs and making sure they could sustain families in the future.

Bill understood that economic justice, social justice and environmental justice were all essential parts of our vision of a better Canada. He was a leading voice against increased globalization. He warned against the dangers of a race to the bottom where greed and profit were the priority, and people and the environment and protecting them against exploitation was seen as a barrier to free trade.

Bill was also a passionate champion of our public health care system. As the NDP health critic, he was instrumental in pushing the Liberal health minister at the time, Minister Bégin, to introduce the Canada Health Act to protect Canadians from having to pay for health care services. Both Bill and Minister Bégin told stories of how Bill engaged in guerrilla warfare in the House to make sure the act contained the necessary protections and, as is still the case, the minister depended on this pressure from the NDP to convince her colleagues to make the legislation better for Canadians.

Before it was ever fashionable, Bill was an environmentalist. He loved nature. He was an avid paddler and camper. He believed it was a part of our mission to protect the earth. In his final act of political life, as Manitoba's minister of conservation, he put these beliefs into action when he took measures to protect the boreal forest, a place that had nurtured him.

Tributes

Bill loved Parliament. He was the dean of the House and served as Deputy Speaker. In 2007, he was named Parliamentarian of the Year by Maclean's magazine. He was an incredible speaker, and his speeches in this place were legendary, shaming the government of the day for ignoring the needs of the most vulnerable and laying out a path to a better and fairer future.

When Jack Layton was elected leader, he asked Bill to be his parliamentary leader since he did not yet have a seat in the House. Bill had finished second in that leadership race, which was a disappointment to him, but he put that aside and took on the challenge of leadership in the House, working closely with Jack, sharing his wisdom and advice with the new leader.

He also loved getting to know MPs from other parties and finding common ground with people who had a different view of the world. He could be hard on members in the House while still respecting their humanity and sharing a conversation over a meal.

He was fiercely proud of his Scottish heritage. Bill was one of the founders of the annual Robbie Burns night on the Hill, which he saw as another opportunity for MPs of different parties to meet each other outside of daily debate.

• (1540)

Listening to his children tell the story of Bill's life, it was clear he found his strength in two places: his faith and his family.

Bill's Christian faith informed his politics. For him, the calling to do good in the world required him to challenge injustice and those in power who allowed injustice to happen. He did not believe that the Bible should be used to justify a politics of hate and exclusion, but a politics of justice and equality.

Bill loved his family. The life of a politician is not easy on families. It means long days and lots of time away from the home. Bill's wife, Brenda, was the glue that kept the family together, and it is her more than anyone we must thank for sharing Bill with the country.

Bill delighted in time with his kids, being fully present for them. He made sure their time together was filled with bike rides, camping and canoe trips and sharing stories of his family and childhood in Transcona.

We are so fortunate to have Bill's son, the MP for Elmwood—Transcona, in the House and in our caucus. He carries on his dad's legacy, speaking truth to power, standing up to injustice and always defending the interests of the least powerful. Like his dad, he does not suffer fools gladly, but when people win his friendship, they know he will always have their back.

In his final years, Bill cherished time with his four grandsons, Robert, Owen, Noah and Emmet. Throughout his battle with cancer, he made sure to find the energy to make memories with the new generation of Blaikie kids. He took part in water pistol fights and played in the fall leaves with them just as he had with their parents. Bill made sure his grandchildren knew him and heard his amazing stories.

New Democrats across the country mourn the loss of Bill Blaikie, and we are so thankful for his life. He leaves a legacy of

compassion, fairness and justice. His example reminds us that we are morally required not to add to the riches of those who have the most, but to meet the needs of those who have the least.

I extend my sincere sympathy to his family and our commitment that we will continue his work.

• (1545)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I hope I can get through this. All of the tributes from all parties have been heartfelt.

I first met Bill Blaikie in 1987. I have been honoured for 35 years to call him a friend and to love him as a colleague and as a fellow Christian warrior for the things we believe in. I knew Bill since 1987. Obviously I was not elected when Bill was here. In 1987, Bill was the environment critic for the New Democratic Party. I was a senior policy adviser in the office of the federal minister of the environment, and that is how I had the amazing honour to get to know him and work with him.

I cannot tell the stories of all the adventures over the years. I am going to try to keep this brief; I will try hard. We had adventures. We marched together in the battle in Seattle, chanting, "Turtles and teamsters, together at last." We were tear-gassed together. What is more binding than that? That is where I first met Rebecca, by the way.

We were also together at the first meeting of the World Trade Organization in Singapore. I was there at the first 1988 Robbie Burns night dinner when Speaker John Fraser, with whom Bill Blaikie was a grand friend, joined Bill. I can picture Bill to this minute marching in and piping in the haggis. There was something about Bill Blaikie's legs in a kilt, and I thought, "How could he be related to oak trees?" In any case, as we have heard, he was a bear of a man with a heart as big as he was.

I want to tell members one thing from being an eye witness to his talents. He had skills as an orator in this place, an enormous warrior heart, an ability to stay focused and never give up and, of course, a talent in parliamentary alchemy.

I will tell one brief story. In 1987, the hot topic was trying to save the southern third of Haida Gwaii from clear-cut logging. Our champion, in the seat now held by the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, was another dear friend we lost too soon, Jim Fulton. We were all working, and the minister of the environment no less than everyone else, to save this area. There was an opposition day motion that came forward from Jim Fulton. In those days, opposition day motions were non-votable, but we had the whole day devoted to the campaign to stop the logging and protect this area, working in concert with the Haida Nation.

At one point in the proceedings, Bill got up and said to the Speaker, turning to his colleague John Fraser, who was just as much of an eco-radical as the rest of us, that there seemed to be a lot of unanimity in this place. No one had spoken against saving the area, although there were many against it. He then moved that, by unanimous consent, at the end of the debate the motion be deemed voted on and passed unanimously.

There was a fair amount of uncertainty throughout the room at that moment because no one had ever tried that before. John Fraser, as Speaker, then said the words “do we have consent?” The Liberal environment critic was Brian Tobin. The minister, Tom McMillan, was in the room too, as were, of course, Bill and Jim. There was unanimity. It was deemed to have passed unanimously at the end of the day. Miles Richardson, then president of the Council of the Haida Nation, told the media that the great spirit had hovered briefly over the House of Commons that day.

Those were things Bill Blaikie could do because he was universally respected and he knew his procedure. If Bill thought we could get away with it, well who knew? We did.

We have heard from many members here today about his many talents and skills and where he drew his strength. Yes, it was from family. However, the social gospel is something that we do not hear about very much in this place.

I went to find some of the things Bill said about it. He related that when he finished theology school he “found the prophetic tradition within the Bible, a tradition of challenging the ruling elite.” He called it this, and I proclaim the same: faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and saviour. Bill clarified that he is “our saviour from the idolatries...in the world.” Then Bill pointed his finger at the market as the “be-all, and the end-all” to which “everything is sacrificed”.

• (1550)

Bill knew we could not serve God and Mammon at the same time. I once heard him being interviewed on CBC Radio's *Tapestry*, and he said that we always hear about the Christian right; let us hear it for the Christian left.

The social gospel is with us because Bill will always be with us. I will never, ever stop being grateful for the chance I had to be his friend and to get to know the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona and his sister Rebecca. I do not know Jessica and Tessa as well as I should, but I thank Brenda, his wife, for sharing him with us all these years.

It is the greatest loss, but one can cherish a life well lived. I just hope heaven was ready for Bill, but we will leave that for now.

Tributes

He is, was and will always be a prophetic voice in Canadian politics that says we do not leave behind the downtrodden, we do not forget what it is to say we have faith and we believe that miracles are possible. Eternal rest be with him, oh Lord, and light perpetual shine upon him. May he rest in peace.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my mother, Brenda, my sisters, Rebecca, Jessica and Tessa, and our respective families, including my wife, Janelle, and our sons, Robert and Noah, who are here in Ottawa today, I want to thank all my colleagues in the House of Commons for taking the time to honour my father's life and work here in the House.

[*English*]

I want to especially thank the members for Burnaby South, Winnipeg North, Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel and Saanich—Gulf Islands for their very kind words about Dad's legacy and work in this place.

Members have already heard a bit about Dad. I think it is fair to say that he was an outstanding parliamentarian, an ordained minister of the United Church of Canada, an avid canoeist and hiker, a lover of all things Celtic, a husband, a father, a grandfather and dear friend. He means the world to those he leaves behind.

During his time in this place, Bill Blaikie left a lasting mark on the House of Commons and the nation.

Some may know this and some may not, but as a member of the McGrath committee on parliamentary reform, he had many tales that he liked to tell around the dining room table. As a member of that committee and a long-time NDP House leader and Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, he played a key role in developing many of the procedures that we now take for granted in this place, from electing the Speaker by secret ballot to applying votes to simply enforcing an appropriate decorum in the chamber, a task easier said than done but that he often made look easy. Incidentally, he was able to use the same sense of gravitas at home to enforce decorum.

It was a very proud moment for him when, at the conclusion of his parliamentary career, his peers in this place named him parliamentarian of the year.

Government Orders

Some alluded already to the fact that as NDP health critic in the early 1980s, he led the charge for a proper Canada Health Act. He is credited in the memoir of then health minister Bégin for having paved the way for a much stronger act than the government of the day would have enacted if left to its own devices.

He negotiated recognition and protection for indigenous rights into the Clarity Act. He served as parliamentary leader in the initial period of Jack Layton's leadership and was sworn into the Queen's Privy Council at that time in the context of his own and other New Democrats' advocacy for the rights of Maher Arar.

In the early days of the Harper government, Bill led the negotiating team that protected the 2005 so-called NDP budget by going to what was then known as the Langevin Block to meet with the new prime minister, Harper, ensuring that hundreds of millions of dollars would go to providing housing, public transportation and post-secondary education to millions of Canadians instead of going to more corporate tax cuts.

In his work, Dad was reinforced by this faith, and we have heard a bit about that already today too. It is a faith that calls us not simply to care about what happens to souls in the next life, but to care for people, all people, in this life, and manifest the love and compassion of Jesus not only through the charity of individuals, but as a matter of justice and in the rules that structure our economy and our relationships with each other and the planet. He often saw the work of the NDP as standing in the prophetic tradition and speaking truth to worldly powers too consumed by greed, convenience and other concerns that blind us to our duty to care for the earth and all its creatures.

Despite the importance of his work in Ottawa, Dad was always happy to slip home as soon as he could. In fact, earlier, former government House leader Don Boudria came to meet with my mom, and Dad would often tell tales of him and Boudria figuring out, in the month of June, how to wrap up business efficiently in the House so that he could do this very thing. Then, especially in good weather, he could tie a canoe to the top of the van and zip off with one or more of his children to explore a lake or creek, usually in or on the way to Whiteshell Provincial Park, that he had been eyeing up from the highway for years and wanted to check out more closely with a paddle.

He carried that wonder for the natural world into his work as a parliamentarian. He was among the first to raise the problem of global warming in the House of Commons. In his time as minister of conservation in Manitoba, he created five new provincial parks and took great care and delight in directing the maintenance and repair of Manitoba's existing parks.

There are many iconic photos of Dad playing the pipes, from formal gatherings here on Parliament Hill to family gatherings down at the lake. He deeply valued tradition and family connections. Exploring and celebrating our Scottish and Irish heritage was one of the ways he connected to our family history. Growing up, Celtic music, stories and toasts featured prominently in our family gatherings.

However, these things were also an important part of his public persona. The New Democrats in Winnipeg have spent many

evenings on a diet of Burns poetry and reflections on the state of democratic socialism in Canada in order to support NDP MPs from Elmwood-Transcona. In fact, the member for Burnaby South had the honour of being our guest speaker on one such occasion.

Dad and Tommy Douglas organized the first formal Burns dinners here on Parliament Hill, a tradition that was subsequently taken up by the Speaker. These dinners have served as an opportunity for politicians of all stripes to gather and relate to each other in positive ways too often drowned out by the more toxic personalities in the House of Commons.

My sisters and I will be forever grateful for the many long conversations that lasted well into the wee hours of the morning where we got to investigate the mysteries of theology, politics and history with a master of the arts who cared for us deeply. We love you too Dad.

Earlier, I mentioned Dad's fondness for Scottish culture, so I would like to finish this tribute with one of his favourite Scottish toasts:

Here's tae us,
Wha's like us?
Damn few,
And they're a' deid!

● (1600)

The Speaker: I invite all hon. members to stand to observe a moment of silence in honour of our former colleague, the late Hon. Bill Blaikie.

[A moment of silence observed]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

COST OF LIVING RELIEF ACT, NO. 2.

The House resumed from October 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-31, An Act respecting cost of living relief measures related to dental care and rental housing, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: It being 4:02 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, October 18, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment of the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan to the motion for second reading of Bill C-31.

The question is on the amendment.

● (1605)

[English]

May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

Government Orders

[Chair read text of amendment to House]

● (1615)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 194)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chambers	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Deltell	d'Entremont
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeschen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Gallant
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perkins
Poilievre	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Scheer	Schmale
Seeback	Shields
Shipley	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Wagh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer — 115	

NAYS

Members

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

Government Orders

McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Bains	Baker
McLeod	McPherson	Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Mendès	Mendicino	Battiste	Beaulieu
Miao	Michaud	Beech	Bendayan
Miller	Morrice	Bennett	Bérubé
Morrissey	Murray	Bibeau	Bittle
Naqvi	Ng	Blaikie	Blair
Noormohamed	Normandin	Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
O'Connell	Oliphant	Blaney	Blois
O'Regan	Pauzé	Boulerice	Bradford
Perron	Petitpas Taylor	Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Plamondon	Powlowski	Cannings	Carr
Qualtrough	Rayes	Casey	Chabot
Robillard	Rodriguez	Chagger	Chahal
Rogers	Romanado	Champoux	Chatel
Sahota	Sajjan	Chen	Chiang
Saks	Samson	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay	Cormier	Coteau
Scarpaleggia	Schieffe	Dabrusin	Damoff
Serré	Sgro	DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Shanahan	Sheehan	Desilets	Desjarlais
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné	Diab	Dong
Singh	Ste-Marie	Drouin	Dubourg
St-Onge	Sudds	Duclos	Duguid
Tassi	Taylor Roy	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Thériault	Therrien	Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Thompson	Trudeau	Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Trudel	Turnbull	Fillmore	Fisher
Valdez	Van Bynen	Fonseca	Fortier
van Koeverden	Vandal	Fortin	Fragiskatos
Vandenbeld	Vignola	Fraser	Freeland
Villemure	Virani	Fry	Gaheer
Weiler	Wilkinson	Garneau	Garon
Yip	Zahid	Garrison	Gaudreau
Zarrillo	Zuberi — 212	Gazan	Gerretsen
		Gill	Gould
		Green	Guilbeault
		Hajdu	Hanley
		Hardie	Hepfner
		Holland	Housefather
		Hughes	Hussen
		Hutchings	Iacono
		Idlout	Ien
		Jaczek	Johns
		Joly	Jones
		Jowhari	Julian
		Kayabaga	Kelloway
		Khalid	Khera
		Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
		Kwan	Lalonde
		Lambropoulos	Lametti
		Lamoureux	Lapointe
		Larouche	Lattanzio
		Lauson	LeBlanc
		Lebouthillier	Lemire
		Lightbound	Long
		Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
		MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
		MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
		Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
		Masse	Mathysen
		May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
		McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
		McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
		McLeod	McPherson
		Mendès	Mendicino
		Miao	Michaud
		Miller	Morrice
		Morrissey	Murray
		Naqvi	Ng
		Noormohamed	Normandin
		O'Connell	Oliphant

PAIRED

Members

Bergeron	Boissonnault
Champagne	Généreux
Gray	Sorbara — 6

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

[*English*]

The 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.

• (1620)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the deputy House leader, I request a recorded division.

• (1630)

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

(*Division No. 195*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey

O'Regan
 Perron
 Plamondon
 Qualtrough
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Sahota
 Saks
 Sarai
 Scarpaleggia
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Simard
 Singh
 St-Onge
 Tassi
 Thériault
 Thompson
 Trudel
 Valdez
 van Koeverden
 Vandenberg
 Villemure
 Weiler
 Yip
 Zarrillo

Pauzé
 Petitpas Taylor
 Powlowski
 Rayes
 Rodriguez
 Romano
 Sajjan
 Samson
 Savard-Tremblay
 Schiefke
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sinclair-Desgagné
 Ste-Marie
 Sudds
 Taylor Roy
 Therrien
 Trudeau
 Turnbull
 Van Bynen
 Vandal
 Vignola
 Virani
 Wilkinson
 Zahid
 Zuberi — 212

Scheer
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Soroka
 Stewart
 Stubbs
 Tochor
 Uppal
 Vecchio
 Vien
 Vis
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Williams
 Zimmer — 113

Private Members' Business

Schmale
 Shields
 Small
 Steinley
 Strahl
 Thomas
 Tolmie
 Van Popta
 Vidal
 Viersen
 Vuong
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Williamson

PAIRED

Members

Bergeron
 Champagne
 Gray
 Boissonnault
 Génereux
 Sorbara — 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Health.

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

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
 Albas
 Arnold
 Barlow
 Benzen
 Berthold
 Block
 Brassard
 Caputo
 Chambers
 Cooper
 Dancho
 Deltell
 Doherty
 Dreeschen
 Epp
 Falk (Provencher)
 Ferreri
 Gallant
 Gladu
 Goodridge
 Hallan
 Kelly
 Kmiec
 Kramp-Neuman
 Kusie
 Lantsman
 Lehoux
 Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Lloyd
 MacKenzie
 Martel
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 Melillo
 Morantz
 Motz
 Nater
 Paul-Hus
 Poilievre
 Reid
 Richards
 Rood

Aitchison
 Allison
 Baldinelli
 Barrett
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Bragdon
 Calkins
 Carrie
 Chong
 Dalton
 Davidson
 d'Entremont
 Dowdall
 Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
 Fast
 Findlay
 Genuis
 Godin
 Gourde
 Hoback
 Kitchen
 Kram
 Kurek
 Lake
 Lawrence
 Lewis (Essex)
 Liepert
 Lobb
 Maguire
 Mazier
 McLean
 Moore
 Morrison
 Muys
 Patzer
 Perkins
 Redekopp
 Rempel Garner
 Roberts
 Ruff

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

BANK OF CANADA ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The House resumed from October 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-253, An Act to amend the Bank of Canada Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read a second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-253 under Private Members' Business.

