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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, April 20, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1000)

[English]

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 23(5) of the Auditor General Act, the spring 2023 reports of the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 32(5), these reports are deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government response to two petitions.

These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-330, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (successor rights and obligations — airports).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to introduce this bill under Private Members' Business to close a loophole in the Canada Labour Code that annuls existing labour contracts or collective agreements when there is a change of employer for subcontractors working at Canadian airports.

This is an anomaly in our Canada Labour Code that causes these workers to go back to square one every time. Over the past few years, we have seen how this has led to disastrous results. Negotiations have to start over so the workers can get acceptable working conditions.

Over the years, these employees have suffered setbacks in terms of their salaries, working conditions and the benefits they had. That is no way to ensure good labour relations in Quebec and Canada. This is not how things work in the whole of the private sector in this country, except for people who work at airports.

This bill will attempt to fix this flaw by ensuring that these workers have the same rights as everyone else in this country. I encourage all parliamentarians to pay special attention to this and ensure that everyone has the same labour rights in Canada.

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

* * *

● (1005)

[English]

LEBANESE HERITAGE MONTH ACT

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.) moved that Bill S-246, An Act respecting Lebanese heritage month, be read the first time.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour for me today to officially sponsor Bill S-246 on behalf of the people of Halifax West, all Lebanese Canadians and all Lebanese. It has been an immense privilege to work closely with Senator Jane Cordy on this piece of legislation, which complements the Lebanese heritage month bill I brought before the House last April.

This bill is dedicated to those brave women and men who came to this land of opportunities, looking not only to provide for themselves and loved ones, but also to give back to their chosen country, Canada, just like my mom and dad. It celebrates and spotlights our many distinct Lebanese communities across Canada and gives them a new platform to share their histories, culture, language and food traditions with our entire Canadian family. It is a meaningful step that shows those in the motherland that they are never far from our thoughts.

Routine Proceedings

My thanks go to Senator Cordy, members of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology and all senators who supported the bill unanimously. I look forward to hearing from colleagues in the House and to passage of this bill unanimously and without delay.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I move that the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, presented on June 16, 2022, be concurred in.

I am honoured to rise in the House to promote and defend the aerospace industry, especially Quebec's. As we know, it is a leading industry. I have been waiting for this moment for years now. This matter has already been debated and studied at the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology in a previous Parliament. I want to especially thank my colleagues at the time, who contributed to this debate.

I am therefore taking this opportunity today to have a frank discussion with my colleagues in the House about support for the aerospace sector. I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the Bloc member from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, and I would like to recognize his leadership and initiative in promoting the development of the aerospace industry.

Air carriers were hit hard during the pandemic and are slowly recovering. However, there are still many challenges and the federal government is not treating them fairly. This has to stop. I devoted several hours to this study. Many testimonials from across the country have helped identify challenges and lay out the vision needed to support the industry's development. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, the IAMAW, and in particular that of David Chartrand and Éric Rancourt.

What is a national aerospace strategy?

It is a table at which all stakeholders, including workers, companies and the Quebec government, gather to share their reality and their needs, much like what Ottawa does for the auto industry. These are specific programs adapted to the sector's reality. They provide predictable, long-term support that enables stakeholders to engage in more long-term projects. Let me emphasize the word "predictable". It is a global vision that includes every link in the chain, a military procurement policy that takes into account benefits for the industry, a long-term commitment that strengthens the entire cluster. Risk sharing is a fundamental aspect of the industry, especially when it comes to the risks associated with larger projects. It is a review of research and development support programs to ensure they respond better. It is also credit for buyers who purchase Canadian aircraft.

There is currently a shortage of 6,000 aircraft worldwide. Airlines are renewing their fleets, and other markets are growing. Que-

bec can play a major role here. What is the federal government doing right now? It has just now done the opposite of what the industry has been saying over and over. We need a strong signal. We could do better, and the government knows it. It knows it because the Bloc Québécois has reminded it many times of the needs expressed by the aerospace industry. The report of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology is clear.

What is the aerospace industry in Quebec?

It is an industry that, thanks to the Quebec government, benefits from the presence of a dynamic industrial cluster that brings together businesses, research centres and post-secondary institutions. This concentration of expertise and resources fosters innovation and competitiveness in the industry. It is an industry that plays a key role and that generates about \$16 billion in revenues annually. Quebec's aerospace industry employs over 40,000 people directly and over 20,000 others indirectly, which represents about 45% of the entire Canadian aerospace industry. That is something.

The main stakeholders in Quebec's aerospace industry include Bombardier, Pratt & Whitney Canada, CAE, Bell Textron Canada and Héroux-Devtek. Many of these companies took part in the study. They manufacture airplanes, helicopters, engines, pilot training systems, and aircraft simulation and maintenance systems, and are involved in aircraft recycling. In fact, Quebec could play a major role in the circular economy by recycling retired aircraft.