● (1645)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 196*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
 Albas
 Arnold
 Barlow
 Benzen
 Berthold
 Block
 Brassard
 Caputo
 Chambers
 Cooper
 Dancho
 Deltell
 Doherty
 Aitchison
 Allison
 Baldinelli
 Barrett
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Bragdon
 Calkins
 Carrie
 Chong
 Dalton
 Davidson
 d'Entremont
 Dowdall

Private Members' Business

Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Ellis	Epp	Desilets	Desjarlais
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Falk (Provencher)	Fast	Diab	Dong
Ferreri	Findlay	Drouin	Dubourg
Gallant	Genius	Duclos	Duguid
Gladu	Godin	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Goodridge	Gourde	Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Hallan	Hoback	Fergus	Fillmore
Kelly	Kitchen	Fisher	Fonseca
Kmicic	Kram	Fortier	Fortin
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek	Fragiskatos	Fraser
Kusie	Lake	Freeland	Fry
Lantsman	Lawrence	Gaheer	Garneau
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)	Garon	Garrison
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert	Gaudreau	Gazan
Lightbound	Lloyd	Gerretsen	Gill
Lobb	MacKenzie	Gould	Green
Maguire	Martel	Guilbeault	Hanley
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier	Hardie	Hepner
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean	Holland	Housefather
Melillo	Moore	Hughes	Hussen
Morantz	Morrison	Hutchings	Iacono
Motz	Muys	Idlout	Ien
Nater	Patzer	Jaczek	Jeneroux
Paul-Hus	Perkins	Johns	Joly
Poilievre	Redekopp	Jones	Jowhari
Reid	Rempel Garner	Kayabaga	Kelloway
Richards	Roberts	Khalid	Khera
Rood	Ruff	Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Scheer	Schmale	Kwan	Lalonde
Seeback	Shields	Lambropoulos	Lametti
Shipley	Small	Lamoureux	Lapointe
Soroka	Steinley	Larouche	Lattanzio
Stewart	Strahl	Lauzon	LeBlanc
Stubbs	Tochor	Lebouthillier	Lemire
Tolmie	Uppal	Long	Longfield
Van Popta	Vecchio	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Vidal	Vien	MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
Viersen	Vis	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Wagantall	Warkentin	Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Waugh	Webber	Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
Williams	Williamson	McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
Zimmer — 115		McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
		McLeod	McPherson
		Mendès	Medicino
		Miao	Michaud
		Miller	Morrice
		Morrissey	Murray
		Naqvi	Ng
		Noormohamed	Normandin
		O'Connell	Oliphant
		O'Regan	Pauzé
		Perron	Petitpas Taylor
		Plamondon	Powlowski
		Qualtrough	Rayes
		Robillard	Rodriguez
		Rogers	Romanado
		Sahota	Sajjan
		Saks	Sanson
		Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
		Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
		Serré	Sgro
		Shanahan	Sheehan
		Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
		Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
		Singh	Ste-Marie
		St-Onge	Sudds
		Tassi	Taylor Roy
		Thériault	Therrien
		Thompson	Trudeau
		Trudel	Turnbull
		Valdez	Van Bynen

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bérubé
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Blois
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff

van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 208

PAIRED

Members

Bergeron	Boissonnault
Champagne	Généreux
Gray	Sorbara— 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

[Translation]

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions and the tributes, Government Orders will be extended by 86 minutes.

[English]

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 Bow River, Health; the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni, Health; the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Health.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HEALTH

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Health in relation to the motion unani- mously adopted on Thursday, October 6, regarding over-the- counter pediatric medication.

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official lan- guages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Human Re- sources, Skills and Social Development and Status of Persons with Disabilities entitled “Housing Accelerator Fund”.

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

* * *

DECLARATION ON THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF ARTISTS AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION IN CANADA ACT

Hon. Jim Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.) moved that Bill S-208, An Act respecting the Declaration on the Essential Role of Artists and Creative Expression in Canada, be read the first time.

He said: Madam Speaker, our rich tapestry of artistic expression reflects Canada's cultural diversity, one of our great strengths. Cre- ative expression not only help us to understand the depth and vitali-

Routine Proceedings

ty of our own cultural experience, but also presents Canada's unique story to the world through the universal language of art.

The declaration, promoting the essential role of artists and cre- ative expression, recognizes the vitally important role of artists and the arts in Canadian society. It calls for artists to be respected and promoted, and to have the right to intellectual property on their work and to be free from cultural appropriation. The declaration would ensure the fruits of artistic expression are accessible for the enjoyment of all Canadians.

I am honoured to sponsor Senator Bovey's Bill S-208, an act re- specting the declaration on the essential role of artists and creative expression in Canada.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

* * *

• (1650)

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Lead- er of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent to adopt the fol- lowing motion. I move:

That a take-note debate on mental health be held on Thursday, October 20, 2022, pursuant to Standing Order 53.1, and that, notwithstanding any standing order, special order, or usual practice of the House: (a) members rising to speak during the debate may indicate to the Chair that they will be dividing their time with another member; (b) the time provided for the debate be extended beyond four hours, as needed, to include a minimum of 12 periods of 20 minutes each; and (c) no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

[Translation]

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[English]

PETITIONS

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by 3,596 Canadians who are deeply concerned about federal funding for graduate students and post-doctoral scholars.

Routine Proceedings

They point out these students are our best and our brightest. They are the life force of discovery and innovation in Canada. They are funded by the federal tri-council funding agencies, but the wages paid to them have not increased since 2003 and now amount to less than minimum wage. They are living in poverty. Therefore, the petitioners ask the government to increase the value of graduate scholarships and post-doctoral fellowships by 48% to match inflation over the past 20 years and to index that value to the consumer price index. They also ask that the number of scholarships and fellowships be increased by 50% so we can truly support their efforts to keep science and innovation alive in Canada.

PEST MANAGEMENT

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition on behalf of the citizens of Cypress Hills—Grasslands. They are concerned about the government's arbitrary ban of strychnine for the use of the control of Richardson's ground squirrels, otherwise known as gophers. They cause a lot of damage to farmland and to grassland, and they do damage to both the economy and the ecosystem. Therefore, petitioners are signing to ask the health minister to repeal the ban of strychnine use for the control of Richardson's ground squirrels.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am presenting a petition today on behalf of Canadians who are aware that the Liberal Party of Canada was elected with a promise to revoke charitable status for pro-life organizations.

The petitioners are specifically focused on crisis pregnancy centres at this time. They feel these centres serve young women who are seeking assistance in carrying their child to term in a scenario where possibly it is an unexpected pregnancy. They also provide incredible assistance to families, to both parents, and provide for the needs and encouragement of those young mothers. They are calling on the government and members of Parliament to do everything in their power to prevent, block, organize and vote against any effort by the government to revoke the charitable status of pro-life organizations in Canada and, specifically, crisis pregnancy centres.

• (1655)

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadians who signed this petition are concerned about legislation related to a universal basic income. I have received countless messages from my constituents on this. Petitioners are calling on the government to ensure that paycheques can continue to feed families. They are concerned that billions of dollars have been poured into our economy and about the rising costs of everything because of that. They state that universal basic income disincentivizes people from working and maintaining a job and also that taxes would have to be greatly raised in order to pay for a universal basic income.

The petitioners are calling on the government to vote against Bill S-233 and Bill C-223. They also want an end to the carbon tax and inflationary spending. Finally, they would like to see pipelines and other projects built across Canada to ensure that our freedom energy can help free the world and ensure growth in Alberta and Canada.

AGE VERIFICATION SOFTWARE

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, my second petition is from people across this country who are calling on the government to pass Bill S-210. The petitioners are concerned about how easy it is for young people to gain access to sexually explicit material online, including violent and degrading sexually explicit material. They comment on how this is an important public health and public safety concern. They note that a significant portion of commercially accessible material has no age verification software. Moreover, age verification can be done without breaching privacy rights.

The petitioners note the many serious harms associated with sexually explicit material, including the development of addictions and the development of attitudes favourable to sexual violence and the harassment of women. Finally, these petitioners call on the House of Commons to pass this legislation to protect young minds.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of a number of Canadians who are bringing to the attention of the government the illegal practice of human organ harvesting that is going on, particularly in China. They are calling on the federal government to enact resolutions and policies to combat this horrendous activity.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR A HEALTHIER CANADA ACT

The House resumed from October 18 consideration of the motion that Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, to make related amendments to the Food and Drugs Act and to repeal the Perfluorooctane Sulfonate Virtual Elimination Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, every day, Canadians are exposed to chemicals from polluting industries that spew harmful chemicals into the air we breathe and into the waters of our lakes, our rivers and our oceans. At home, we also experience this in the products we use.

Canadians expect their government to take action to protect them and their families from these toxic substances. They expect their government to ensure that all people have the right to live in a healthy environment. However, Canada's main environmental law to prevent pollution and regulate toxic chemicals is decades out of date. While over 150 other countries already have legal obligations to protect the right to a healthy environment, Canada does not.

These are things New Democrats have been calling on the government to fix for years. While we are glad to see this bill finally come forward, there are some critical and troubling weaknesses and loopholes in the bill.

In the two decades since the Canadian Environmental Protection Act was last updated, the number of chemicals that people in Canada are exposed to in their daily lives has grown exponentially. There has been a 50-fold increase in the production of chemicals since 1950 and this is expected to triple again by 2050. Personal care products are manufactured with over 10,000 unique chemical ingredients, some of which are either suspected or known to cause cancer, harm our reproductive systems or disrupt our endocrine systems.

Over the last 22 years, we have also learned much more about the harmful cumulative effects of these toxic chemicals on our health. Nine out of 10 Canadians have hormone-disrupting chemicals used in consumer products in their blood and urine. We now know that exposure to hazardous chemicals, even in small amounts, can be linked to chronic illnesses like asthma, cancer and diabetes. According to Health Canada, air pollution is a factor in over 15,000 premature deaths and millions of respiratory issues every year in Canada.

This is also an issue of environmental justice.

Frontline workers, who are predominantly women and racialized people, often have higher exposure to hazardous chemicals. We know that, across Canada, indigenous, Black and racialized people are disproportionately impacted by toxic dumps, polluting pipelines, tainted drinking water and other environmental hazards. The former UN special rapporteur on human rights and hazardous substances and wastes has stated, "The invisible violence inflicted by toxics is an insidious burden disproportionately borne by indigenous peoples in Canada."

Government Orders

This is why this bill is so important. Without modernizing legislation to update chemicals management in Canada, and without the legal recognition of the right to a healthy environment, Canadians will continue to be exposed to unregulated and harmful chemicals.

The NDP has a long history of advocating for environmental rights and enshrining the right to a healthy environment in law. My colleague, the MP for South Okanagan—West Kootenay, has a private member's bill on enshrining the right to a healthy environment in an environmental bill of rights. For years, New Democrats have introduced legislation on the right to a healthy environment.

The MP for South Okanagan—West Kootenay has been urging the government to amend Bill S-5 to incorporate the stronger language in his private member's bill. However, the government has not even committed to whether they will accept all of the amendments that the Senate put forward.

While it is good to see the government finally taking steps in this direction, it is important to note that adding the right to a healthy environment in a limited way under CEPA is not the same thing as ensuring that, broadly, all people have the right to live in a healthy environment. There remain troubling limitations on how the right to a healthy environment will be applied and how the right will be enforced.

While the Senate has made several positive amendments to improve the bill, including removing language stating that the right to a healthy environment should be balanced with economic factors, they have also left us with outstanding concerns about the enforcement of that right that they were not able to address.

One of the most disappointing and concerning gaps is that the bill does not touch on the citizen enforcement mechanism in CEPA. The citizen enforcement mechanism is, frankly, broken. It has never been successfully used. The process is so onerous that it is essentially impossible for a citizen to bring an environmental enforcement action. Without a functioning citizen enforcement mechanism, there are serious questions about how the right to a healthy environment can be truly enforced.

Government Orders

• (1700)

Because the government decided not to fix the enforcement of CEPA in the bill, it will be out of scope for amendments. This is a huge gap, but there are also other critical gaps in the bill. It lacks clear accountability and timelines for how toxic substances are managed. It lacks mandatory labelling so Canadians can make informed choices about the products they use. It would not fix loopholes that allow corporations to hide which toxic substances are in their products.

If we want to protect the environment and our health, we have to ensure that we are following the advice of scientists and experts, not the interests of big corporations. These big corporations, made up of some of Canada's biggest polluting industries, have been attempting to stop amendments to Bill S-5, amendments that would strengthen the bill. They are lobbying against better protection for people and for communities. These groups wrote to the Senate, urging the Speaker "to reverse the amendments introduced by the Committee and pass Bill S-5 as it was originally introduced."

These corporations do not want to be accountable for their toxic pollution. They do not want the right to a healthy environment to be enforceable. They would prefer the bill the Liberals originally put forward. They would prefer a bill with enough loopholes to keep profits and pollution high, but people fundamentally have the right to live in a healthy environment. It is why New Democrats are fighting to amend and fix these loopholes.

In addition to pushing the government to fix the bill, we have also been pushing for an office of environmental justice. The United States already has an office of environmental justice as part of its Environmental Protection Agency, and it has had it since 1992. If we established such an office in Canada, it could not only help coordinate the national strategy on environmental racism, improving our understanding of the burden of preventable environmental health hazards faced by indigenous, Black and racialized communities, but also help us assess possible interventions to address these hazards and ensure that all Canadians have the opportunity to enjoy the same level of environmental protection.

Environment and Climate Change Canada is going to need more resources and capacity if the government is truly committed to addressing environmental inequities and upholding the right to a healthy environment. An office of environmental justice could provide structure and additional capacity to carry out this important work.

I find the failure to address enforcement in Bill S-5 the most troubling loophole, but I want to mention a few other gaps in the bill. It does not include legally binding and enforceable air quality standards. It would fail to establish a more open, inclusive and transparent risk assessment process for the evaluation of genetically modified organisms. These are critically important areas the government has chosen not to address, and since the government did not open up these sections, like the section on enforcement, they are areas the government has deemed out of the scope of the bill, so it is not open to fixing them with amendments. This is incredibly troubling.

It has been over 20 years since CEPA was last updated. The environment committee studied this issue and made recommendations

on how to fix it five years ago. We have been waiting for this bill, waiting for years, so why have the Liberals left so many gaps, loopholes and issues that still need to be fixed?

Canadians cannot wait another two decades while they continue to be exposed to unregulated and harmful chemicals, while the environment is polluted, and while human health is threatened. We need to protect Canadians now. My New Democrat colleagues and I will continue to push the government to improve the bill, and we will not stop fighting for the right to a healthy environment, a truly enforceable right that ensures that all Canadians can enjoy safe products and a healthy environment for generations to come.

• (1705)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think there are many aspects of the legislation that really would improve our environment going forward. One of the things I think is quite interesting is the whole issue of labelling of toxic products. That is something that, from what I understand, is being expanded upon, and I am wondering if the member could provide her thoughts in regard to the importance of labelling. From a personal perspective, I believe it is something that is really quite encouraging, and I hope to hear more feedback on that.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, I agree with the premise of the question, that labelling is incredibly important. Having Canadians know what is in the products they are using is vital if we want to protect human health. Unfortunately this bill would take a small step, but would not close the loopholes that allow industries to hide some of the things they are putting in the products we use. Yes, I want the government to move in this direction, but I hope it will be open to amending the bill and strengthening it, so that Canadians can truly be protected.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her speech. I enjoyed working on the environment committee with her.

One thing she talked about in her speech is that there were consultations for five years on this bill, so it has already taken five years, but with respect to the right to a healthy environment, the government is now saying it is going to take two more years to determine what the right to a healthy environment means.

I find that incredibly troubling, that it is dragging its feet so long on this. I wonder if the member shares those concerns or would like to comment on that.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question, and I also enjoyed working on the environment committee with him.

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Yes, the delay is extremely troubling. It has been 20 years since the last time the Canadian Environmental Protection Act was updated, and it has been five years since we received recommendations from the environment committee. To now have a longer timeline is unacceptable.

What is truly unacceptable, though, is to put forward a right to a healthy environment that cannot be enforced. That is what the government has done. What we want is to protect Canadians, the ecosystems, the environment, the air, the land and the water. This is vitally important, and we need to do it right.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am always so grateful to hear my hon. colleague speak. I learned so much just from the last few minutes in the House.

She pointed out the weaknesses and flaws within this piece of legislation, but she also mentioned another piece of legislation that our colleague, the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay, has put forward. I wonder if she could talk about the strengths of that bill compared to the weaknesses in this one.

• (1710)

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for her question, for her work and for the motions she has put forward to protect watersheds and fresh water around Canada.

I really appreciate her bringing up the motion that the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay has put forward, because it is an environmental rights bill. To just put it in the preamble of this update to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act is not the same thing. To talk about the right to a healthy environment is not the same thing as having a broad approach to making sure that across government this right is being protected. It is also not the same thing as ensuring that the mechanisms we have to enforce that right, to protect Canadians, are in place.

I hope the government will look at the bill presented by the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay, but I also hope it will reconsider and open up the section on citizen enforcement, so that we can protect Canadians and the right to a healthy environment.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know my hon. colleague is such a passionate advocate for the environment, especially now that she is a mom and looking forward to the future generations.

Of particular interest in New Brunswick is the issue around the aerial spraying of herbicides and pesticides. I wonder if she would care to comment on that specifically.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question and also for her work on this issue. I know she has put forward motions to address this.