Quebec has several post-secondary institutions that offer aerospace training programs, which helps provide a highly skilled workforce. World-class innovation zones support a cutting-edge high-tech industrial ecosystem and the capacity to work on long-term projects. Quebec is a major research and development hub for the aerospace industry, with research programs supported by universities and research centres like the Consortium for Research and Innovation in Aerospace in Quebec, or CRIAQ, and the Innovative Vehicle Institute, or IVI.

In short, Quebec's aviation industry is an important pillar of the province's economy. It creates jobs and promotes economic growth, while offering innovative solutions to meet aerospace challenges.

• (1010)

Quebec's aerospace strategy puts the emphasis on the latest technological developments and new trends in the industry, such as the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, enhanced security and safety, digitization and connectivity. It is essential that we improve the efficiency and adaptability of the aerospace supply chain, which is complex and comprises many players, such as parts suppliers, aircraft manufacturers, airlines and maintenance companies.

To ensure optimal management of the supply chain, we are considering the benefits for the future of all industries, such as artificial intelligence, automatic learning and connected automation. These can play a crucial role and support production predictability, improve delivery performance and make it possible to respond quickly to minimize production interruptions. Connected automation allows for voluntary transparency between businesses and the supply chain and can be used to connect the various players and allow for real-time collaboration and visibility for the entire chain.

IoT sensors can also be used to track and monitor the condition of products, which allows for better production and delivery planning. Order processing can also be automated to reduce errors and delays.

This shows the whole potential of what can be developed, but that would take a federal aerospace strategy in Canada. It is fair to say that the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry formally committed to fund the strategic innovation fund as part of his government mandate to stimulate innovation and R and D in Canada.

However, as I have showed this morning, the industry's needs are far greater. The government needs to take real action if we are to truly improve the competitiveness of our aerospace industry. Some stakeholders in the industry have criticized the lack of funding and inadequate government support to implement the strategy's initiatives. They also point out that the strategy does not address important issues such as foreign competition, regulations and sustainable development. It is clear that the implementation and long-term effectiveness of the federal initiatives we have seen so far remain a concern.

With respect to Quebec's innovations in the aerospace sector, one of the most remarkable is Héroux-Devtek's development of a new electric landing gear system for aircraft.

To get back to the report of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, we received a response from the government, and I think it is important to address certain aspects. One of the most important recommendations made by the committee and supported by the people in the industry is the whole question of a national aerospace policy. Predictability and long-term vision are extremely important. Investing in an airplane means investing over 10 or 20 years, or even longer, in research and technology. These are major investments in risk capital.

These major companies are jewels of Quebec's economy. We know that the federal government has provided little support so far. When it withdrew from the pharmaceutical industry, we lost some of the leaders of Quebec's economy. That is why a Canadian aerospace strategy is essential. I welcome the leadership of the minister, who could make this vision a reality and give our industries the predictability they need to innovate. If we want green aircraft to take flight, we need to give these companies predictability and substantial risk capital.

The minister's response to this recommendation acknowledges that this is needed. He stated the following: "By no means exhaustive, these actions are the pillars of the Government's pandemic response and its strategic plan for the recovery of Canada's aerospace

Routine Proceedings

sector." Those are fine words, but that acknowledgement should be accompanied by funding to protect these long-term investments.

The committee made recommendations in the context of COVID-19. Now that the pandemic is behind us, we have to be able to implement strategies.

Allow me to touch on another problem affecting regional air travel. It is a basic need, but it is not working right now. Air Canada cancels almost one in five flights without notice. This is a problem throughout Abitibi-Témiscamingue and in every region.

How could we provide better support for companies in the aerospace industry? Air Canada may not be the key player anymore. Maybe we should rely more on regional airlines, like Propair or Air Creebec in Quebec.

● (1015)

There is also Transport Canada's remote air services program, which is in place but could be enhanced to ensure a better vision.

The last thing I want to mention is that the government promised investments of around \$400 million on July 15, 2021, during the election campaign. That is substantial, but it does not meet the industry's needs when it comes to everything we could be developing to maintain Quebec's competitiveness in the aerospace sector.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I tend to disagree with the member on one thing. The Government of Canada has been very supportive of the aerospace industry, virtually from day one. It recognizes the valuable role that the aerospace industry plays in our society, which goes far beyond the industry itself.

In fact, Quebec has led the country in terms of having a diversified aerospace industry. Quite frankly, one can build a plane from beginning to end in the province of Quebec. I think all Canadians are very proud of that. We have an aerospace industry throughout the country. Winnipeg is an important hub of that industry.

The pandemic had a worldwide impact, and the federal government stepped up to support the industry because we recognize just how important those jobs are and how important the industry is to the country as a whole.