It is a concern also in British Columbia, so it absolutely is something that needs to be addressed. We need to take strong action to ensure companies are not putting toxic chemicals into our environment that then enter our bodies. If we are thinking about our children and future generations, this is critically important to address.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate. Before I get into the substance of Bill S-5, I would like to share a brief history of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, and before I do that, I want to talk about the harmful effects of pollution on human health and emphasize how crucial it is to keep enforcing tough regulations to minimize pollution.

In 2017, The Lancet commission on pollution and health concluded that pollution is the greatest environmental risk factor for disease and premature death worldwide. An update to the original report published in 2017 was recently released. It finds that pollution is still responsible for a staggering nine million premature deaths per year, which is one in six deaths worldwide. These nine million pollution-related deaths each year are nearly 50% higher than all deaths worldwide attributable to COVID-19 to date. They are also higher than all deaths in 2019 attributable to war, terrorism, AIDS, TB, malaria, and drug and alcohol use combined. Air pollution is the largest contributor to pollution-related deaths, accounting for 6.67 million total deaths.

I would like to go back to the Constitution of 1867 and remind everyone that there is no reference to the environment in terms of the division of powers between the federal and provincial governments. I would presume that if the fathers of Confederation were here with us and we used the term “environment”, a question mark would appear over each of their heads. Of course the Constitution talks about forests and fisheries, but purely from the perspective of resource development, not from the perspective of resource protection.

The division of powers in environmental matters is not a static thing. It is a result of court rulings or the product of case law. That case law does not grant sole responsibility to any one level of government. In other words, the environment is a shared jurisdiction.

At this point, I would like to talk about the well-known Hydro-Québec case, when the Supreme Court decided that the federal government did indeed have the right to legislate on the regulation of toxic substances under criminal law. In this case, Hydro-Québec, a Crown corporation, was charged with dumping polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, into the Saint-Maurice River in the early 1990s under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

In its arguments, the Crown corporation stated that the regulation of toxic substances did not fall under criminal law and that the federal government was using criminal law as a pretext, or colourable device, to infringe on provincial jurisdiction. In a rather close five to four decision, Justices La Forest, L'Heureux-Dubé, Gonthier, Cory and McLachlin said, and I quote:

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The protection of the environment, through prohibitions against toxic substances, constitutes a wholly legitimate public objective in the exercise of the criminal law power.... The legitimate use of the criminal law in no way constitutes an encroachment on provincial legislative power, though it may affect matters falling within the latter's ambit.... The use of the federal criminal law power in no way precludes the provinces from exercising their extensive powers under s. 92 to regulate and control the pollution of the environment either independently or in co-operation with federal action.

• (1715)

In other words, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act is a cornerstone that is rooted in our criminal law. It is serious business. Anyone who says that the act is not robust or strong is minimizing the powers enshrined in the act.

[*English*]

What does Bill S-5 do? No doubt it has been mentioned in other speeches, but it does the following: It recognizes the right to a healthy environment. This is something that many constituents have written to me about. They are asking for this bill to incorporate it. It also confirms the government's commitment to implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The bill recognizes the importance of minimizing the risk to vulnerable populations, namely children and those who live in high pollution areas. Very importantly, it requires that cumulative effects, that is, how chemicals interact with each other, be considered in substance risk assessments. That is not nothing; this is something that is value-added to this legislation.

Of concern also to many of my constituents, the bill seeks to reduce the use of animals in testing the safety of products. Also, Canadians would be able to request that specific substances be assessed outside the government's particular assessment priorities. There is a role for citizens in this bill and that is in regard to the role and right to request that specific substances be assessed.

Let us go back a bit in the history of CEPA. Let us go back to 1999. The first update to CEPA was in 1999. I remember that very well because I was working on the Hill as a political staffer and the MP I worked for was the parliamentary secretary to the minister of the environment. There were lengthy consultations with stakeholders on how to amend the bill. The committee hearings were quite extensive and involved.

CEPA, 1999 incorporated for the first time the precautionary principle, which, again, is not nothing. The precautionary principles states:

Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

I remember there was a lot of debate around that definition of the precautionary principle. No doubt many people would like to see the definition perhaps be a little stronger and maybe not mention the term "cost-effective" as in cost-effective measures. Nonetheless, it is there in the bill.

Also in CEPA, 1999, there was a focus away from managing pollution after it had been created, to preventing pollution in the first place. CEPA, 1999 also included provisions for regulating vehicle emissions which, as we know, the government uses in the battle against climate change.

Finally, CEPA, 1999 established a new, more rigorous and timely approach to assessing whether a substance is or may be considered toxic to the environment or to human health. In the act, toxic is defined as having "an immediate or long-term harmful effect on the environment or its biological diversity" constituting or possibly constituting "a danger to the environment on which life depends" or constituting or possibly constituting a danger "to human life or health".

• (1720)

Bill S-5, as I understand it, would inject more rigour into the process. Here I quote:

The new regime will retain the risk-based approach in the current Act. For substances assessed as meeting the criteria to be considered toxic under CEPA, the amendments would then require that the Ministers give priority to prohibiting activities in relation to said toxic substances of the highest risk. The criteria for substances of the highest risk would be set out in regulations, and would include persistence and bioaccumulation as well as criteria for such things as carcinogenicity, mutagenicity, and reproductive toxicity. These regulations will be developed in consultation with stakeholders.

We are talking about a bill, and this is a complex area. Clearly, regulations will be required. One cannot put everything in the bill. Much of the detail will have to be contained in regulations.

Another interesting fact about Bill S-5 is that the bill, if it is passed and I assume it will be, would require the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to publish and maintain a watch-list. This is something new. By watch-list, we mean a list of substances that have been determined to be capable of becoming toxic under CEPA. We are not just talking about substances that are determined to be toxic, but those that could be determined, after study, to become toxic, if, for example, exposure is increased. The watch-list would help importers, manufacturers and Canadian consumers to select safer alternatives and avoid regrettable substitutions.

Another interesting fact about CEPA, which I do not think has really been talked about too much is that CEPA is relevant in the context of the fight against climate change. When we talk about the measures to battle greenhouse gas emissions, we refer a lot to the price on carbon, the price on pollution, but we do not really focus on CEPA.

I was elected and already sitting in the House in 2005, and I remember that the government of Paul Martin added greenhouse gas emissions to CEPA, 1999, namely those emissions from large industrial emitters, citing the "worldwide scientific consensus that there is sufficient and compelling evidence to conclude that greenhouse gases constitute or may constitute a danger to the environment on which life depends."

Government Orders

This was almost 20 years ago. Even back then the Liberal government had the foresight to understand that climate change was a real and growing problem and made amendments to CEPA, 1999 to give itself the leverage, the power to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. I do not recall the Conservatives being thrilled with this change at the time, although today they happily preach the regulatory route to supporting clean technologies as the preferred alternative to putting a price on carbon.

It has been mentioned and talked about even today in this debate that one of the major steps forward through Bill S-5 is the introduction of the right to a healthy environment. I will read the new section 5.1(1) of Bill S-5, which says:

For the purposes of paragraph 2(1)(a.2), the Ministers shall, within two years after the day on which this section comes into force, develop an implementation framework to set out how the right to a healthy environment will be considered in the administration of this Act.

I will come back to this in a moment.

There is another very important aspect of Bill S-5 which should not be minimized. It has been mentioned; the member for Victoria touched on it. The bill seeks to minimize risks to the health of vulnerable populations. By vulnerable population, we mean “a group of individuals within the Canadian population who, due to greater susceptibility or greater exposure, may be at an increased risk of experiencing adverse health effects from exposure to substances.”

Those with greater susceptibility may include, for example, children and those in poor health. Those with greater exposure may include workers and those living in areas where levels of pollution are particularly high.

In addition, the new law would require that the government conduct research and studies, including biomonitoring surveys specifically in relation to the role of substances in illnesses or in health problems which may relate to vulnerable populations.

• (1725)

This is where Bill S-5 intersects with Bill C-226, which in this Parliament is being sponsored by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, but was first introduced by the member for Cumberland—Colchester in the last Parliament. It has been referred to as the bill on environmental racism.

Bill C-226 is identical, except for a couple of grammatical changes and some wording, to the bill that came out of the environment committee before the last election. This bill goes a bit further than Bill S-5 in being very proactive and prescriptive in engaging with vulnerable populations on the risks they face.

For example, Bill C-226 requires the minister to develop a national strategy to promote efforts across Canada to advance environmental justice, and to assess, prevent and address environmental racism.

The bill requires that this strategy include a study that includes an examination of the link between race, socio-economic status and environmental risk, information and statistics relating to the location of environmental hazards. It must include measures that can be taken to advance environmental justice and assess, prevent and address environmental racism and that may include possible amend-

ments to federal laws, policies and programs, the involvement of community groups in environmental decision-making, and lastly, the collection of information and statistics relating to health outcomes in communities located in proximity to environmental hazards.

In an effort to leverage the new right to a healthy environment and the protection of vulnerable populations, it has been suggested that Bill S-5 be amended to require that the minister specify what actions the government will take when ever a substance for which an ambient air quality standard has been established, when the average ambient concentration of such a substance in a geographic area exceeds the standard.

I think this is very important. I think it was alluded to by the member for Victoria. Going back to the beginning of my speech, this is where pollution really impacts human health. It is often through air pollution. Many are calling for an amendment to the bill that would require the government to develop actions whenever it is determined that the ambient air quality in a particular area is above standard.

I understand there are some federal and provincial jurisdictional issues around doing this, but I hope it is something that the committee will explore with expert witnesses and perhaps an amendment will be introduced to this effect.

This connects to another issue that I received a lot of mail about in the last few years. The bill seeks to reduce reliance on animal testing. I have many constituents who have written to me in relation to animal testing for cosmetic product development. They have written to me saying that we have to stop this. In fact, the bill opens the door to minimizing the use of animal testing. The Senate made some amendments to make that part of the bill even stronger.

I have met with stakeholders, particularly animal rights groups like the Animal Justice Canada, Humane Canada and the Humane Society International/Canada. They have recommended strengthening this part of the bill even more. The Senate amendment talks about refining the use of animal testing, but that leaves the door open a little too wide according to those I have met with.

• (1730)

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Madam Speaker, it was interesting listening to the member's speech.

Right now, we are in a situation where the government cannot really seem to get much done. People cannot get a passport or a NEXUS card. People cannot immigrate to Canada. People trying to renew their work permit cannot get that done either.

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The bill says that any person can ask for a substance to be assessed. Given the state of the government as it stands now, and it cannot even get passports done, could the member please explain to me how the Liberals think the government is going to be able to assess every chemical that any person in the country decides needs to be assessed?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, that is an interesting question. I would assume that there would have to be some kind of triaging system. One could ask the government to assess a substance that is totally harmless, so I think there would have to be some funnelling.

However, the government has been assessing chemicals for a long time. This bill goes back to 1988, and I believe we have a lot of expertise in the government on the assessment of toxic substances. I have faith that the government will be able to act on this particular provision, but it is a point that I look forward to discussing. It is a good question and, in fact, I would like to see that question addressed to government departmental officials.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I do have a question for him about the principle that is included in the bill, specifically with respect to creating a healthy environment for all Canadians.

If that is the government's intention, why not talk to its Canadian partners about including this principle in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the member. I had the pleasure of listening to one of her speeches during a Conservative Party opposition day. She delivered a magnificent speech on pricing pollution.

Honestly, I would rather that we not open the Canadian Constitution. The member may want to see the Constitution reopened and constitutional discussions, but I remember constitutional discussions and I would like to stay away from that sort of idea.

• (1735)

[*English*]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his work chairing the environment committee. It is a pleasure working with him.

The member spoke about receiving lots of correspondence about the right to a healthy environment. The first people who came to me about the right to a healthy environment were Franny and Rupert. They started advocating for this in 2014 when they were seven and 10 years old. Now, eight years later, they are still incredible environmental advocates, and they want to see a strong right to a healthy environment.

One of the ways the government could do that is to open up the section on enforcement and ensure that there is a strong citizen endorsement policy, and one that is not broken the way the current one is. I am curious about the member's thoughts on ensuring that the right to a healthy environment can be enforced.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her ongoing focus on enforcement. As some members of the

House may know, the member had the environment committee study enforcement.

I agree that enforcement is really the name of the game. It is an issue that is more general than related to the right to a healthy environment. I believe that the right to a healthy environment is incorporated in many pieces of environmental legislation. However, we must remember that the right to a healthy environment is not a constitutional right but a right within a law that can be changed depending on the government.

The right to a healthy environment exists through the Impact Assessment Act, the Fisheries Act and through legislative instruments the government has to protect the environment. That right is pervasive, and enforcement should always be a focus of the government.

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 could provide some thoughts on the importance of reconciliation.

In the legislation, from what I understand, there is consideration being given to the UNDRIP, which is an important aspect of the legislation. The member might want to provide some thoughts on that or just speak generally to reconciliation and how the government needs to continue its efforts in dealing with the environment on the issue of reconciliation.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, I have seen the evolution of discourse in the House and in legislation. It is nice, heartening and encouraging to see references to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in an increasing number of pieces of legislation. Again, that speaks to the way the notion is permeating our political culture.

Yes, I am very encouraged by that, but the bill's focus is also on vulnerable populations. If we were to marry it up to Bill C-226, it would take reconciliation a few steps forward because these measures recognize that there are populations, many of them indigenous, that have suffered disproportionately from the impacts of industrialization and pollution. This bill recognizes that fact and points us in the right direction.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the member opposite about this right to a clean environment. Most of the rights that we have in Canada are what are deemed to be negative rights, to be free from something. This is more of a positive right.

How do you see that working out over time as the government has not really fleshed this out and will leave it to regulation? What is your thinking on where this is going to go?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind members to address questions and comments through the Chair.

The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

Government Orders

• (1740)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, by requiring the government create a framework for defining and implementing the right to a healthy environment, the bill opens the conversation with stakeholders. Through the discussions, I think we will see that idea become more tangible and concrete, and one can no longer close the door on this idea. It is out there, and it will continue to inform policy, legislation and regulations.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, in the member's answer, he mentioned that this opens the door to having discussions with stakeholders. Would it not have been more wise to have, or did the government have, significant conversations with stakeholders before bringing this bill forward?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, the discussion on the right to a healthy environment has been taking place for quite a while now. There have been debates about it in the House. However, a formal process of consultation injects rigour into the process and will lead to some tangible recommendations. That is where the difference is.

We are focusing the discussion now. We are funnelling the discussion, and that will move us forward on the issue.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the debate we are having on this Senate bill, which I do think is important. However, there is a great deal of impatience in my riding with us talking about frameworks and rights when my community has just gone through the 90 driest days in the history of the community. We are facing wildfires and smoke. Yes, let us set frameworks and strategies, but let us also get busy working on the changes we need in creating jobs in renewable energy. We need good, family-supporting jobs.

There is, as I said, increasing impatience when we talk in the House about frameworks and the right to a healthy environment, but we are not actually getting down to the hard work of making the changes we need.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, the member is touching on a bit of a separate issue. He is talking about the need for transitioning workers from fossil fuels to cleaner energies and those kinds of things.

On the fight against climate change, the government's plan, which it has been implementing and is starting to show results, is extremely comprehensive and detailed. Unfortunately, that level of detail does not make it into news headlines, but the government is doing a tremendous amount.

I understand the impatience, but it is important for citizens to maybe do some of the research, to look into what the government is actually doing at the federal level, what other governments are doing at the provincial level and what industry is doing as well.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my honour to rise today to speak to Bill S-5. This is a bill coming out of the Senate, but it is a government bill nonetheless, and it contains some amendments to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

I would like to talk a little about the history of environmental protection and some of the good work governments have done over

the years in environmental protection. Members may know that I am an auto mechanic by trade, and from that I learned that the government has put its fingers in the mix of what it means to build an automobile, both in emissions regulations and safety. I would like to talk a bit today about how, over the years, there have been changes to automobiles that have led to improvements in our environment.

Long before I was born, there was a thing called the hole in the ozone layer, and that was deemed to have been caused by things called chlorofluorocarbons, which were used in air conditioning systems. Before I was born, governments from around the world worked on that to say that we needed to stop using this product and find a different product.

Air conditioning systems of older cars are filled up with a product called R-12. Sometime in the eighties, or it might actually be in the nineties, we switched over to a product called R-134a. Ozone is a particular product in the air way up in the atmosphere. Over a generation, the hole in the ozone layer down by the South Pole was monitored. We watched that slowly close over time. That was deemed to be because of actions governments took. Governments from around the world worked together to ensure this product would not be used as much, and definitely not in the automotive sector.

We have seen vehicles be converted. If one's air conditioning leaked out, one could not buy R-12 anymore and had to convert it to R-134a. When I became an auto mechanic, I was taught on how to switch them over, and also what R-134a was.

More recently, we have gone from R-134a and moved into the new R-1234. That came in about 2013 or 2014, and I was elected in 2015, so I do not have a lot of experience with R-1234. However, I do know governments worked hard on fixing the hole in the ozone layer, and the automotive industry was impacted immensely just with air conditioning. That is one area where governments have done good work in ensuring we could fix the hole in the ozone layer.

The other area, which is probably more tangible to folks, is the area of acid rain. I do not know if the Chair ever experienced acid rain, but again, this was something that governments took action on long before I was born. They worked to ensure automobiles were not producing the substances that create acid rain. We have actually seen a reduction in fuel mileage and horsepower because of these requirements, but we watched the air of every major city in North America improve dramatically. Today, we have not heard about acid rain for a generation, maybe longer, and the air in most cities is tolerable.

More recently, in 2003-04, we moved from worry about those emissions in gas powered vehicles to those of diesel vehicles. We may have heard consternation from diesel pickup owners in our ridings about some of the emissions controls, but those are targeting the acid rain producing materials that come out of internal combustion engines.

Government Orders

● (1745)

NOx and SOx are what they are called, and they are formed when the combustion temperature inside a combustion chamber is too high. Rather than the hydrogen in our hydrocarbon fuels and our carbon combining with oxygen to create water and CO₂, the high temperature causes the sulphur that might be in the fuel to combine with oxygen, causing sulphur oxides. For the nitrogen in our air, which is 78% nitrogen, the high temperature causes nitrogen to join with oxygen so that we get nitrous oxides. Those come out of the tailpipe and cause the smell when we drive behind an old vehicle on the highway and it stinks. We often forget this, but when a carburetor vehicle from the sixties smells bad, it is the NOx and SOx we are smelling.