Does the member recognize that the pandemic had some very strong, negative impacts on the industry as part of the worldwide impact?

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for his important question.

Routine Proceedings

Do I think the federal government is stepping up? Hardly. Just compare the aerospace sector with the automotive industry in Ontario. The government contributes billions of dollars, tens of billions of dollars, to that industry. However, when it comes to supporting Canada's aerospace economy, it contributes only millions of dollars. I think that is a fundamental difference.

Why do we not have an aerospace supercluster in Quebec based in Montreal and centred on Aéro Montréal? In my opinion, that would be key.

We are talking about an aerospace strategy. We could use industry leadership to send a message. We are one of the only countries without an aerospace strategy. We are talking about risk sharing, the importance of cash flow, and the need to adapt to the needs of SMEs. The economy is also an economy of SMEs, of all the parts suppliers in the orbit of Bombardier, Airbus, Bell Textron, Pratt & Whitney, MDA, Héroux-Devtek and CAE. That is the economy we need to strengthen.

The federal government is not stepping up for the industry. That is what witnesses told our committee.

• (1020)

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, when we raised the issue of the aerospace industry and its need for financial support, we have often been told that the major airlines are already receiving funding and support. However, the aerospace industry is much more than just the big airlines.

I would like my colleague to explain what the aerospace industry is exactly.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I was just thinking of my colleague's leadership when it comes to the importance of the Davie shipyard.

It is important that the government also choose Quebec companies in order to better share the wealth. Too often, we feel that we are not getting our fair share, and the national capital region has the same problem.

In answer to my colleague's question, I want to quote Jean Lapierre who, when he was minister, said that the aerospace industry is to Quebec what the automotive industry is to Ontario.

What does the aerospace industry in Quebec represent? It represents 400,000 direct jobs and 100,000 indirect jobs; 220 businesses, including 200 SMEs; \$18 billion in revenue; 80% of production for export, since it is Quebec's largest exporter; 12% of manufacturing exports; 50% of jobs in Quebec; 60% of sales; 70% of research and development compared to the rest of Canada; and 55% of industrial research in Quebec. It is the third-largest aerospace hub in the world after Seattle, with Boeing, and Toulouse, with Airbus. It is clearly an integrated industry.

There are only three places in the world with suppliers that are capable of manufacturing all of the components of an aircraft from A to Z, and the greater Montreal area is one of them. It is an absolutely vital industry, and we need to do more to support it.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for tabling the report and for his comments this morning.

I noticed that my colleague's comments left out part of the story. Just a few months ago, our government made the biggest announcement in Canadian history for Quebec's aerospace sector. We made that announcement in Montreal, alongside Premier Legault. This shows how much we care about aerospace workers.

My colleague mentioned CAE. Bombardier came up. We can talk about Airbus, Safran, Héroux Devtek. We on this side of the House are well aware that innovation, that the heart of aviation, is in Quebec, as my colleague so aptly said.

Aerospace is not just in Montreal. Two other companies come to mind. The two biggest companies in my region, Mauricie, are in the aerospace sector, specifically Delastek and Placeteco.

I would say to my colleague that we obviously want to continue to support the aerospace industry. However, I would like him to acknowledge to the Canadians who may be watching this morning that we made a historic announcement to support investment in the aerospace industry, not only in Canada, but specifically in Quebec.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to acknowledge that this was a major step. In my opinion, this step is a direct result of the study done by the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology a few months before the announcement. The industry came before the committee and clearly stated its needs to the Government of Canada.

Yes, the response was issued within a pre-election context, but this response must go beyond just one step. What we need is a truly comprehensive national aerospace strategy that will bring predictability for the next 15 years. The federal government must send a clear message to the Quebec economy underlining the importance of the aerospace industry.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am truly pleased to rise in the House today and say a few words about the aerospace report that was tabled by the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. I should say “finally” tabled, considering that we have been calling for a study of this key sector for years.

Since I was elected about three and a half years ago, I have often risen here in the House to ask that Canada develop a promising, coherent strategy that would allow our industry to reach its full potential.

Better late than never, I guess. Not long ago, when I brought the matter to the attention of my colleagues opposite, I was told that air sector support programs had been launched. This was the response I often got during the pandemic. I am delighted to see that some progress has been made. At least they know what aerospace means now. Someone got out a dictionary and looked up “aerospace”. If nothing else, it is a start. That is worth celebrating.

Routine Proceedings

I remember one time when I was replacing my colleague from Joliette at the Standing Committee on Finance, which was hearing witnesses from the aerospace sector. The government officials asking questions said they had wanted to help Air Canada. The only problem is that Air Canada is not part of the aerospace sector. That is a different cluster, a different sector. At least someone opened a dictionary—I am not sure which—and now they understand what it is.