They are what was causing brown rings around the big cities. The air was actually visibly brown. When we see picture of places like Shanghai and China, the brown air we see is from the NOx and SOx. Industrial emitters produce a lot of NOx and SOx as well, but automobiles, particularly from the sixties, are really bad for that.

Governments worked on ending acid rain and reducing the NOx and SOx coming out of engines by using EGR valves, exhaust gas recirculation valves. They came in because manufacturers had to reduce the amount of emissions coming out of engines. They rerouted the exhaust back into the front end of the engine and that lowered the combustion chamber temperature, which then did not allow for nitrogen and sulphur to combine with oxygen to make those things.

Today we have more cars on the road in our major cities than probably ever before, yet acid rain is not something we hear about. Smog is sometimes a bit of an issue, but it has been dramatically reduced from where it was in the sixties. These were the actions that governments took back in the sixties, and in the nineties with respect to diesel engines, to reduce emissions. We are seeing the benefits of those actions, so I applaud them.

I think there is a role to be played by government action when protecting the environment, but I would like the problem and solutions to be clearly defined. I find it a bit frustrating that this bill does not target some of those things.

One of the issues I heard come up from across the way was the term “reproductive toxicity”. I do not know about members, but it is showing up on my radar with respect to infertility rates. Some folks are struggling to conceive children, and it seems to be an increasing problem in the world. Just like we tackled the hole in the ozone layer and the smog and acid rain situations of the sixties and maybe the nineties, it would seem to me that we should perhaps tackle some of these things on more of a case-by-case basis, rather than with a boil-the-ocean kind of environmental protection. Let us get to the bottom of some of these problems we see in the world.

The member from across the way mentioned reproductive toxicity. I am glad that it is in the bill and is being talked about, but there does not seem to be anything in the bill that says we are going to make it a priority and try to get the bottom of it. Is this actually a problem? What is going on here? We seem to insinuate that it is a problem, but we do not really seem to be focused on how to fix it.

This is an ongoing frustration of mine with the government, particularly of late, and I seem to share it with my NDP colleagues. The Liberals come in with a piece of paper that says “Housing Strategy” or “Environmental Protection Act” on the top of it. Then they pass on that blank piece of paper and ask what we are complaining about because they have an environmental protection act. They say, “Don't you see the words on the paper?” Well, we say it does nothing.

It is kind of the same thing with this right to a clean environment. I am glad we put on a piece of paper that we have this right, but what does it mean? I do not know what it means. Then they say they will work on it. Well, the Liberals have been in government for seven years. This is lazy governing. If they are going to just put words on a blank piece of paper and say they are going to fill it in after the fact, what was the point of bringing forward that particular piece of legislation?

● (1750)

Again, we see that here. It is hard to argue against the right to a clean environment. Those are very nice words, but what does that mean? I do not know what that means, because it is going to be filled in with regulations after the fact. We will do consultations and fill that in.

I am increasingly frustrated by this laying on the table of a piece of paper that says good things on it but does not actually mean a whole bunch. I asked the previous Liberal member what it means. It is a positive right in some sense.

Maybe I should explain a bit about the difference between negative and positive rights. A negative right is like the right to not have property taken away. The government may not impede property rights. That is a kind of negative right, and I do not see a problem there. A positive right is like the right to housing. It is great to have a right to housing, but how do we enforce it? What does that mean? Does the government then have to provide us with housing? Who must it take it from? That is the challenge sometimes with positive and negative rights.

The right against illegal search and seizure is a so-called negative right, as the government cannot impinge upon one's person. I think that is a good thing, but the right to a job, for example, is maybe more difficult to enforce and is also not necessarily something the government has to give. It does not have to provide us with a job. Who will the government force to hire us, essentially? These are positive rights versus negative rights.

Government Orders

The right to a clean environment strikes me as one of the so-called positive rights that I would have liked to see in the bill. I would like to see the government lay out what it means by that. What does the right to a clean environment mean? If someone does not have a clean environment, must the government move them across the country to a place where there is a clean environment? If we do not feel that the environment is clean, can we sue the government to clean it up? If we do not feel that we are living in a clean environment, what does that mean? That is essentially what I am looking for in this particular bill.

I would say that Conservatives over the years have had a very strong record in tackling some of the very issues that have come toward us, such as acid rain, the hole in the ozone layer and the NOx and SOx issues. Also, generally, given the word “conservative”, we are about conserving things. We have a great record in Canada of conservation efforts around wildlife, for example, and getting our hunting and angling communities to ensure that there are people out on the land monitoring all of these things. We work together to ensure that we manage our wildlife and I think that is important.

We have probably, over the last 200 years, improved wildlife numbers in Canada dramatically. The Canada goose was, at one point, on the brink of extinction. If we ask anybody about that today, it is definitely not a problem. We can go to any public park anywhere, and I am sure that the Canada goose being nearly extinct is not something anybody is concerned about anymore. The beaver, which is on our nickel, was near the brink of extinction at the turn of the century. In 1899, it had been nearly trapped to extinction for the fur trade. Today, the beavers are winning the battles against our highway crews in many places along Highway 88 in northern Alberta. I do believe the railway to Churchill was taken out by the beavers in 2017. The beavers are winning these wars. Why? It is because there are millions of them in Canada. These are success stories of conservation that we have had here.

• (1755)

These are stereotypes, and I often get accused of trading in stereotypes. Nonetheless, one of the differences between so-called progressives and Conservatives is the idea of trade-offs versus solutions. Conservatives are typically thinking in terms of the trade-offs of different policy proposals, whereas often the progressives are talking in terms of solutions to things. When they see a problem, they say the carbon tax will be the solution to climate change, and that is their argument to make. However, we would say that there are trade-offs to be made.

Think about the plastic straw, for example. We see that the plastic straw is being banned all around the world, including here in Canada, and we are bringing in paper straws. There is a case to be made for the plastic straw ending up in the oceans, but are the plastic straws that end up in the ocean coming from Canada? Well, we can clearly make the case that this is not happening. In general, the plastic in Canada is ending up in the garbage. It is being recycled, being put in a landfill or being used to create electricity, so that is generally not the case.

We can say that the trade-off between a paper straw and a plastic straw is that paper straws do not work. I do not know if members have gone to McDonald's for a milkshake and tried to use a paper

straw, but it is terrible. The plastic straws work better. We can make the trade-off and say that while plastic straws might be a problem in parts of the world, they are not a problem here, so let us use plastic straws.

The other thing is the trade-offs between the CO2 emissions of things and the reality of other products. We are concerned about plastic ending up in our environment, and that is a valid concern, but we have to balance that against CO2 emissions. In many cases, plastic reduces our CO2 emissions dramatically. For CO2 emissions, the difference between using a plastic straw and using a paper straw is dramatic. The CO2 emissions per straw are something like 10 times lower for the plastic straw versus the paper straw.

If we think about that a little, it is great that the paper straw is decomposable. Maybe it does not work but it is decomposable, whereas a plastic straw is not and we have to make sure that it gets to the appropriate recycling department. However, the CO2 trade-off is that the plastic straw has 10 times fewer CO2 emissions over the lifetime of the straw.

It is the same with plastic bags versus paper bags. We could transport 1,000 plastic bags for the same effort as transporting 10 paper bags. We should think about that when going to the grocery store and using paper bags versus plastic bags, and about the amount of energy that it takes to haul paper bags to the store versus plastic bags. As for the CO2 emissions between a paper bag and a plastic bag, the difference is 100 times just in the transportation costs. There is a trade-off to be made there. There is a trade-off to be made between ensuring that plastic does not end up in our environment and addressing CO2 emissions.

As Conservatives, we understand that all of the decisions governments make are generally trade-offs. We are trying to find a balance between two extremes. Are we more concerned about plastic ending up in our environment? Are we more concerned about CO2 emissions? We made that trade-off extensively when it came to PPE. We have all come through this pandemic, but suddenly single-use disposable plastics did not seem to be as big of an issue anymore when we were concerned about fighting a pandemic around the world.

I remember going to get a test for COVID and there was a single-use apron, face shield and mask. They tested me and I watched them throw it all in the garbage and repeat it for the next person. For single-use plastics, suddenly we made that trade-off. We said that our fight against the pandemic was worth more than our concerns around plastic.

I am excited to see where this bill goes. I am hopeful that the government will clarify the right to a clean environment, and I am happy to take some questions.

Government Orders

• (1800)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a quick question and also a comment.

The question is with respect to whether the Conservative Party will in fact be supporting Bill S-5. The member seemed to be implying that the Conservatives would likely be supporting it, at least in terms of referring it to committee. I would like some clarification on that, because the other day they brought in a concurrence motion in order to prevent debate on the bill.

My comment is regarding the member's reference to plastic bags. Many years ago, when I was an MLA, I was in favour of banning plastic bags. The member could google right now, as I just did, plastic bags in trees, and there are a lot more than what the member is putting on the record when we talk about a healthy environment. I see the banning of plastic bags as a good thing. Does the member support the banning of plastic bags?

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, that was precisely my point around the banning of plastic bags. We make that trade-off between having plastic bags not end up in trees, but we then have greater CO₂ emissions. That is the trade-off we are making, and that was my whole point. We have to see these things as trade-offs.

In the same way, when we were fighting the pandemic, we saw the trade-off between fighting the pandemic and seeing single-use plastic as not being a problem. Petroleum products have been a miracle product for humanity. As we have developed petroleum products, we have seen food waste dramatically reduced, and we have seen poverty being reduced around the world, so I am generally in favour of petroleum products being used. However, we must recognize that in most of these cases there are trade-offs to be made.

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, in 2010, I believe that the government banned BPAs in baby bottles. Since then, some companies have been known to replace the substance with another substance that is just as toxic.

My colleague talked a lot about single-use plastics in the environment. Does he not think the regulations should be stricter in order to improve our health and the health of our children?

[*English*]

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Yes, Madam Speaker, again, I was pointing out that perhaps we should tackle some of these issues more in relation to specific issues.

I mentioned reproductive toxicity. That is a noble cause to tackle, and I would like to see us tackle it. If there are environmental impacts that are causing that, let us get to the bottom of it. If it is the BPA in our plastics, let us prove that. Let us work on it. That is important, rather than these kinds of “boil the ocean” bills.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Peace River—Westlock talked about ways and the history of our working together, whether it be tackling acid rain; or working with Megan Leslie, the former member for Halifax, who put forward a motion banning microbeads, which has now

been implemented; or my own motion, M-151, back in 2018, which my colleague supported and voted for, about reducing single-use plastics, including plastic bags, plastic cutlery, cigarette butts, and many different things that are lowering the impact. We are glad to see the government dedicate funding to address ghost and derelict fishing gear. That is actually being implemented on the coast right now. Is it enough? No, it is not. We need to go much further.

We know there are over 10,000 unique chemical ingredients used in various different products that are known to cause cancer, harm the reproductive system and disrupt the endocrine system. These are simple, low-hanging fruit that we can all agree on. Does my colleague agree that there should be mandatory labelling of hazardous substances in all consumer products?

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, here we are, once again seeing these trade-offs that we have to make. We want to ensure that we have a healthy environment, but we also want to ensure that we have a healthy economy. In some cases, allowing consumers to make their own decisions on a lot of these things would ensure that we can get to where we need to be on many of these things. We have to take Canadians along on the journey.

I know the fight to end acid rain was a trying fight, but it was one worth fighting and there are no disagreements in Canada around that anymore. I hope we can tackle some of these things specifically, and we will come together on them, for sure.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, the question I have for my friend really boils down to whether he trusts the government to determine whether a substance is toxic, like a straw or a pen. It is saying all plastics are toxic. Plastics are—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. If members want to have conversations, they should take them outside. If they have a question or comment, now is not the time; I did not recognize them.

The hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, the real hypocrisy is that the Liberals had a previous member who was a minister, and in her riding in Chester, Nova Scotia, they have this technology, Sustane, whereby they can take plastics, distill them down to their original form, the different oils, and use them as biofuel. Instead of that, what do the Liberals do? They just ban straws all together. As my colleague said, these paper straws have an even larger carbon footprint.

Does my colleague feel that he can trust the government to politically ascertain what is toxic and what is not?

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Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, yes, I agree with the hon. member that I do not think we can trust the government to get it right. I know the Liberal members were hopeful.

I would tell them to make a definition of what they deem to be toxic and maybe put out a schedule of toxins. That would have been nice to see. They could have defined the “right to a clean environment” and put that in the bill. Then we could be debating that. I am certain that I would not agree with the government, because it is generally playing politics with this kind of stuff.

● (1810)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I asked the member two questions, and he answered the second part.

My first question was whether the Conservative Party supports Bill S-5. Would it like to see it go to committee?

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, we do have concerns about the bill. I imagine the bill will pass and go to committee, so we will look forward to working with the government to ensure our concerns are alleviated. We would love to be able to support the bill.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Speaker, there are a lot of items in this bill that have been talked about. You mentioned plastic straws and things like that.

A few years ago, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle introduced a bill to ban sewage dumping in our country, which was defeated by all opposing parties in Parliament.

I am curious about your thoughts as to where something like dumping raw sewage into our rivers and oceans rates compared to the possible trade-off of a plastic straw. What is the trade-off on raw sewage? I am curious to hear your thoughts on that.

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

The hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for that comment, because I had that written down as another thing to talk about.

Not only did members not support our colleague's bill, but one of the very first actions the Liberal government took back in 2015 was to approve the dumping of raw sewage into the St. Lawrence Seaway. That seemed to be something counterintuitive. The government that seems to be so concerned about the environment approved the dumping of raw sewage into the St. Lawrence Seaway. It seems like it made an off-brand decision.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I really like the approach the member has taken by framing policy questions in terms of choices. There are always trade-offs, and there is a tendency from the government to label something as a solution, while ignoring the reality of the trade-offs. I thought that was a fascinating approach, and I ask him to use whatever time he has left to continue on and explain that process.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, in some ways I was trying to outline the difference between Conservatives and progressives, which is that progressives tend to fall on the side of solutions, whereas we tend to fall on the side of trade-offs. There are many examples of how that rolls out, whether they be how we deal with crime, how we deal with the environment or how we deal with taxation.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg North.

Before I get going, I just want to take a quick opportunity to acknowledge my parliamentary secretary assistant, Kelly, who is celebrating his birthday today. Kelly has been a volunteer of mine since he was in high school. As a matter of fact, in the summer of 2015, when we were running against the Conservative government and Stephen Harper called an election in the middle of the summer, most of us were saying to ourselves, “Why is this election so long?” It was one of the longest elections in Canadian history.

Meanwhile, Kelly was celebrating the fact that Stephen Harper had called the election on or for his 18th birthday. On October 19, 2015, Kelly turned 18, registered to vote and cast his first ballot. He has been part of my team ever since, and is my parliamentary secretary assistant. I just want to wish him a happy birthday.

I was trying to think of what I was going to talk about as the debate was ensuing this afternoon, and I was not quite sure. Then the member for Peace River—Westlock got up and spoke, and it became very clear to me what I was going to talk about. I find it very interesting and very rich that the Conservatives on the other side of this House always hearken back to the days of the good old Conservatives, who fought for climate. Indeed, if we talk about the Progressive Conservatives, individuals like Flora MacDonald, who came from my riding, from back in the 1970s and 1980s, were Progressive Conservatives who cared about very important issues.

The member specifically spoke about two issues, and I will reference them as well. First, on the protection of our ozone layer, he is absolutely right. I think it is lost on a lot of people, the incredible work, through the leadership of Brian Mulroney, back in the 1980s, when it came to the ozone depletion and our approach on how we were going to solve this globally. I will read something from CBC:

They predicted that continued use of CFCs would completely collapse the ozone layer by 2050. Without ozone protecting us from the sun's UV rays, skin cancer rates would skyrocket.

Faced with that dire outlook in 1987, 46 countries agreed, in Montreal, to dramatically limit the use and production of CFCs.

Mulroney signed the protocol. So did Reagan, often considered the ur-Republican. Even Margaret Thatcher, the Iron Lady of British Toryism, got on board.

If members can believe it, led by Brian Mulroney, a Progressive Conservative, those countries literally saved the planet by protecting the ozone layer. The member is absolutely right when he hearkens back to the Progressive Conservatives and the role they played.

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He also talked about acid rain. Let me read a quote, also from the CBC, about acid rain:

In 1990, Bush signed an update to the Clean Air Act that included regulations on emissions that were causing devastating acid rain in the U.S. and Canada. The Canadian government had spent a decade trying to get Washington to address the issue, but were met with resistance—until Bush.

This is the legacy of Brian Mulroney and the Progressive Conservatives. They fought for the environment. They did not care where the problem originated. They looked at it as a global problem and saw Canada's responsibility to lead the way, and on two occasions Brian Mulroney did exactly that.

Right after talking about the incredible work of Brian Mulroney, what did the member for Peace River—Westlock do? He asked why we would bother trying to get rid of plastic straws, because we are not using plastic straws; our plastic straws are not ending up in the oceans; it is other people's plastic straws. He asked why we had to use paper straws because other people are irresponsible. That is the Conservative Party of today. That is their approach. Their approach is not the Brian Mulroney approach or the Flora MacDonald approach of the 1980s. That is what we are faced with right now.

I would remind the member that Stephen Harper, the next “Conservative” prime minister to come from this place, did absolutely nothing.

● (1815)

I put it in quotes because we all know, and it is glaringly obvious, that ever since Stephen Harper came along the Conservative Party, the Progressive Conservative Party, that could elect somebody in Kingston and the Islands, Flora MacDonald, no longer exists. They can take the name and the colour, but what we have over there is the former Reform Party of Canada. That is what we have. We do not have the Brian Mulroney Conservative Party that cares about the environment. For the member for Peace River—Westlock to suggest that Conservatives have always been there to fight for climate, to fight for the environment, is incredibly rich because it draws no comparison to the party of today.