Now, thanks to the work of the Bloc—and, more specifically, our representative on the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, the member for Abitibi-Témiscamingue—we can say this matter was addressed in a study. Finally, the sector was able to make itself heard. Finally, there is an official report that advocates for an aerospace strategy. I urge the government to follow its recommendations so that Canada is no longer the only country with a major aerospace industry without a strategy to support its development. I would even go as far as to beg the government to take that step.

Our efforts are paying off here. In fact, they are probably behind the 2021 announcement that the minister referred to a few minutes ago. Indeed, it is an excellent announcement that we welcomed. We are not opposed to virtue. However, without our constant demands, would the Prime Minister have gone to Quebec to announce that Ottawa was going to invest up to \$440 million to support innovative projects in the aerospace industry? I have my doubts. I must point out that he knew he would call the election a few months later, but that is another story.

Just in passing, Quebec has had an aerospace policy for 20 years now. These investments that have been announced are significant, and we welcomed them, but it is not a strategic policy or a comprehensive vision. Despite this progress, for now, Canada still lags behind, unfortunately. However, there is an important hub in Canada. It is the third-largest aerospace hub in the world, after Seattle and Toulouse. Indeed, greater Montreal is one of the rare locations able to design and supply all components of an aircraft from A to Z, in addition to making it fly and certifying it.

When he was the federal industry minister, Jean Lapierre said, “the aerospace industry is to Quebec what the automobile industry is to Ontario”, and that is true. It is even rooted in our history. The first glider to take flight in Canada was designed and piloted in Montreal by a 14-year-old teenager, Lawrence Lesh.

In 1907, he achieved what was then the longest gliding flight in the history of aviation. In 1911, 112 years ago, the first airplane designed in Quebec was developed by Percival Reid in a garage on Sainte-Catherine Street, in Montreal.

Today, Quebec's aerospace industry represents \$18 billion in sales. That is 12% of our manufacturing exports. The sector represents 40,000 direct and 100,000 indirect jobs. It includes 220 companies, of which 200 are small and medium-sized businesses. My colleague from Beauport—Limoilou asked a question earlier, and said that these were not only large companies. Indeed, there are also small and medium-sized businesses. When we consider things in purely numerical terms, instead of by weight, 200 out of the 220 companies in Quebec are small and medium-sized businesses.

These companies are a source of great pride; they are innovative success stories at the forefront of research. In all, 70% of the sector's research and development in Canada is done in Quebec. Need I remind the House that the greenest commercial aircraft in the world, the Airbus A220, was created in Quebec? Unfortunately, it has been sold, but the plane was created in Quebec.

As I was pointing out, this sector certainly does not owe its success to the vision of Ottawa and successive governments.

● (1025)

In fact, since this report was produced and the subsequent announcement made, the government has squandered several opportunities to demonstrate that it is serious about supporting this industry. Apart from a pre-election announcement, nothing has happened. There have been endless missed opportunities since then.

Let us not forget that we are still waiting to see Ottawa take action to help position Quebec as a leader in aircraft recycling. We have been asking. The machinists' union sent a press release about this in the fall of 2021. The election was over, and it fell on deaf ears. The Bloc Québécois relayed the request because we supported it.

Our efforts and the times that the various aerospace groups have tried to engage with the government must not be in vain. North America has the largest aircraft graveyards in the world, and there is a market there. According to the specialized firm Cirium, more than 21,600 commercial aircraft will be permanently retired by 2039. This is an incredible economic and environmental opportunity that we must take advantage of.

Quebec has the expertise to become one of the main North American hubs for aircraft storage and recycling. It is home to the only two companies in Canada that specialize in that area. The development of such centres in Quebec would be perfectly in line with the necessary transition to a green economy, not only in terms of the reuse of used parts, which is very important, but also in terms of preventing soil contamination with toxic fluids and metals from the aircraft. The government needs to walk the talk.

The government has turned a deaf ear to the industry's calls to change the luxury tax. We saw that in the budget we voted on yesterday. That decision will cost 2,000 good jobs in Quebec and will have a major negative impact, especially when our manufacturers are already dealing with cancelled orders because our competitors do not have to deal with this type of tax. Worse yet, there are a number of states that are even offering incentives while our government is imposing punitive measures with respect to our aircraft. By stubbornly insisting on going forward with this tax, the government is encouraging buyers to purchase aircraft from non-Canadian, non-Quebec sellers and to even register the aircraft and have their maintenance done outside Quebec. Meanwhile they continue flying in Canadian airspace.

Routine Proceedings

Anyone who read today's *La Presse* is aware of this scandal: Canada is currently considering purchasing a fleet of military surveillance aircraft, specifically 16 P-8 Poseidon aircraft and related equipment from U.S. giant Boeing, without a call for tenders. A contract worth at least \$5 billion is at stake. Bombardier had, however, expressed interest in providing its own aircraft as a potential replacement for the Auroras and had made a number of representations before various ministers, in vain.

Let us talk about Boeing's P-8A Poseidon aircraft, which Canada is looking at purchasing. A report from the U.S. government revealed that the aircraft has failed in recent years due to sitting too long in a workshop. The Poseidon availability rate, which corresponds to the percentage of aircraft that are capable of performing missions, fluctuated between 53% and 70% between October 2018 and March 2020, which is quite low compared to the U.S. military requirement of 80% performance.

Such a scenario would be an absolute betrayal of the aerospace industry in Quebec. Offering that kind of untendered contract to an American company for planes that would fail to meet maintenance standards when we have a local company just asking for a chance to promote its planes, which are built in this country, by participating in an open competition is outrageous.

Therefore, I am pleased that the report has been tabled, and hope it will help wake some people up.

• (1030)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the previous question, I made reference to the importance of the aerospace industry, in particular in the province of Quebec. However, it is important for us to recognize that the aerospace industry goes far beyond the province of Quebec or even planes. When we talk about the aerospace industry, we talk about everything from satellite developments to helicopters. The best helicopters in the world are arguably made in the province of Quebec. There is satellite technology and development in the province of Manitoba; the wings for the F-35, for example, are made in the province of Manitoba.

This is an industry that goes beyond the province of Quebec, and it is important, as the federal government has recognized, that we continue to work with the stakeholders, those businesses, small and big, within the sector, and with the provincial governments in order to protect the tens of thousands of jobs that are there and the many contributions that the industry makes to our communities throughout the country. Would the member not agree?

• (1035)

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I agree, but let me rephrase a few things.

First of all, the member talked about helicopters made in Quebec. Indeed, we have Bell Textron, an amazing company. However, it is really sad that Bell Textron has never been able to bid on federal government contracts. Is that a coincidence? I wonder why that is.

Therefore, the member might consider refraining from mentioning these companies.

I would also rephrase the member's words. Yes, I agree that we need to work with this industry. However, instead of saying that they are continuing to work with it, I would say they are starting to do so.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed my colleague's passionate speech in support of the aerospace industry and its economic benefits for Quebec and beyond.

I want to pick up on the point about the P-8 surveillance aircraft. I am having a hard time understanding why a government that claims to be responsible would not launch an open and transparent bidding process to award this contract. It almost feels like the government wanted to apologize to Boeing for buying the F-35 from Lockheed Martin, so it is awarding this contract to Boeing at the expense of Canadian and Quebec companies like Bombardier.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, yes, it is somewhat incomprehensible. Honestly, I, too, am trying to find the logic in that. My colleague's interpretation makes sense. It is quite possible that this was indeed meant to make it up to the Americans, but that is ridiculous.

Many countries do not even accept competitive bidding processes because defence is considered too sensitive a sector for that. Since it is such a strategic sector, national companies are automatically given priority, and bidding processes are not even launched. I emphasize the word "automatically".

Here, we have the opposite situation, in other words, no bidding process, but with the aim of prioritizing an American company, to give it a free pass. It is absolutely incomprehensible.

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for his very positive and important speech.

We know that the needs are great in the aerospace industry. Very often, airlines do not manage to serve the markets all the time.

I want to underscore the importance of supporting all our airports. I am speaking in particular of the Val-d'Or airport, which needs lighting and funding. We always have to ask the minister to provide funding with no conditions. It is often also a question of life or death for the indigenous communities of northern Quebec.

How can the committee take into consideration the needs and the reality of our regions?

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I work with my colleague who sits on the committee. Clearly, these demands will not be ignored.

Of course, this also concerns the regions, as was mentioned a little earlier. The aerospace industry is not just in Montreal. It is also present in many places, in many areas. Small suppliers and small businesses are found all over.

A member said earlier that it is a constellation, a cluster. I want to emphasize that point because I believe that people are not fully aware of it. Quebec is one of the three places in the world where a plane can be fully assembled. Think about it. This means that all the parts can be manufactured and assembled in Quebec. This area is sustained by this important industry.

The luxury tax is a threat to at least 2,000 jobs, and some of them are definitely in the regions.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to rise in the House to speak to this important report from the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology on the key sector of aerospace and aviation.

We know how important it is for Canada as a whole, for western Canada and Manitoba, and obviously for Quebec. This sector creates and maintains thousands of jobs in Quebec, including 40,000 direct jobs and maybe 100,000 indirect jobs, with an entire supply chain made up of hundreds of small businesses. I will come back to that.

This is a major economic sector that supports thousands of families with good jobs. As the report indicates, these jobs pay on average 10% more than the average salary in Canada. These are good jobs that are often unionized and represented by the machinists' union, Unifor, CSN and FTQ.