Then, when we think that we got to the furthest point possible with Stephen Harper, members across the aisle are even less progressive than Stephen Harper. If we will recall, it was Stephen Harper who said that pricing pollution makes sense. Why would that not make sense to a Conservative? We are literally talking about the economic model and how to incentivize market decisions through the economic model and the principles around an economy.

One would think that if anybody understood that in the House, it would be Conservatives, who purport themselves to be the saviours of the economy, the party that understands economic principles and how an economy works. Conservatives cannot even support a basic principle of understanding that, when we put a price on something, it will change and incentivize choice in the marketplace. Stephen Harper understood that. Stephen Harper is on the record having said it makes sense to put a price on pollution.

Where are we today? We get the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle who comes along as the next leader and goes completely against that. Then we get the member for Durham, who, to his credit, and I almost felt sorry for him at times, recognized that he was dealing with a party that did not support this because it is motivated

from an angle of denying climate and wondered how he would work with it. He set up this Air Miles-type program of trading off options and then getting to pick a prize at the end, a bicycle or something. He tried at least to build it into an economic model of some sort.

Then, of course, we get to the current leader of the Conservative Party, an individual who, time after time, gets up and harps on and on about how pricing pollution is not the answer, despite the fact that economists throughout the world, and one would think that Conservatives would listen to economists, say that it is, and despite the fact that it is proving to be the most effective tool throughout the world. Here we are. This is the Conservative Party of Canada today.

It is not the Conservative Party of Brian Mulroney. It is not the Conservative Party that literally saved the ozone layer. It is not the Conservative Party that saved us from acid rain and that worked and pushed George Bush for a decade to do something about it. This is a different Conservative movement and it is nothing like the Conservative movement that elected Flora MacDonald in my riding of Kingston and the Islands.

● (1820)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I hear the member talk so much about how carbon pricing is supposedly the most effective way of dealing with emissions. I would like him to put on the record how many megatonnes Canada's emissions have dropped since the carbon tax was put into effect by the government.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: To ask that question, Madam Speaker, trivializes the entire issue. It assumes that every other—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The member is going to give a response and I would hope that hon. members would like to hear that response.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the irony is that I am being heckled by one of the strongest and biggest climate deniers on that bench.

Nonetheless, to answer the question, the member is assuming that every other variable stays still. There are so many other variables involved in trying to measure this. It is a very easy talking point. I know the Conservatives love doing it. They are oversimplifying the issue. The reality is that the member has to look at this stuff holistically. He has to look at every variable involved, and when he does that, he will land on the same conclusion that every economist does and that every other nation has that has put similar practices in place.

Government Orders

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, as I said in an earlier intervention, there is no doubt that there is a need to update the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and that there are some very good things in Bill S-5.

However, surveys have found that there are a lot of toxic substances in ordinary consumer products. We had a study that found very high levels of lead in products that were being sold in dollar stores, including in canned food and children's toys. This bill does not have any requirement for more transparency from corporations about the presence of toxic chemicals in ordinary consumer products. Why is that left out of this version of the bill?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, it is an excellent question and I cannot give the member the answer, but I can say that I would like to know the answer to that. I think people have the right to know what is in a product, in something that they are buying, and in particular if they are buying something for a dependent, for example, or if they are buying it for a child.

I think it is very important, as a parent, that I know, when I am purchasing something, if there is a potentially toxic chemical in there. I invite the question. I want to know the answer to it. I really hope that we get the answer to it through the process as the bill moves through the House, because I would like to know the answer to that as well.

• (1825)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my friend on his seven years in office in Ottawa and also wish Kelly, who is an incredible young man, a happy birthday.

To his point earlier, in terms of the need for carbon pricing and the history of the Conservative Party, if I recall, in the previous election that concluded in September of last year, the Conservative Party and those who are here, elected as a result of their platform, did run on a platform of carbon pricing. I am wondering if he could elaborate on what that impact has had on Canadians.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, that is absolutely right, including the member on the Conservative bench who is heckling me, who is a climate denier. Yes, they ran on it. They ran on a platform of putting a price on pollution.

It is not the same way that we are pricing pollution. It was done in a different way. It was proposed by their former leader, the member for Durham, in a different way, but they ran on it. They ran on the idea of pricing pollution.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Strike three.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would invite the hon. member, instead of yelling across, to ask a question and to be recognized, as opposed to—

Mr. Bob Zimmer: I tried, but you did not recognize me.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): No, you did not get up on this one.

The hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, who, on this side of the bench, is the so-called biggest climate denier?

Historically, what has occurred is that, when a scientific basis for a comment or an explanation is not in reach or does not exist, their reaction is to automatically call the person who is questioning the science behind what they are stating some sort of name.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, it appears as though there is a bit of a jealousy going on, because maybe this member who is asking me the question is indeed the biggest climate denier.

We just have to watch the Gallant news network to see that for ourselves—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the parliamentary secretary that he is not to use the name of an individual, either first or last, and I would ask the hon. member to ensure that he is careful with how he describes individuals.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Apologize. Resign.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sure that the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke wants to hear the answer.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I do apologize for using the member's name. I was actually referring to the newscast program. I thought that was the proper name of that and I was not trying to reference her name.

However, she is on the record suggesting that climate change is not real on multiple occasions, not just on social media but in the House. If it is going to be a competition as to who is the bigger climate denier, let the Conservatives sort that out on their own and then they can come back and tell us.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, if you check the record, you will find that when he asked that question last time, I replied that I agreed that the climate has been changing since—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is not a point of order. It is a point of debate.

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, it is such a pleasure to rise to speak to such an important piece of legislation. It is probably one of the more substantive pieces, as it would update and possibly modernize legislation that, in my opinion, is going to have a real impact on Canadians.

Having a right to a healthy environment is something that we should never take too lightly, and I believe this legislation would establish a framework that would provide a much higher level of confidence for Canadians. For the first time, we have a government in Canada that sees that each and every one of us has a right to a healthy environment.

Government Orders

I remember listening to newscasts years ago that talked about the chemicals being put into products that were ultimately sold to children. I am thinking particularly of those small products that infants and young children would put in their mouths, which were primarily imported into Canada. We did not know the chemical makeup of the paints used, for example, but the product was being put directly into the mouths of children and being digested.

There was a time when asbestos was recognized as a wonderful product, and homes in all regions of our country were using the product as a form of insulation. In fact, if we go far enough back in time, we will see that governments were possibly subsidizing and encouraging the consumption of that particular product.

How things have changed, and I see that as a very strong positive. Fast-forward to today. We are now debating a piece of legislation that would deal with many chemicals, carcinogens and toxins, and how we can make a difference in what the public as a whole is seeing in our communities. Whether it is walking down the street or purchasing a product, we would have a better sense of what it means to have a healthy environment in which to live.

Earlier, a member from the Conservative Party asked about this whole idea that any Canadian would be able to request a substance to be assessed, and he tried to portray it in a negative light to my colleague in the form of a question. I, too, will wait as we see the framework flushed out to see how that issue will be appropriately addressed. However, what I take away from this legislation is that, for the first time, we would be empowering the people of Canada to be able to say, "Here is a substance that causes concern from a health perspective that I would like to see the Government of Canada address."

I see that as a strong, positive measure. The details of that will come out in time, but my colleague answered the question by saying that it would possibly require some sort of triaging to determine priority in terms of possible investigations. I do not know the details of it, but I think the vast majority of people would recognize that this is a significant step forward. When we talk about having a right to a healthy environment, that is the type of example that I will give to the constituents I represent. I think people can relate to that.

• (1830)

Today at second reading we are talking about the principles of the legislation. I am really encouraged that there is a commitment for ongoing reconciliation in the legislation. I made reference earlier to UNDRIP and how that is being brought in, in terms of the calls to action on the issue of reconciliation.

We have a Prime Minister and a government as a whole that recognize the importance of indigenous communities in dealing with legislation such as what we are talking about today. It was a commitment that was given virtually from day one when today's Prime Minister of Canada was first elected not as the Prime Minister but as the leader of the Liberal Party, in third party status here in the House. The Prime Minister made the commitment on the calls to action.

Even within this legislation it might not necessarily be the biggest highlight for all people, but the principle of what is being

talked about, and incorporating it into the legislation, is another clear indication of the sincerity of this government wanting to move forward on the issue of reconciliation. It is so vitally important not only for the Prime Minister, but also for all members. Particularly within the Liberal caucus, it is something that is constantly being talked about in a wide variety of different departments.

In talking about existing substances, I do not know much in terms of science, but I do know there are carcinogens and toxins that, as everyone understands and appreciates, cause serious issues for our environment and Canadians in general. There is an established list, at least in part. It is important that we continue to assess and manage those substances. It is important that we keep an open mind, as no doubt there will be a need to add to that list. Something that is talked about within this legislation is the development of a watch-list. I would suggest we could take that back to some of my first comments in regard to Canadians being able to contribute to that.

We often hear from our constituents about the issue of animal testing, how animals are being used as test subjects for different consumer products and more. In a very real way this legislation is moving us forward on that issue in looking at ways in which we could minimize animals being used for testing.

The bill talks about labelling, an issue I made reference to earlier, and how we ensure there is consistency in labelling so there is a better understanding of what is in the contents.

My colleague made reference to the importance of provincial and federal jurisdiction. As a government, we are committed to working with indigenous communities, provincial governments and other stakeholders. Caring for our environment and protecting the health of Canadians is all of our responsibilities. We, as a national government, have a leadership role to play, and I believe Bill S-5 is demonstrating that leadership role.

• (1835)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was beginning to think there was a scintilla of hope that if this bill went to committee, there would be some sort of redemption, but the member opposite convinced me that there is not even going to be an attempt to make these initial decisions based on a scintilla of science. He said that somebody might be afraid or feel that something might be toxic and it is put on the list, but that is not the way we do it. We have a rigorous system for developing the list of toxic chemicals that exist here or that can be brought into Canada. He mentioned lead paint. I am sure he would be comforted to know that in Canada and the United States, we have not been putting lead in paint since 1992, not to say what is on the walls already that should not be.

From what he says, somebody who fears that ground beef could be toxic could have it put on the list and everybody would be denied ground beef and it would have a warning label. Actually, that was proposed earlier this year. I am glad that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency thought better of it.

• (1840)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, there are many things I could say.

Government Orders

One of the biggest differences between the Stephen Harper government and this government is that science is a factor. Science matters. We have seen that throughout the pandemic and with many other policy initiatives that have been taken, including in Bill S-5. It is not like someone from anywhere in Canada said that something was a bad substance and needs to be added to the list and then all of a sudden it appeared on the list. No one is saying that at all.

Obviously, science is a factor. At least when the Liberal Party is in government, science matters.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about the right to a healthy environment, which obviously we support. I come from a coastal community. I can tell the House what it is like in coastal communities today. People cannot go anywhere without finding expanded polystyrene littered and broken apart along coastal shores, whether it be in coastal British Columbia or in Atlantic Canada. We know there are alternatives to expanded polystyrene that can be used which the government is not enforcing. The same member supported my Motion No. 151, which called on the government to regulate polystyrene in marine environments and reduce it, but the government has not done anything.

I am hoping my colleague will come forward with what the government is going to actually do to tackle polystyrene in marine environments and end this environmental disaster that is taking place. It is impacting our food systems, the environment and the ecosystem that absolutely relies on a healthy environment. I hope my colleague and his government will finally take real action in banning polystyrene from being used, especially in industrial use and marine environments.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, our national caucus was at the Bay of Fundy. The tides were out and I was near the ocean bed at the Bay of Fundy. Protecting our bodies of water like the Pacific Ocean, the Bay of Fundy and Lake Winnipeg is of critical importance. That is one of the reasons that we came up with a list of banned single-use plastics.

We will continue to look at ways in which we can improve our environment, in particular our bodies of water.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a lot has been said this evening as far as the track records of the different parties in this place are concerned. I would just like to draw the member's attention to this. The Conservative omnibus bill, Bill C-45, is pretty infamous. It revised the Fisheries Act and removed sections of banned activities, which resulted in the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat. It also altered the Navigable Waters Protection Act. There were so many pieces in the omnibus bill that were just an attack, an assault, I would say, on environmental protections in this country.

Could you comment further on the Conservatives' record as far as environmentalism is concerned?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the member to address questions and comments through the chair.

I would ask for a brief answer from the hon. parliamentary secretary. He has 10 seconds left.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member for Fredericton is a very strong environmental advocate. I really do appreciate the many contributions she makes to the government caucus.

The member is quite right. The elimination of support for the experimental lakes program is another good example. It is something we have reinforced and continue to try to improve wherever we can. I am sure that she will ensure there is a high level of accountability in Fredericton and every other region of the country and that they are being well served by government programs.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour and a privilege to rise in the House of Commons and to get a chance today to speak to Bill S-5, which is a piece of government legislation that comes to us from the other place. After it was introduced there, several amendments were made to the bill and it was sent to this House for more consideration. This piece of legislation mainly focuses on how the government will administer the Environmental Protection Act, 1999, as well as the Food and Drugs Act. I will talk about some of that in a moment.

First, it is worth noting that this is another environment bill coming from the Liberal government, which is a frequent topic. That is always something interesting to see when we consider the long list of hypocrisy, double standards, failure and empty promises that we keep getting from the government. That is why we often have to wonder what exactly the Liberals are trying to do whenever they are trying to bring something like this forward. Sometimes they are pushing political agendas or special interests in the name of supposedly helping the environment. Other times they are quickly trying to change the subject to distract from their failed policies or one of the many scandals that they seem to find themselves involved in on a regular basis.

For all we know, that might be why the government added a general statement that we should protect the environment, without really defining or explaining it any further. Regardless, it is important to remember how the Liberals tend to operate when any bill on this topic comes from their government.

Until recently, I was on the public accounts committee. Along with reviewing the Auditor General's reports, we had the privilege of being able to look at the environment commissioner's reports on a regular basis as well. This gave me and my Conservative colleagues a closer look at the government's record of not keeping its promises or of missing its targets. It is remarkable how, over the course of time on the committee, and I am sure many other members here who have sat on the committee would agree with me, there is a recurring theme of overall failure to get things done and accomplished. More than half of the reports that we saw in this particular Parliament indicated significant failure. In some cases, the government is not delivering because there was no plan or no effort at all to get it done.

Government Orders

The last environment commissioner's report that I worked on had to do with the just transition, as the government supposedly calls it. This is what the commissioner told us:

[T]he government has been unprepared and slow off the mark.... We found that as Canada shifts its focus to low-carbon alternatives, the government is not prepared to provide appropriate support to more than 50 communities and 170,000 workers in the fossil fuels sector.

The government identified Natural Resources Canada as the lead department to deliver just transition legislation in 2019.

[We found [t]he department took little action until 2021, and it did not have an implementation plan to address this significant economic shift.... Without a proper just transition plan in place, there are risks that are comparable to what occurred with the collapse of the northern cod fishery in Atlantic Canada in the 1990s.

Why is this important? I represent an area in southwestern Saskatchewan and my colleague from Souris—Moose Mountain is in the southeast corner of Saskatchewan. Right where our borders meet is an area that is going to be affected by this supposed just transition by the government. The towns of Rockglen, Willow Bunch, Coronach and many other communities in that area are going to be directly impacted by this. What we have seen repeatedly through the delays is that the government has not actually taken any steps yet to help these communities with this transition as the government is removing the number one economic driver in those communities and throughout that entire region. This has only been exacerbated these last two years, but that does not give the government the excuse of not being able to deal with something that it has implemented and forced upon these communities.

Whenever the government takes something away from someone, it has to be able to backfill it or replace it with something else. That is what the government is supposedly trying to do with a just transition, but we are just not seeing it. It is really important. Having gone through so many of the public accounts reports and seeing the failure, not even to have a plan in place is doing an extreme disservice to these communities.

I will talk about the town of Coronach as well. Coronach is in the riding of the member for Souris—Moose Mountain. I met with the mayor because he is part of a regional group that is represented by both Rockglen and Willow Bunch in my riding. He was talking about how their town specifically was designed to accommodate a population base of closer to 2,000 people. The town has only around 800 people right now, though. With the removal of the coal mine and power plant from the riding, who knows what is going to happen to that population?

• (1845)

Coronach is a town that is uniquely set up to grow and blossom, if only there were some proper investments into the community, from both the private sector and the government, particularly from the government, when it is removing the number one driver of the local economy. This is a town that has all the potential in the world to be able to do more, but the government is making sure it will achieve less, and unfortunately it is going to be at risk of suffering a fate similar to other communities that have had their entire economies wiped off the map.

Again, I look at Rockglen and Willow Bunch. The government spent some money in those communities. That had nothing to do with this just transition plan, yet the government is saying that it

was actually from that funding stream, which is completely backward and is not actually helping to address the problems these communities are going to have going forward. These are problems such as broadband, which would be a far more appropriate investment by the government into their communities. Instead, it is investing in other areas that are not on a priority list for these communities. They are seeking an opportunity going forward as the government removes this critical industry from them.

Something else the committee looked at in public accounts was the carbon tax. The Liberals call it a price on pollution as though it is supposed to help protect the environment and we have just not seen the results yet. It is supposed to be their signature policy for the environment, but we see it is not actually a serious approach to the issue of the environment. Instead, it has turned out to be a great excuse for the government to take more money from Canadians' pockets, and the Parliamentary Budget Officer has released reports to confirm that Canadians, in fact, are receiving less than what the government is taking from them.

On the government's claims about the carbon tax being revenue neutral, when I asked the finance department about the amount of GST charged on top of the carbon tax, it confirmed that is over and above the \$4.3 billion collected last year, but it could not actually give me a number because it was not keeping track of it. This is absolutely insane, because when we look at an energy bill, and I have many farmers who are sending me their bills to show how much carbon tax they are paying on their energy costs to dry grain, heat their barns and things like that, there is the carbon tax price and right below it there is a line for the federal GST that is collected.