I want to use this opportunity to talk about the importance of good union jobs and support the union movement in general. Right now, federal public service employees are on strike. These are good jobs, but not as good as they used to be, which is making it harder to attract and retain federal employees. This is partly why 155,000 workers have been striking since yesterday. The government has to stay competitive on the labour market and offer working conditions that enable workers to cope with the rising cost of living resulting from the last two years of inflation. I want the workers to know they have our full support.

From the start, the NDP has always been a party that promotes the cause of workers and acknowledges their right to seek a balance of power and exert pressure. It is part of the party's DNA. Workers can count on us. We will always be there for them. I think their demands are legitimate and reasonable.

Once again, I ask Treasury Board to speed up negotiations to get good, well-paying jobs for federal employees who in turn can provide good services to citizens, Quebecers and Canadians.

Let us come back to the aerospace and aviation industry. It is fitting that I am able to rise in the House today to talk about this industry because, just a few minutes ago, I introduced a private member's bill affecting airport workers.

Since I have a little more time now, I will take this opportunity to talk about the importance of that bill, which fixes a problem with and closes a loophole in section 47.3 of the Canada Labour Code. Unfortunately, because of that section, there is no continuity in airport subcontractors' collective agreements and work contracts.

That is called contract flipping. Every time there is a tendering process, the lowest bidder gets a new service provider contract, and those contracts can vary a lot. This can affect workers who do

Routine Proceedings

maintenance, those who bring food to the planes for passengers, those who fill the planes with fuel before departure and so on.

Every time there is a call for tenders and a new company is awarded a contract by bidding extremely low, the pre-existing labour contract disappears. This leads to a new attempt to renegotiate the contract. In practical terms, what that means for these workers is that, unlike workers in almost every other sector in society, their wages, working conditions, insurance and benefits get worse every time there is a call for tenders.

Right now, 600 workers at the Montreal airport are affected by this issue. Two contracts have been put out to tender, one by Swissport, if I remember correctly. Some 600 people in Montreal are currently affected by this contract flipping.

● (1040)

This has a very real impact. That anomaly, that loophole, is virtually unique in the Canada Labour Code. There is no other federally regulated unionized worker in the same boat.

That is why I am bringing this private member's bill to the government's notice. This is something that it can look to as an example and use to try to end this unacceptable and wholly disrespectful situation. I have already spoken to previous labour ministers about this. I hope that the current Minister of Labour will be sensitive to this reality. I have already told him about it, and I hope that he will be open to listening to these people.

With respect to the aviation industry, I asked my colleague a question a few minutes ago about this. This seems to be just a news item, but I also want to highlight the fact that the Liberal government seems to be considering awarding a sole-source contract to Boeing for the purchase of surveillance aircraft, the P-8 Poseidon, even though there are Canadian and Quebec companies, that is, Bombardier, but others, too, that may be interested in offering their services for the construction and sale of surveillance aircraft for National Defence. Why is the government favouring an American company for something that could be done in Canada? Instead of having a free and transparent competition, why is it giving a gift to a foreign company, when there will be no positive economic impact or spinoffs for Canada?

Routine Proceedings

We have companies that could build the plane and sell it. In addition, the P-8 Poseidon is a last-generation plane that is on its way out. No one buys them anymore, not when there are new models from a new generation, with new technologies, that perform better and that could be considered by National Defence and the Liberal government.

It seems like there is some sort of backroom deal going on. The government just awarded three huge contracts to Lockheed Martin for the purchase of a large number of F-35s, so it almost seems like it is trying to make it up to Boeing by promising to purchase the P-8 Poseidon. This plane is not a good plane, the manufacturing will have no economic spinoffs in Canada, and there are Canadian companies that could build better aircraft with greater economic benefits for Canada.

I am not demanding a full-on “buy Canada” policy, but can we at least prioritize Canadian companies, Canadian jobs and Canadian technology so that we get a better plane that also meets our future needs?

Speaking of the future, for years, the Liberal government has had no vision for the aerospace industry. As was stated several times this morning, Canada is one of the few countries in the world where it is possible to build an aircraft from start to finish. We are fully independent. That is amazing.

This sector provides 235,000 direct and indirect jobs at hundreds of companies, ranging from huge corporations to small but capable companies. I remember visiting companies in Drummondville's industrial park that are able to engineer parts for aircraft that are unique in the world and that have special capabilities, with machines that I could not begin to understand. Clients send them plans for a part that has never been made and tell them what they need, and these companies are able to digitize it, model it, put it into the computer and then manufacture multiple copies. They are among the best in the world at this work. That is happening in Drummondville, and it is high-calibre work. I see my colleague from Drummond nodding, so I assume he agrees with what I am saying. I thought this work was fascinating and very impressive. That is just one example of companies that are capable of making parts for seats and engines.