Over time that becomes a lot of money, because there is a lot of carbon tax being collected now, but as we see the government planning to triple the carbon tax going forward, all the way up to \$170 a tonne, that is going to be problematic, and we are going to see that GST number rise, yet the government does not even know how much money it is collecting from it. It is just insane. I do not even really know what more to say than that.

Bill S-5 is a bit different from the more outrageous examples out there. In particular, it would bring the focus back to Canada's legal and regulatory frameworks, which have already been in place for a long time. While many industry associations have supported the bill from when it was originally introduced, they have also expressed their concerns with some of the amendments it has received since then.

It is our job in the House to consider all of this and carefully review everything so that we can get the right balance, and hopefully the government will listen and reconsider some of the changes made to how it originally wrote its own piece of legislation. One of the first questionable issues for Canadian industry is a change to the wording related to the precautionary principle.

At first reading, the bill originally used standard wording, which is internationally recognized. It read, “the lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation”. The key word in that sentence is “cost-effective”. It demonstrates that we fully expect the co-operative and responsible approach on the part of our industries to protect the environment. This expectation also includes awareness and respect for the needs and circumstances for those same industries. That is quite clear.

However, this statement has been amended to say, “the lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing effective measures to prevent environmental degradation”. Such a change is not as small as it might sound. Those two words are clearly different with their emphasis, and this causes a shift in the meaning and interpretation of that section.

The other problem is that the bill refers to the precautionary principle, which is an international concept of long-standing international recognition. It represents a balanced approach between the environment and industry, and there is no need to move away from it. The wording for it is “cost-effective” and our law should faithfully reflect what it is citing, instead of creating uncertainty by changing what it says and what it means.

• (1850)

I will turn to another amendment made to this bill about assessing whether a substance is toxic. The original version mentioned vulnerable populations, but it did not include “vulnerable environment” as a new term, which has been added along with it. In Bill S-5, it is vague and unclear, which is not helpful and can create regulatory uncertainty for stakeholders dealing with the process of assessment or enforcement.

Again, we must not lose sight of the right balance between strong protection for the environment and practical concerns expressed by our industry. In that regard, it is a real possibility for a regulatory regime to become excessive and hostile to development.

We have seen a similar situation that is unnecessarily blocking resource projects across the different regions of the country. The Impact Assessment Act process has not only ruled out new pipelines for oil and gas, but also created challenges for forestry, and even more so for new mining projects, which are needed for the government's green ambitions.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1855)

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC) moved that Bill C-289, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (identity verification), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand here this evening with my fellow colleagues to talk about a very important issue, which is money laundering, and to discuss a simple private

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member's bill to amend the Criminal Code to make it easier for authorities to prosecute and convict money launderers.

This bill is a simple addition, an amendment to the Criminal Code, to make it a criminal offence to provide false or misleading statements to a reporting entity about the identity of the account holder or the corporate structure and beneficial ownership of the ultimate account holder. Money launderers often lie about their identity or the ownership structure of the account holder. It is a simple lie that has significant impacts on Canada. This is because money laundering can impact every community across Canada.

The bill comes with penalties of up to 10 years in jail, a \$1-million fine or both. It should no longer be free to wash money in Canada. These crimes, these simple lies, deserve significant consequences. The secret is that Canada has a far lower rate of prosecution and conviction for white collar and financial crimes when compared to other like countries across the world.

The Cullen commission, which was a British Columbia inquiry into money laundering, recently released its report in May of this year. It details significant concerns with and gaps in money laundering laws and has exposed the significant challenges Canadian authorities, our police and prosecutors, have in convicting money launderers. The commission heard stories of people going into casinos with hockey bags full of \$20 bills as dirty money, and that money coming out washed and clean. This must stop.

These are the proceeds of crime in our communities. These are the proceeds of drug trafficking for substances such as fentanyl. They are the proceeds of human trafficking and of political corruption. When we look at what is happening across the globe from a geopolitical perspective, Russia's illegal war and invasion of Ukraine, and the political corruption and kleptocracy that goes on in some regimes, we know some of that money ends up here in Canada.

What we want to do, and what this bill proposes, is to make it easier for authorities to convict money launderers of this crime. We care about money laundering, of course, because it enables crime. We also care about it because it is expected that about \$100 billion every year ends up being laundered in Canada, and much of it ends up in our real estate all across the country, which increases the demand for housing. When we increase the demand for something, we also increase the price.

Of course, the significant rise in housing prices is not related solely to money laundering. That is not what I am claiming here tonight, but it certainly does not help the situation. This increased real estate activity and demand for real estate in our major urban centres spills over into some smaller communities. As people are pushed out of major urban cores, they end up in beautiful rural parts of this country, just like Simcoe North.

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In fact, the Bank of Montreal earlier this year singled out Orillia, which is in Simcoe North, as having a 300% increase in real estate prices for the average home over six years. That is a very difficult price increase to manage for local residents. It has been a challenge for renters and those trying to find housing in cities such as Orillia all across this country.

Our country has become a playground for global criminals to wash their dirty cash. Canada is even being promoted by criminals around the world as a safe haven for the proceeds of crime. That puts Canada on the map for all of the wrong reasons. The rest of the world has introduced some more stringent and stricter laws than Canada when it comes to money laundering, and that is why criminals are finding their way to Canada.

As the holes in the dike get plugged across the rest of the world, criminals will move their money to the jurisdictions with the weaker laws. Unfortunately, right now that happens to be Canada. At one point, we actually did lead the world with some laws pertaining to financial crimes, but we have unfortunately fallen behind, which means it puts us on the map for these criminals as a safe place to come and wash their money.

● (1900)

What can we do? These are complex, transnational organizations with links to organized crimes and corrupt political regimes. How do we make sure that they cannot use our lax systems to launder their money?

In a recent C.D. Howe intelligence memo, expert Kevin Comeau acknowledged the challenge with Canada's current laws. He wrote, "Under our present anti-money-laundering rules, financial institutions and designated non-financial businesses...are legally required to collect and verify the identity information of their clients." Clients who provide false beneficial ownership information are often not caught when they lie about these representations. He also says, "The federal government can reduce these risks by enacting legislation attaching sanctions to false reports of beneficial ownership". We need to give authorities the tools to make it easier to catch these criminals.

As a rookie MP, I wanted to bring forward an idea that I thought might have cross-partisan support. Money laundering, I am sure, will not have many people stand up in this House and advocate that we need to keep our laws weak. Money laundering affects us all. It is not a partisan issue, but it is one that we can all work together on.

The government, to its credit, has signalled progress on money laundering. It has actually moved up its commitment to introduce a beneficial ownership registry. That is very important. The original date was 2025. It moved that up and it is supposed to be enacted by the end of this year.

I must say that this beneficial ownership legislation is very important, but I am underlining that the beneficial ownership registry must be publicly available and it must be free of charge. It does not appear that this will initially be the case, but I hope that the government can keep this commitment. As many people in the House know and say, sunlight is, in fact, the best disinfectant.

This private member's bill, Bill C-289, is proposed to be complementary to beneficial ownership legislation, but it also stands alone. If, for some reason, the beneficial ownership legislation is delayed, or, for whatever reason, it is not brought forward and enacted this year, this private member's bill will be another tool for authorities to use to combat money laundering activity.

Additionally, penalties for lying about beneficial ownership or identity and money laundering activity should be met with criminal and not administrative penalties. We need criminal penalties for people who lie about the ownership structures of their accounts because of the harm that it does to society. These penalties must have teeth. Weak punishments will only be seen as a cost of doing business. That is how these money launderers, these sophisticated criminals, view weak punishments.

Do not take my word for it. Here are some thoughts of well-known stakeholders. Christian Leuprecht of the Macdonald Laurier Institute, a senior fellow, says, "After decades of turning a blind-eye, the proposed amendment to the Criminal Code is one of many steps Canada needs to show that it is actually serious about containing global financial crime." James Cohen at Transparency International Canada says, "We are pleased to see the proposal of this bill that fits in with increasing attention and efforts in Canada to fight money laundering...a crucial tool in closing one of the many gaps that have been exploited by kleptocrats, tax cheats and their enablers." Other supporters of this bill who have come forward include Publish What You Pay and Canadians for Tax Fairness.

I commit to working with members of all parties in the House on this bill. I am hoping to hear their constructive feedback. I do not quite care who gets the credit if we make significant progress affecting money launderers. I want to work with members of the House and the Senate to close other loopholes that money launderers rely on.

● (1905)

Some of the ideas that I plan to advance in the House also include a national commission on money laundering. I think it is important to follow the B.C. commission and bring forward a time-limited study with some concrete measures that the government can enact quickly in order to combat money laundering. There was enough evidence presented in the Cullen commission in B.C. that should give all of our legislators here in the House some cause for concern, and we must turn our mind to that on the national stage.

Additionally, the U.K. has brought in something called unexplained wealth orders, which I believe we should be considering here in the House. It would allow authorities to recover the proceeds of crime and identify assets that are purchased by criminals.

As well, there is a very simple change we could make to the Privacy Act where financial institutions could share information between themselves and the RCMP so that individuals who are identified as laundering large sums of cash cannot just walk across the street to another financial institution and continue their activity. These institutions often have significant data and intelligence on individuals or organizations who launder money. We need to make it easier for the institutions to speak to each other so that these criminals have a harder time getting access to financial products and accounts that allow them to launder their money.

In the few minutes left, I would like to thank some people.

I thank the parliamentary drafters. I think I scared them initially with some of my ideas, but we narrowed it very well. Ms. Lemaire did a fantastic job working with me and had a lot of patience with me as a rookie MP about the ideas, and I believe we landed at a great spot, an elegant spot.

I thank James Cohen from Transparency International Canada and Sasha Caldera from Publish What You Pay Canada. These individuals were with me at the very beginning talking about some ideas that we could bring forward to close money-laundering loopholes.

I thank Troy Cochrane from Canadians For Tax Fairness. Sam Cooper has been a relentless advocate on the money-laundering file for years. He was talking and writing about money laundering and uncovering financial crime. He is still doing that. He has written a book called *Wilful Blindness*, which I think all members of the House should consult. It gives us a small lens into a very dark world of money laundering.

I thank the Macdonald–Laurier Institute, which I mentioned earlier, as well as Kevin Comeau and others at the C.D. Howe Institute, Christian Leuprecht, whom I mentioned, Garry Clement, Jason Wadden, Tim Hyde, senators from all parties, frankly, and finally, my former director of parliamentary affairs, Ryan Ouderkirk, who is no longer in my office but left to pursue a legal education at my alma mater, Western University. He will make a fantastic lawyer. His help was instrumental in getting us to this place today. I want to thank him very much.

I thank the hon. member for Abbotsford for seconding this bill and speaking with me at length about it. I very much appreciate the veteran parliamentarian for imparting some wisdom to a rookie, and not just for his help on this bill but in general. I have been very lucky to have him as a mentor.

I will close by saying that I look forward to constructive feedback on this bill and a commitment from all members in the House to take a simple yet necessary step to close a loophole to combat money laundering. Today is the day when we can say no to global criminals who see Canada as a safe haven to launder their dirty cash.

• (1910)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the manner in which the member has presented the legislation and his willingness to be open.

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No doubt, we as a society have to come to grips with the issues of our money supply, the laundering that does take place, and to a fairly wide spectrum of issues in between. We also need to recognize that it is very much a global issue. The member made reference to that in the last few words of his speech. It is important that, as a nation, we work together with other like-minded nations to deal with the issue of money laundering. I wonder if the member could provide more insight on that specific issue.

Mr. Adam Chambers: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is right. On many things we may disagree, but on this one we agree. It is important that the global community work together to combat money laundering. Unfortunately, in the last number of years, Canada has not kept up pace with other jurisdictions that have enacted more serious penalties and crimes and other regimes. I referenced the U.K. in my speech about unexplained wealth orders. There are a number of steps we could take. This is but one small step, and many other countries have done much more.

I am hoping this is a positive first step that will support the government's objectives, including the beneficial ownership, which many other countries already have and Canada still does not have. Yes, we need to coordinate globally, but this is a small step forward that I believe gets us to a better place.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened with care to the member's introduction of his bill, and I guess I have a fundamental question about the bill. There are lots of very robust measures that have been suggested for tackling money laundering, and it seems to me that all this bill does is take something that is an administrative penalty now and make it a criminal penalty. It seems like a very small measure given the very robust recommendations we have had from the Cullen commission about the things we need to do to combat money laundering.

Mr. Adam Chambers: Madam Speaker, if I had the benefit of being in government and significant legislative resources to bring forward additional measures, I most certainly would have done so, but the truth is there actually is not an administrative penalty for it right now. The beneficial ownership registry does not exist today, so this is a criminal penalty for those who lie about their identity or the corporate ownership structure of the name under which they are opening an account.

We need a serious penalty for a serious crime, and it needs to be criminal and not administrative. That is what we will see in the beneficial ownership registry. We need a criminal penalty for this, and we must take a step to say no to global criminals.

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• (1915)

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, coming from the banking world, I have to say there are security measures in the financial institutions to watch for money laundering. I remember it very clearly.

The thing I would like some clarification on and would like the hon. member to explain is that in the banking system one bank cannot speak to the other bank, even though we know there are illegal transactions going on. Can we enhance that, so they have the ability to speak to one another?

Mr. Adam Chambers: Madam Speaker, yes, that is most certainly the case. This bill would not do that, but it is something we must work on together, and it is a simple rule that we could implement. I look forward to working with all members of the House on simple measures like that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I indicated to the member in my question, I appreciate the manner in which the member has presented his private member's bill and his openness to hearing what other members have to say on what is a very important issue.

Money laundering and the false information that is out there have very significant impacts and ramifications, not only here in Canada but around the world. When we think of some of those ramifications, we can talk about the speculation on the costs of housing, which I think a lot of people can appreciate. We can talk about issues such as the financing and funding of terrorist acts that take place around the world. The amount of harm that is caused as a direct result of money laundering is virtually unlimited.

One of the things we need to take into consideration is actions that have already been taken, because there have been some substantial actions that have been taken. The member, for example, just made reference to the ownership registry, and I think having an ownership registry that is publicly searchable is something that is absolutely critical. Within the budget we have made movement toward that, but I would recognize that the Canada Business Corporations Act is something that is going to have to ultimately be changed. In making those modifications, one of the things we need to do as a government is to work with provincial entities to gain some support in taking some of the necessary actions to ensure the ownership registry the member talked about materializes in a way that is as effective as possible.

I recognize the member makes reference to that, and that is a very important aspect. It is something that we have referenced in budget 2022, and we did not stop there. In terms of the importance of our financial markets, and here I talk about money supply and so forth, we have to take into consideration institutions such as FINTRAC. FINTRAC is there to protect the interests of Canadians. It is very close to, if it has not already, establishing a financial intelligence unit, and there was a commitment from the federal budget of just under \$90 million to support and advance that.

FINTRAC has an incredible record, and there are ways we can use FINTRAC's record to assist in dealing with and broadening the ways it can possibly help out on money laundering issues and the issues related to false information, which are actually quite ram-

pant. It is something that is not just unique to Canada. It is becoming a larger issue from a global perspective. That is why I posed the question to the member in regard to Canada's role in advocating for global leadership, because in many ways the best way to tackle it, at least in good part, is to get like-minded countries working together.

I know the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance is very much concerned about that issue and does make efforts to try to ensure there is more of a global approach to dealing with money laundering. We have actually taken steps to establish a new Canada financial crimes agency within the budget, and again it is a move to try to address the issue right up front in a very direct way, which I think people can really appreciate.

• (1920)

When we talk about legislative reviews that are necessary, we have made a commitment to look at how money has been digitized. That is such a critical issue. We heard the leader of the Conservative Party talk about cryptocurrency. Members will recall his commitment to cryptocurrency. I wonder to what degree the leader of the Conservative Party actually took into consideration the possibility of laundering taking place in that digital atmosphere.

Digital money and the markets it is getting into continue to expand, so as a government we have made a commitment to move forward on that issue. The coming of the Internet and the things that take place digitally have expanded more than a hundredfold over the years. The manner in which large sums of money travel the world is quite significant and is having an impact in many different ways on our currency and on issues such as money laundering. It is one of the reasons that legislative review is in fact being taken into consideration.

There is a combination of actions the government has put in place, just from the 2022 budget, and I would encourage the member opposite to maybe meet with representatives, different possible ministers, who all contributed to the budget in dealing with an issue he obviously is very much concerned with.

I would suggest this is not the first budget in which the Government of Canada has expressed an interest in ensuring we are doing whatever we can on the issue of money laundering or people trying to avoid paying their fair share. We have had at least two budgets I can think of offhand in which there was a commitment of literally hundreds of millions of dollars. A commitment was made to have CRA look at ways in which people or corporations are using loopholes and other mechanisms to avoid paying taxes. That is something the government takes very seriously.

When we talk about the issue of laundering, it is important that it is more than one department and more than just one level of government that is ultimately responsible. It even goes beyond Canadian borders. What we have seen over the last number of years is a government that is taking a strong leadership role. It has, in fact, worked with the provinces and looked at what is happening.

In particular, let us look at British Columbia or what is taking place in Toronto and other communities, and the role casinos, for example, might be playing. We understand the depth, at least in good part, of the problem, and our budgetary actions have reflected that understanding.

I suspect that as we continue to move forward in the weeks, months and years ahead, we will see more action from the government in addressing this problem. We can understand and appreciate that it is an issue that is there that affects us all, and we will continue to move forward on it.

● (1925)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening to speak to Bill C-289, which was introduced by the Conservative member for Simcoe North.

I will start by saying that the Bloc Québécois is in favour of Bill C-289, which will amend the Criminal Code to make it an offence to give false or misleading information to a financial institution requesting that information in accordance with the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act.

Right now, the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act asks financial institutions to verify their clients' true identity and the source of funds under certain circumstances. Financial institutions must also report transactions they deem suspicious to the government, so the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, or FINTRAC, can carry out the necessary verifications, prevent laundering of the proceeds of illegal activities and prevent such funds from being used to finance illegal activities, such as terrorism.

The problem is that we know from experience that there is a serious lack of rigour and very little vigilance, at all levels, in the tracking of dirty money. If a bank's client makes a false statement, it is very likely that they will get away with it. There is minimal verification. Since the act of intentionally making a false or incomplete statement is not criminally sanctioned at present, this client has every chance of falling through the cracks. This leaves FINTRAC with incomplete information, and its work becomes less effective. This is how the chain of negligence results in dirty money being laundered in the real economy.

This is a flaw that Bill C-289 will correct. It will not fix everything, of course, but it is another step in the right direction to better uncover money laundering activities.

In May 2022, the Consulate General of Italy in Montreal organized an event to mark the 30th anniversary of "operation clean hands", a vast anti-mafia and anti-money laundering operation during which, let us not forget, two judges were murdered. Retired Italian judge Roberto Scarpinato came to Montreal to give us a warning. He told us that Canada had become a paradise for the mafia and money laundering and that we as a society had to do something. He encouraged us to develop what he called "antibodies", to stop being naive, to be more vigilant and not be afraid to enforce our laws to the fullest extent, because money laundering is a scourge in Canada and in Quebec.

Private Members' Business

According to Transparency International, the amount of money laundered annually in Canada could be between \$43 billion and \$113 billion. This means that up to \$113 billion a year in proceeds of crime, from both here and abroad, is being reintroduced into our economy, allowing criminals to reap the benefits of their crime with impunity and causing economic distortions, such as skyrocketing real estate prices.

British Columbia launched a commission of inquiry into money laundering, the Cullen commission. The Cullen commission may be the most comprehensive effort ever made to understand the phenomenon of money laundering in Canada, its effects, its causes and the best ways to prevent it in future. It submitted its report in June after more than two years of work and hundreds of witness testimonies. The report points the finger at the RCMP and FINTRAC for not taking money laundering seriously enough. It excoriates the banks for looking the other way. In fact, it accuses pretty much everyone of negligence. It also provides examples of what money laundering looks like.

● (1930)

Take the case of Runkai Chen, a Chinese immigrant who arrived in Vancouver in 2006. While reporting an income of about \$40,000 a year, he built a real estate empire worth tens of millions of dollars. Mr. Chen was a front man tasked with laundering in Canada the proceeds of corruption in China. He regularly received large transfers from foreign numbered bank accounts and reinvested the money in Canadian real estate.

He made false statements to financial institutions here that, unfortunately, were no longer asking the questions they were supposed to ask. Not one major Canadian bank raised a red flag, not RBC, not CIBC, not the Bank of Montreal. In the end, it was a foreign financial institution that alerted FINTRAC and led to his downfall. That is the type of across-the-board negligence that Judge Scarpinato was referring to when he spoke about the need to develop "antibodies".

We actually already have a lot of the legal arsenal needed to deal with this problem. The Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act is a powerful tool. Banks are required to verify the identity of their clients and where the money is coming from. They have the power to freeze funds they deem to be suspicious. They are required to report suspicious transactions, large cash deposits, and international transfers if they have difficulty determining where the money actually came from. All of these requirements exist, but unfortunately, most of them rely heavily on the client acting in good faith and the financial institution being vigilance.

Private Members' Business

When the government decided to invoke the Emergencies Act in what we believe, need I repeat, was an unjust manner, the Standing Committee on Finance held hearings on the financial aspect of the orders that were made following the emergency proclamation. At these hearings, representatives of the Department of Finance could not say whether the funds frozen by the financial institution had been frozen under the Emergencies Act or under the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act, the law that we are discussing today and that Bill C-289 seeks to strengthen.

From the moment the occupation of downtown Ottawa was declared illegal, the financial transfers used to fund it fell within the scope of these laws. All that was required was vigilance. There was no need to invoke the Emergencies Act. It would have been sufficient to enforce the existing laws, namely the Criminal Code and the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act.

By forcing clients to make true and complete statements to the banks or face criminal penalties, Bill C-289 addresses the first step, which is to verify the identity of the client and the source of the funds. This could start off a virtuous cycle rather than a vicious one, as the financial institutions themselves would be more diligent about checking. Government organizations would be better informed and more likely to co-operate with their counterparts abroad. In short, it would help us begin to develop the antibodies needed to seriously address the scourge of money laundering.

That is why I am pleased to reiterate that we will support Bill C-289.

• (1935)

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am really pleased to rise tonight to talk about money laundering, as this is a multi-billion dollar industry in Canada. We require serious legislative and enforcement measures if we are to curb its role in facilitating other types of criminal activity and prevent money laundering from contributing to higher housing prices due to its sheer volume and the frequent use of real estate as a way to launder proceeds of crime.

I have to say that over the past decade, both the current Liberal government and the Conservative government before it have failed to devote adequate resources to the fight against the increase in money laundering and its increasing sophistication. This is becoming an increasing challenge with technological change and with the emergence of cryptocurrencies, which are quite often used for obscuring the sources of funds.

I do not wish tonight to question the motives of the member for Simcoe North for putting forward this particular bill on money laundering—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. There are no questions and comments, so there should not be any loud discussions or heckling.

The hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke can continue.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Madam Speaker, I am not questioning the motives of the member for Simcoe North, but I worry that the impact of putting forward such a narrow bill as Bill C-289 only makes it appear like the House of Commons, particularly the Conservatives, want to crack down on money laundering, when in fact this bill would make little or no contribution to the actual fight against money laundering.

The Cullen report on money laundering in B.C., made public last June, made literally dozens of recommendations for effective measures to fight money laundering, but creating a separate criminal offence for providing false or misleading information in money laundering investigations was not one of them.

New Democrats will be opposing this bill because a serious problem like money laundering requires a much more serious and robust action than the one small and probably redundant measure suggested in Bill C-289. I will continue to question why we are here talking about this narrow and probably redundant bill instead of talking about more robust measures to fight money laundering, such as those suggested in the Cullen report.

It is also important to note that the Cullen commission report clearly states that it was the Harper government that made a very significant contribution to the explosion of money laundering in Canada when its 2012 cutbacks to the RCMP caused the closing down of the integrated proceeds of crime units, which it had been operating in each province from 1990 to 2012.

Let me quote the Cullen report directly here. It states, “The RCMP's lack of attention to money laundering has allowed the unchecked growth of money laundering since...2012.” A cynic might even wonder if this Conservative private member's bill on money laundering might have been put forward as a distraction from the role the Harper Conservative government played in allowing the explosion of money laundering through its cutbacks in 2012.

The current Liberal government does not escape criticism either. The Cullen commission reports condemns the current federal anti-money laundering legislation and enforcement in simply one word, ineffective. I will cite just one piece of evidence of how ineffective the current federal efforts are.

In 2019-20, FINTRAC received over 31 million individual reports of suspicious financial transactions, yet it transferred only 2,057 of those reports to law enforcement agencies. When we compare the efforts of other jurisdictions, we find that they have many more reports. If we compare it to the United States, we get about 12 times as many reports of suspicious transactions, but when it comes to actual prosecutions as a result of those reports, we are in the tiny percentages.

Private Members' Business

The Cullen report did note that there was some progress in British Columbia starting in 2015 when David Eby became the B.C. attorney general. The previous government had very clear warnings from law enforcement and regulators that money laundering had become a massive industry in B.C., especially at casinos. A key change was finally introduced in 2018 by Attorney General Eby. It implemented a provision requiring casino patrons to present proof that the cash used in transactions of \$10,000 or more came from legitimate sources, and there was an immediate drop in the amount of transactions over \$10,000 in those casinos.

While the Cullen commission report and study were really focused on British Columbia, it still made six major suggestions for improving the federal response to money laundering. I will talk for just a minute about each one of those, and they are: unexplained wealth orders; corporate beneficial ownership registry; a program to fight trade-based money laundering; better and more frequent scrutiny of money service businesses; the requirement for better reporting by chartered professional accountants; and, finally, better regulation of the mortgage industry.

All of those are not things that we normally talk about in our daily lives, so let me talk for a minute about unexplained wealth orders, which has been used very successfully in the United Kingdom. This is where either FINTRAC, or possibly the Canada Revenue Agency, would be given the power to go to court where criminal activity is suspected and require those suspected to produce information about where the money used to purchase assets has come from, was the source of funds was to purchase, for instance, real estate. If it cannot be explained and proven that it came from legal sources, then the court can order that property forfeited to the government. This is essentially what happens in British Columbia through the civil forfeiture process. That is a power we do not have. It is one I would like to see us talking about here tonight, rather than this narrow bill.

● (1940)

The second major recommendation is for a corporate beneficial owner registry. What does that mean in common language? We have numbered corporations, which means we cannot figure out who actually owns them and we cannot figure out their links to other corporations that take place in the darkness of those numbered corporations.

We are told now that legislation is coming. I am interested to hear the Conservatives say that they are now in favour of public access to a corporate beneficial ownership registry, but I have to say that in 2018, when New Democrats put forward this kind of idea, neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives were enthusiastic about proceeding with this. This is a recommendation that has already been made in the fisheries and oceans committee as a way of getting at another problem on the west coast in British Columbia, and that is the problem of not being able to find out who actually owns fishing licences because a great number of them are numbered corporations. I am happy that we appear to have a consensus growing here that we need such a corporate beneficial ownership registry. I would like to see the government come forward very soon with legislation to implement that proposal.

The Cullen commission also pointed out that probably one of the largest sources of money laundering goes completely unmonitored in this country, and that is what is called trade-based money laundering. If I understand it, it is pretty simple. People who make money from illegal criminal activities order and purchase goods from abroad which either do not exist or are not valued at the amount they are paying. That money goes to a company they own offshore and then comes back as clean money as a result of selling products into Canada. Nobody is monitoring this, nobody at all.

The Cullen commission said very clearly that the federal government should set up a program that would combat trade-based money laundering and the power to share information with other governments about suspicious trade transactions, which apparently are simply money laundering. That is another good thing we could be talking about tonight instead of this very narrow bill.

I will briefly name the problem with chartered professional accountants, which is that in a five-year period, only one chartered professional accountant was ever prosecuted for participating in money laundering. I would like people to raise their hands if they think that only happened once in five years in Canada. The Cullen commission pointed out that we need better reporting regulations for chartered professional accountants and we need better monitoring of their activities. It is not casting aspersions on all CPAs. It is saying that the lack of monitoring allows for those who are unscrupulous to take advantage of that and get involved in money laundering.

The fifth one of those is better and more frequent scrutiny of what are called money service businesses. That is where money is transferred back and forth abroad or back and forth around the country. There is a peculiar regulation that allows most of those businesses to avoid scrutiny from FINTRAC by changing their names and reconstituting themselves every two years. The final one is better regulation of the mortgage industry.

Let me close by repeating what I said. Money laundering is a very serious problem and we need serious measures, both in terms of legislation and enforcement, to crack down on money laundering. I do not believe that Bill C-289 is one of those measures. I do not think it makes a major contribution. However, both the Liberal and Conservative governments before and both Liberal and Conservative government policies before have prevented us from taking the actions we need to take on money laundering on a serious basis.

Private Members' Business

● (1945)

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to engage in this debate and to support this bill from my colleague, the member for Simcoe North. My colleague suggested that he is a rookie, but I think a lot of us know that he is one of the rising stars here on the Conservative side. He has brought forward a bill that is perhaps the first step in addressing the issue of money laundering. For me as a British Columbian and a member of Parliament from the west coast, it is especially important, because this is an issue that has now been thoroughly canvassed by the Cullen commission. I will get into that in a moment.

Money laundering is a very serious problem that deserves our serious attention. The amount of money that is laundered is in the many billions of dollars. Perhaps \$100 billion a year is being laundered through casinos and real estate. It has a huge impact on Canadians. It has a huge impact on our prosperity and our lifestyles.

Money laundering is, at its very core, criminal. It is an activity firmly rooted in greed that has a complete disregard for the interests of others. Money laundering is deeply destructive to our communities and our families, and is thoroughly implicated in things like gun smuggling, drug trafficking and human trafficking. It goes on and on. Who suffers the most from money laundering? It is our communities and the most vulnerable members of our society, particularly those with addictions, mental health challenges and gambling addictions.

Money laundering is also implicated in much of the gun and gang violence we see across the country, including in my community of Abbotsford. It is an affront to every law-abiding citizen who earns their money honestly, pays their taxes and invests in their communities. It is essential that all of us, whether it is government, law enforcement or regulators, take strong and decisive action to fight this problem.

I mentioned that money laundering is an expensive business for Canadians. Billions of dollars are not being declared and are not being taxed, but are going into criminal activity. There is very little that has been done to address this problem so far.

A significant amount of money that is laundered ends up in our real estate market. I do not know if members understand that, or if Canadians understand that money laundering plays a significant role in the skyrocketing cost of real estate. It is not the only factor but it is one significant factor.

What happens is that these laundered funds end up in real estate and distort real estate prices, especially real estate prices close to major urban markets. Residents then have to seek lower housing costs by moving away from larger cities to communities such as Abbotsford, which in turn strains local real estate markets. Laundering money in Canada is therefore not a benign activity.

What are we supposed to do about it? So far, money laundering has not been addressed in a comprehensive way. The Cullen commission in British Columbia led to a damning report that concluded that billions of dollars per year were being laundered, and that was just in the province of B.C. alone. It called for sweeping changes. The commission found that this dirty money has been laundered

through real estate, casinos and the purchase of luxury goods, for example, and Mr. Cullen made 101 recommendations.

● (1950)

To answer my colleague from the NDP, the soft-on-crime NDP, who said this bill is too narrow and too minor to support, I have never heard that argument made in the House before. I have never heard that a significant, narrow Criminal Code amendment could be too minor to support. Had my colleague from Simcoe North broadened this legislation, the NDP would not have supported it; we know that. The NDP is soft on crime. Canadians understand that.

The other thing is that we here on the Conservative side are the official opposition. We are not government. We are not the ones who are supposed to be bringing forward big bills to address the rising crime rate in Canada, especially when it comes to money laundering. That is the role of the Liberal government, which is being propped up by the NDP, who will not bring forward this kind of law or anything close to substantially addressing the issue of money laundering in Canada.

Let us talk about the recommendations the Cullen Commission made. Most of these recommendations are actually directed at the Province of British Columbia. When my NDP colleague says there are all these recommendations and this is not one of them, I can say that my colleague from Simcoe North did his research and his homework.

The bill before us, where individuals who lie to reporting authorities and organizations can go to jail for up to 10 years and can be fined a million dollars, is a big step. It is not a minor step. It is not a narrow step. It is a big step in the right direction. When I said, at the beginning of my remarks, that this is a step, someone has to take the first step. It is usually up to Conservatives to do that and that is what we are doing.

I am really saddened to see that the NDP has decided not to support the legislation. It is not about its merits. It is because it is too narrow. The NDP thinks it is too insignificant so it is going to push it aside and vote no. Canadians have to understand the perspective that the NDP comes from when it comes to addressing crime in Canada.

What are these recommendations that Justice Cullen made? There was a suggestion that there should be a dedicated provincial money laundering intelligence and investigation unit. It said the government should develop anti-money laundering guidance for financial institutions and the money service businesses that are often implicated in money laundering.

He recommended that a corporate beneficial ownership registry should be established, and we see that the Liberal government has now included that beneficial ownership registry in its budget. Has it been implemented, this public beneficial ownership registry? No. In fact, it said it will get it done by the end of 2023. Quite frankly, we could have an election by then. We all know that. By the end of 2023, we could have an election because the marriage between the NDP and the Liberals will likely break up before then. We will be in the middle of divorce proceedings between the two.

Another recommendation is that cryptocurrencies should be regulated because this is the next frontier in which money laundering will take place, if it is not taking place already. There was a recommendation that the threshold for requiring proof of the source of funds for casino transactions conducted in cash should be reduced. There is the suggestion that all cash transactions for the purchase and sale of luxury goods over \$10,000 should be reported. There was also a suggestion that professional bodies like lawyers and accountants should be regulated more strictly.

These 101 recommendations, many of which were directed at the Province of British Columbia, provide us with a lot of fodder, a lot of support. At the end of the day, actually having some penalties, like prison time or massive fines, for those who lie to reporting authorities is a good step forward.

I thank my colleague from Simcoe North for bringing forward this very important bill.

• (1955)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is great to be in the House tonight and dealing with this topic. I am glad to see the parliamentary secretary for health, and since I have asked a question about health, we will start with a bit about health.

There was the warning label on ground beef and pork. There was no warning label on the same cuts of beef and pork when they were whole, but all of a sudden there was a warning label on the ground meat itself. Maybe it was the knife. Maybe it was the grinding that made it. I do not know what the science was, but a couple of people have mentioned analogies to me. They said we might have a whole log that had no warning label on it, yet if we cut it up into a two-by-four, it might get a warning label. Maybe it is the saw. What about a potato? If it was whole and baked it could have no warning label, but if we turned it into mashed potatoes, it might get a warning label. Maybe it is the utensils.

Adjournment Proceedings

The science must have changed, because the Liberals reversed it. We did not know what the science was before, but the science changed, so they reversed it. They did not tell us what the reversing science was.

Let us go into a bit more about health in the ag sector, because it is huge in the sense that it directly affects ag. Is there a lot of stress in the ag sector? There absolutely is. Have members seen the suicide rate in the ag sector? They should check it out.

In my riding we have irrigation, and a lot of irrigation. Four per cent of the land produces almost 20% of the Alberta ag GDP. Electricity is used to produce irrigation. Electricity is not a fuel, so there is not an exemption for fuel. As a business expense, it is very small: less than part of 1%. It is an inflation carbon tax. The carbon tax takes literally millions away from my ag producers. Does this cause stress and is it a health problem? Absolutely.

Now, the Liberals want to triple the carbon tax. It is not going to be returned; it is gone. That means there is a ripple effect on the machinery producers and the communities. Wherever they buy, there is less money there.

Stress is there in the ag sector. The warning label on beef was just one of the stresses, but the tripling of the carbon tax and the cost of irrigation, which is huge in my riding, is another problem for health in my ag producers.