• (1045)

I am also thinking of Longueuil. These people are capable of building extremely precise high-tech, high value-added components. These are very good jobs. These people are capable of ensuring that the aircraft built here are among the best in the world.

Let us come back to the matter of the Liberal government's lack of vision. Canada is at the back of the pack globally in terms of strategy, because we do not have one. It does not exist. We have no strategy. We do not have an overall vision for one of the economic sectors that we excel in. It is astounding.

France, Brazil and the United States take care of their aerospace and aviation sectors. They have a vision that melds civil aviation, defence, space, research and development, and worker training, by bringing all the partners to the table.

Here at home, the opposite is true. Things are done piecemeal, ad hoc, by chance. We have ad hoc programs that respond to a small need for help here, a bit of innovation there. The government might put a bit of money into a project or grant a loan if construction is involved, but there is no regularity, predictability or overall vision.

The NDP, along with several other parties, is calling on the Liberal government to sit down and finally develop a national aerospace and aviation strategy, because we need one. We also need more R and D investments to ensure that we have the best technology so we can be at the forefront. As we know, many other countries around the world, including China and India, invest heavily in R and D. If we do not do the same, if the sector is not there to support the industries so they can be the best in the world, we will fall behind. We will no longer be among the best. We will no longer be the international leader in aviation and aerospace.

A massive effort is needed, particularly regarding the energy transition. We know that civil aviation, air travel, is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. That is one of the concerns of the NDP. We want to see that industry reduce its carbon footprint. I think everyone would agree that it is important for that sector to do so, although perhaps not as important as it is for the trucking sector, for example, or the energy sector, like the oil and gas sector. We all agree on that.

I read recently on the news website *Courrier international* that, in terms of greenhouse gases, the civil aviation sector is the equivalent of landfills, of waste management, which represents between 3% and 4% of total emissions. That is not insignificant, but it is not the worst problem either. However, there is room for improvement. Interesting things can be done for the future.

We hear a lot about the electrification of private and public transportation. However, looking ahead, there are many possibilities for the future of air transport thanks to electrification based on several models. I am not an engineer, but we are not yet at the point of having electric planes, although we already have electric buses, trains and cars. I am very pleased to have a fully electric car. I can participate in the green movement, although it is better to use a bike if possible.

We are a long way from electric aircraft for a host of reasons, in particular because they require tremendous amount of energy. Given the size of battery it would take to generate the necessary energy, the plane would be too heavy to take off. We are not there yet. Perhaps green hydrogen will be a promising fuel option. The hydrogen must be produced with renewable energy. Having a plane run on hydrogen produced with natural gas is not necessarily the best option. There would not be much benefit to such a change. However, the federal government has a role to play in the electrification of transport, and it could ensure that the industry is able to propose promising and productive innovations for the future.

• (1050)

Once again, we must not get left behind by foreign competitors. If we fall asleep at the wheel, others are going to get ahead of us, which would be a great pity for our industry and its future.

Speaking of the future, I mentioned the importance of professional training earlier. The unions, including the machinists' union, are talking about the next generation of workers. It takes time to train new workers, because these are often skilled jobs that require specialized knowledge and have a learning curve. It is sort of like the apprentice system from the Middle Ages. Experienced workers coach trainees and show them the ropes. Currently, little is being done in our high schools and trade schools to steer our youth to the aerospace industry, even though it is an industry that is here to stay, an industry with a future.

It is an industry that has good, often unionized jobs with numerous benefits. As mentioned earlier, the industry pays its employees 10% more on average than other Quebec or Canadian workers. I think it would be a good idea to partner with the provincial governments to attract youth to training and employment opportunities in aerospace and aviation. At present, there are no partnerships. Things are done almost randomly, and the current system is essentially word of mouth. This is concerning in terms of maintaining our capabilities, especially considering the labour shortages and stiff competition we are facing.

I would also like to address the matter of creating an aircraft recycling program. No provision is made for what happens to aircraft at the end of their life cycle, when they are longer able to fly and need to be replaced. We basically have gigantic scrap yards full of aircraft all over North America. There is usable material in them. There are parts that could be reused. There are some things that could be melted down and recycled. There is no system for recycling aircraft. That is too bad, because we are losing a lot of natural resources and parts that could be repurposed.

We have recycling systems for many things in our lives, in daily life, in our municipalities and in our departments, but it seems nothing has been planned for the aviation industry and its aircraft. That is a concern for us. I think the federal government has a lot of work to do on a range of issues relating to the aerospace industry. I am pleased to see that this report includes four solid recommendations.

I think we could go further than those recommendations, but they are a good place to start. We need to make sure that Canada and Quebec continue to be centres of excellence in aircraft manufacturing. Together, let us keep making sure that tens of thousands of families can count on a good job and a good income in order to foster our shared prosperity. Let us keep good jobs in Quebec and in all parts of the country.