The minister announced a 30% fertilizer reduction by 2030. Where was the science? Where was the baseline? Where was the consultation with the ag organizations, with the wheat organizations or with the fertilizer or ag producers? Why is the minister not talking about it being voluntary now? Does this create stress and a health issue in the ag sector? Absolutely it does, because there were no consultations and no credit was given to incredible, world-leading Canadian ag producers whose work is science-based, capturing carbon, reducing fertilizer use and using other practices that are world leading.

There is no science behind this 30% reduction of emissions. These are world-leading ag producers who are doing it. They will continue to do it. The government's goal, which it now calls voluntary even though it was not, was to reduce ag production by \$20 billion a year. Canadian food security would go down if it did this, and export production would go down.

Adjournment Proceedings

Where is the science, and what about the stress on their mental health of tripling the carbon tax on the ag producers, especially in the irrigation sector in my riding?

• (2000)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to come into the House to discuss these issues with my friend from Bow River. He was a teacher, so it is interesting to me that he, like many of his colleagues, refers to a change in the price on pollution, or “carbon tax”, as he calls it. Of course judges in courts across the country have deemed it not to be a tax, because it is not a revenue program, but when it goes up \$15 from \$50, I still fail to see how that is a tripling. Perhaps my colleague from Bow River was not a math teacher.

[*Translation*]

I appreciate the opportunity to talk about this important initiative that will help Canadians make healthier choices.

[*English*]

There is a chronic disease crisis in Canada and its scope is staggering and increasing. Diet-related chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease are now a leading cause of illness and death. Two out of five Canadians live with a chronic disease. COVID-19 showed us that people with obesity and diet-related chronic diseases are more vulnerable to hospitalization and death. This problem is growing and has a human cost. Chronic disease diminishes quality of life and shortens lifespan. It robs us of time with our loved ones. It also has a significant impact on the health care system and our economy. No egg producers or anybody, really, are immune from these complicated lifestyle-related diseases.

My colleague from Bow River did reference front-of-package labelling on ground beef which, if he had a look at the legislation, he would know there is no front-of-package labelling on ground beef as he indicated. He is correct. The vast majority of single ingredient foods, including butter, milk or sugar, are not front-of-package labelled as a product that contains a lot of sugar. A bag of sugar is not front-of-package labelled because, of course, it contains sugar: it is sugar.

[*Translation*]

More than half of the packaged foods in grocery stores are high in sodium, sugar and saturated fat. Most of us eat too much of that stuff without even realizing it.

Canadians' average intake exceeds the recommendations established by authorities such as the World Health Organization.

[*English*]

The front-of-package symbol will signal to consumers to look more closely at nutrition facts on the label. It will only be required on foods that meet or exceed certain thresholds for saturated fat, sodium and sugar. The symbol will give consumers more information about what is in their food. It will help them quickly and easily make healthier choices.

Several countries have advanced similar regulations, and evaluations clearly show that symbols are effective and help people make

better decisions when they are at the grocery store. More information is always a good thing. As a teacher, I am certain that my friend from Bow River would agree.

To ensure the policy will be effective, exemptions are only provided in specific circumstances, such as when there is evidence that the food provides a protective effect on health, like fruits, vegetables or healthy oils.

[*Translation*]

In most cases, when consumers go to the grocery store, there are options in every food category that do not carry the front-of-package symbol.

[*English*]

It is time to provide Canadians with the information they need to choose healthier foods. The evidence is clear that front-of-package labelling will help consumers make healthier choices. That is why I am glad that our government has brought them forward on foods that Canadians will now have a little bit more information on.

My colleague's questions did not focus only on front-of-package labelling, so I look forward to the rebuttal.

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, I always appreciate being in the House with the parliamentary secretary and hearing his response to what I may say, which might be slightly different from what he might have expected.

I will talk again about the irrigation districts, the lack of pipes, the cost of pipes and the environmental practice of putting in pipes instead of canals. The price is now over 200% more than it was a year ago. Municipalities are also experiencing the same cost for pipes to put in the ground.

We are talking about a challenge that is stress related. It is hard on irrigation ag producers in my riding when there is talk about increasing the carbon tax, as the government is going to do. This is a price taker. That creates stress and mental health challenges for the ag producers who produce all of this food for our country and food security.

• (2005)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to talk with my colleague from Bow River.

I am glad that he brought up the top of climate change. I met with a whole bunch of farmers from my riding. Many people are not aware that the riding of Milton is home to many ag producers. We have beef farmers, chicken farmers, egg farmers and apple farmers. When my family came from the Netherlands, they settled just outside of Chatham, Ontario, and they are apple farmers themselves.

I love visiting farms and talking to farmers. I will say that the farmers in my riding are committed to fighting climate change. They understand that they have an extraordinarily important role to play and they are focused on saving our environment from climate change. I know that the farmers in my colleague's riding also care about climate change and fighting it.

It is up to the provinces to decide if they would like to bring something forward like cap and trade or another measure to fight climate change. For the provinces that do not, like Alberta where my colleague is from, and Ontario where I live, we have a backstop program and that is a price on pollution. It is a good thing.

HEALTH

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, this spring, the government had a chance to listen to the experts and act on the toxic drug crisis that is taking a tragic toll on our communities every day. In my riding, in the small community of Port Alberni in the Alberni Valley with just over 30,000 people, we lost 20 people in just the first eight months of this year due to the toxic drug supply. These deaths were preventable and each person lost has loved ones who are left to deal with that grief in the face of government failure. That is four times the national average.

Across the country, we lost over 7,500 lives just last year. Shamefully, we have lost more than 30,000 lives since 2016. I heard the question from people who have been impacted by this crisis. They ask, "How many lives is it going to take before there is real action?" I worry that those with the power to bring change are becoming numb to these numbers. We must never lose sight of the fact that these numbers represent children, siblings, parents, partners, friends and neighbours.

The day this House rose for the summer, the Public Health Agency of Canada released modelling, forecasting, that the toxic drug crisis would continue its tragic path and possibly even worsen over the rest of the year. The agency predicted that we might lose as many as 2,400 Canadians per quarter. These are real lives. While we all returned to our communities for three months this summer, more than 2,000 families were planning funerals that did not need to happen.

They did not need to happen because last year Health Canada's expert task force on substance use made clear recommendations on how to respond to this crisis. Those recommendations included stopping the criminalization of people who use drugs, making significant new investments in supports for people who use drugs and who are in recovery, and expanding safer supply.

Our bill, Bill C-216, a health-based approach to substance use, reflected the paradigm shift the expert task force called for to stop the harm in our communities. However, instead of listening to its own task force, the Liberal government teamed up with the Conser-

vatives to vote down Bill C-216. In the face of a public health emergency that has been worsening for years, the Liberal government is choosing an ineffective piecemeal response because of stigma and politics.

Every day, the government has an opportunity to make a different choice. By granting B.C.'s decriminalization request, the government has acknowledged the harms of criminalizing people who use drugs, yet it continues to allow these harms in every other province and territory in this country.

The Minister of Mental Health and Addictions has acknowledged that funding for the substance use and addictions program is not enough to meet the demand, but the government will not put enough money on the table to ensure people can get help when they need it. The minister has acknowledged the critical role that a safer supply must play in addressing this crisis, but the government remains focused on small-scale pilot projects rather than procuring a safer supply that could save lives across the country.

When will the government finally act like this is a life-or-death matter for thousands of Canadians each day and mount an urgent national response? When?

● (2010)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, before I start, I would like to say thanks to my friend from Courtenay—Alberni. He is a tremendously passionate, outspoken and dogged ambassador, advocate and spokesperson for this cause. He knows that I respect him. He knows that I think he is doing incredible work here in the House, in his community and across the country regarding the overdose crisis. I am proud to be in the House with him and am proud to have an opportunity to discuss this important issue here tonight.

First, our hearts go out to all of the families and communities that have lost loved ones to the opioid crisis and through the tainted, poisoned drug supply that exists in our country. The Government of Canada remains deeply concerned about the devastating impact that the overdose crisis continues to have on people, families and communities across the country, and we recognize that substance use is first and foremost a health issue.

We are committed to a public health approach to substance use that is comprehensive, collaborative and compassionate, and are working with our key stakeholders, including people with lived and living experiences regarding substance use. It is a foundational part of our government's work. We continue to work with partners to look at ways to support programs and services and divert people who use drugs away from the criminal justice system and toward supportive and trusted relationships and health and social services, such as, as my colleague suggested, supervised consumption sites and safe supply.

Adjournment Proceedings

Since January 1, 2016, the number of supervised consumption sites operating in Canada has increased from just one to 39. We have also funded a number of safer supply pilot projects that provide people who are at high risk of overdose with prescribed pharmaceutical-grade alternatives to the toxic and illegal drug supply on the streets. This emerging practice is a key area of interest for the Government of Canada, and evaluation efforts for these services are already under way. Indeed, there has been great progress in the last six months in British Columbia due in part to advocates like my friend from Courtenay—Alberni.

I want to reiterate that we have lost too many Canadians to overdose. We have heard from stakeholders that the criminalization of possession of drugs for personal use perpetuates stigma. It increases the risk of overdose and other harms and creates barriers to care. This government has been clear in its actions that substance use must be treated as a health issue first.

Recently, the House sent Bill C-5 to committee for review. Among other measures, Bill C-5 would require police and prosecutors to consider alternatives to laying charges or prosecuting individuals for drug possession, such as diversion to treatment, a warning or taking no further action.

I have spoken to police officers in my riding specifically about Bill C-216 and how we can face this crisis head-on with compassion and find a solution, not just lock people in jail. I will say that officers at Halton police services in Milton, the ones I spoke to, have been employing these practices of their own accord. They have strong feelings about the opioid epidemic, and it is important to recognize that Oakville, Milton and Burlington are, in large part, wealthy suburban communities. The opioid epidemic affects everyone.

That is why I will continue to work with provincial, territorial and municipal partners, like those in British Columbia and Vancouver, and other key stakeholders and regions throughout this country, to reduce risk, save lives and get people the support they need. Canadians can be assured that combatting the opioid overdose crisis remains a key priority for the government, for the Minister of Health and for me.

I know this is true of my colleague as well. I was proud not to be one of the people in the House to vote against my colleague's bill. I believed in it and continue to, and I am thrilled we are working together on it.

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's speech and his sincerity, and I appreciate that he did not vote against my bill. I need him. We need him. The people and families who have lost loved ones need him. The people who use substances and are looking at death every day need him. They need the government to listen to their expert task force on substance use.

He talked about talking to police and first responders. They all agree. They are unequivocally clear that criminalizing people who use substances is not working.

The Liberals are not funding the substance use program they have set out. They are not filling the need. They know they are oversubscribed. They admit that. They also admit and understand that the average wait time for residential treatment is over 100 days,

on average, in this country. We even agree with Conservatives on this. We need to make sure that we meet people's needs and give them treatment when they need it and make sure that it is on demand.

• (2015)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Madam Speaker, our government understands the urgency of this situation, and I would say the government understands the urgency of this situation even more because of my friend and colleague from Courtenay—Alberni.

We are moving fast and forward with a fact-based approach to ending this crisis. The overdose crisis is having a devastating impact on people. It is ripping the hearts out of our communities. It is hurting families in communities across Canada. We are already supporting a health-based approach to substance use at the federal level through the Canadian drugs and substances strategy, which has been comprehensive, compassionate, collaborative and evidence-based. It is the foundation for the Government of Canada's actions on the overdose crisis.

We will continue doing absolutely everything we possibly can to save lives and end this national public health crisis. Once again, I would like to sincerely thank my friend and colleague from Courtenay—Alberni for his work on this and many other issues.

HEALTH

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, it cost \$54 million at a time when Canadians are facing record food price inflation. Conservatives are asking, "Who got rich?" Where did the \$54 million that was spent on the failed ArriveCAN app go?

We heard from some members of the government that they believe this app was responsible for saving tens of thousands of lives. I can tell members what that app did to at least 10,000 people, which was to put them wrongly under house arrest, in a forced quarantine, in spite of their compliance with public health guidelines in Canada. This \$54-million app was built by one web designer while he was having his turkey dinner over a weekend, and tech experts saying the upset limit they would have given to an application like this would have been in the low seven figures, if they exceeded a quarter of a million dollars.

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When we raised this issue of this \$54-million app with an unknown number of subcontractors, whose identities the government refuses to reveal, the Prime Minister said that \$54 million was just petty. He is not worried about \$54 million at a time when Canadians are having to choose between nutritious food for their children and putting gas in their vehicles to get to work. They are just dreading the day they know they are going to need to turn the thermostat on as the mercury plunges.

It was \$54 million. We could heat a lot of homes and feed a lot of families with that kind of cash, but we heard that it was petty. We disagree. What we want from the government is transparency. It has rescinded the mandatory use of this app, for now, but still left in place seven figures of fines for Canadians who used an app we know did not work correctly. We know we saw thousands of people punished because of errors in what is one of the most expensive apps going.

We saw the wonderful app reviews ArriveCAN had in the App Store, so one wonders how much of that money went to pay for fake reviews for an app that was, by most accounts, terrible and demonstrably unjustified.

What we are looking for from the government is not the assertion by the Prime Minister that \$54 million is a petty sum of money. What we are looking for is transparency. We are looking for the names of the vendors and details of the services they provided for \$54 million. Canadians deserve that kind of transparency. If we are going to ask Canadians to have confidence in their institutions, to be able to trust government, then the government needs to do the right thing and be transparent.

Will the parliamentary secretary stand today and commit to providing Canadians with the details of those contracts? Who got rich?

• (2020)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, before I answer the question from the hon. colleague for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, I would like to talk for just a minute about adjournment debates.

As a parliamentary secretary, I am happy to come into this place and discuss important issues, resolve questions that were not fully answered during debate or in question period and be accountable, but occasionally, and in this case I posit, the adjournment debates are abused. The correct question that was asked months ago was not provided beforehand, and that obviously can catch a parliamentary secretary off guard a little.

I would love to prepare for these types of conversations that we have in the House of Commons. I would love to come to this place with answers. However, on June 1, 2022, the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes asked a question about vaccine mandates. For months and months, all of the members opposite on the Conservative side questioned the efficacy of vaccines, of vaccine mandates and of many of the public health restrictions that were put in place and saved countless Canadian lives. Some estimates say that without some of these public health restrictions, 800,000 Canadians could have perished from COVID-19, which is a high estimate. Tragically, 45,000 Canadians

have perished from COVID-19, but still many people get COVID and suffer undue consequences, particularly if they are unvaccinated. Many are still dying.

I find that many of the arguments in this House against vaccines, against the efficacy of public health measures, against mandatory vaccination in some cases and restrictions on our normal lives when there is a global pandemic that has killed millions of people around the world to be cheap. Supporting Canadians and keeping them healthy over the last couple of years has not been cheap, but the debate has sunk to a cheap level and I find that really disgusting.

We have an obligation in this House to make prudent decisions, not always the most popular ones. It is the obligation of a responsible government to make decisions and choices that are going to keep people healthy and safe. I am proud of those decisions, even the ones that will continue to receive criticism, which is fine because that is why we are here, to receive criticism and to be accountable. I am happy to stand in this House and be accountable and discuss errors that were made in the last two years or so in trying to support Canadians and trying to make prudent decisions, not leading with the populist thing or bending to the will of people who arrive on Wellington Street with a manifesto to overthrow the government. We do not bring them coffee and doughnuts. We question their motives, and we say, “Hey, wait a second. If you want to have a civil conversation then do not arrive saying that we ought to all lose our jobs.”

I agree that there are questions about the ArriveCAN app. There are questions that must be answered. There are questions that will be answered. However, I would ask my colleague, if he wants to have a conversation about these things in the House of Commons, to send the correct question to our office so that I can come prepared with facts, figures and commitments for the future on how we will address some of these accountability measures, because that is what I want to do here.

The question asked six months ago was on the topic of vaccine mandates, and I am proud of those, because 45,000 dead Canadians is no trivial matter. It could, if we had the same outcomes as Spain or France, be 90,000 dead Canadians, and if we had the same death rate as our neighbours to the south or across the Atlantic in the U.K., it would be more like 125,000 or 135,000. Those 80,000 Canadian lives are priceless, and no dollar that we spent was a waste in saving those lives.

• (2025)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, the question is very simple. Will the parliamentary secretary furnish the House with a list of vendors who received contracts for the \$54-million ArriveCAN app?

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What is the secret? I do not know how much prep needs to be done for the member to say that transparency is important. It is what this government has promised to do in the past and what it seems unwilling to do today.

If the member wants advance notice of me asking him and his government to do the right thing and be transparent, consider this notice in perpetuity. I will always come to this place and demand answers for Canadians and demand accountability, and \$54 million to design an app that arbitrarily and wrongly quarantined Canadians and forced them under house arrest is unacceptable. We want to know who got rich.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I go to the minister, I just want to advise that when it comes to late shows, they are a follow-up to a question that was asked in the House on a particular occasion. We will double-check, because it appears that there may have been some confusion as to what topic was being discussed today. We will double-check that and follow up.

I just wanted to clarify that when we do late shows, they are to follow up on questions that were asked at the particular time when the late show request was filed.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has a minute to respond.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, I appreciate that clarification. I will be honest: It was not a mistake. It happens all the time. It is an effort to catch parliamentary secretaries with a

speech or a response that has nothing to do with the question, so the member opposite can stand up and say that the parliamentary secretary is not answering their question.

If I were to answer the question he asked in June, it might not be as interesting now, because there are no vaccine mandates anymore. I think that is why we have pivoted to a new question.

The member opposite continually referred to \$54 million as the cost to build the app, which is of course not true. He has read the same articles as I have. There were costs to maintain the app, and there were costs to upgrade the app over the last two years. It was required to do all the necessary work that the ArriveCAN app did, and the member opposite can continually reference the glitches or the errors, but what it did was provide people at the border with the ability to demonstrate that they indeed got a vaccine, which was a requirement to enter this country.

Within a couple of hours, the member voted against a bill to ensure that lower-income families would have access to dental care. Once again the members opposite are demonstrating that they care about money more than they care about Canadians.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 8:28 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:28 p.m.)

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