• (1055)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we need to recognize that the aerospace industry is worldwide. At the end of the day, many manufacturers, both small and large, in Canada benefit by contract. For example, many would acknowledge that the F-35 is one of the top-rated aircraft in the

Routine Proceedings

world. Those F-35 wings are manufactured in the city of Winnipeg, at Magellan. Magellan has the expertise and skill sets that have an impact in the aerospace industry.

When the member says that Canada should be purchasing Canada only, in part, he does a disservice to the expertise we have in towns across Canada. Many of those skill sets can provide for the aerospace industry worldwide.

Could he provide his perspective on the importance of Canadian skills being able to capitalize on worldwide tendering projects?

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I apologize if I was misunderstood.

I did not say that the government should be purchasing Canada only. What I said was that I do not understand why it would award a contract directly to an American company without opening a tendering process to Canadian companies that could have submitted a bid. That is the key difference. Why give a gift to Boeing when we have companies here that can make better-quality surveillance aircraft than the P-8? It is not the same thing. For the F-35s, for example, I agree that there can be positive economic spinoffs for companies, including the one in Winnipeg.

An aircraft can be built from start to finish here, but that does not mean that a company will do all its work in one country. We know that. I had the opportunity to visit a Bombardier plant in Mirabel that was building the C Series at the time, before it was sold to Airbus for the A220. Some parts for the C Series were made in Ireland. It was the wings, if my memory serves me. Those parts were then brought here. I think that is part of the global model, where aircraft parts are made in different parts of the world based on each place's expertise. That is how it should be.

• (1100)

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has clearly done his homework on several aspects of the report of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. I would like to take this moment to acknowledge the excellent working relationship I had with his colleague, the member for Windsor West, on the issue of the aerospace industry, in particular.

The committee's report contains seven recommendations that touch on important themes: the idea of a centre of excellence, research and development, basic research, greener aircraft, energy transition, the circular economy, recycling, maintenance, innovation and procurement.

The member will no doubt appreciate recommendation 7 of the report, which reads as follows:

Routine Proceedings

That the Government of Canada collaborate with provinces and territories to fund post-secondary training across all sectors of the aerospace industry, adequately accessible all over Canada.

I believe that is one of the things the member brought up.

I would also like to talk about recommendation 5, which he touched on quickly:

That the Government of Canada, following consultation with industrial partners and labour representatives, develop a national strategy for its aerospace sector.

That is fundamental to a vision for the future.

Is the NDP ready to work with the Bloc Québécois to put pressure on the government to implement this strategy and a vision for the future of Quebec's economy for the next 20, 30 or 50 years?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is yes. We are prepared to work with all of the parties in the House on a national aerospace and aviation strategy.

I am very honoured to have been part of the all-party caucus on the aerospace industry for the past few years. We have had a lot of discussions in that regard, and there were many panels on the subject during election campaign debates. Everyone seems to be working in good faith in order to have a comprehensive strategy and an overall vision so that we can bring all of the partners to the table, partners from the industry, the unions and the education and job training communities. We want to help the industry get ahead.

Unfortunately, the Liberal government is dragging its feet. The last budget was a disappointment in this regard. Let us be clear. All this industry of excellence got in the budget was a hastily offered pittance, and yet the demand is clear.

There seemed to be some signs of interest on the part of the Liberals. We need to once again take up the torch for the aerospace industry. It is high time we had a comprehensive strategy.

[English]

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's speech and vision for the future. I am curious about this: What are his thoughts on the Canadian Space Agency's recent announcement that Jeremy Hansen will be the first Canadian to travel to the moon, and what opportunity would that bring for us here in Canada?

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, regardless of our political stripes, I think that we all felt proud when we learned the name of the Canadian astronaut who would be part of the next mission around the moon.

I want to emphasize the importance of the Canadian Space Agency within the aerospace and aviation ecosystem. The space aspect should not be overlooked. I am proud to see we are able to continue that tradition. Even if we are not a world superpower, we still have some input. We are a part of that great human adventure.

I want to congratulate the astronaut on his appointment. We will be following his adventures and his journey with great interest.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the aviation and aerospace industry is really important in Longueuil. We have an airport, there is Héroux-Devtek and Pratt &

Whitney. I even visited Pratt & Whitney, which is working on a hybrid electric engine. I saw it, from a distance. The company does not reveal its secrets to just anyone, but I know that it is working on it and it is important.

This is an issue my colleague raised. He talked about the fight against climate change in relation to the aerospace industry. He seemed to suggest that it was not very significant, but he did highlight the fact that the industry is responsible for 3.5% of greenhouse gas emissions. If the industry were a country, it would be the 11th biggest emitter. That is actually significant.

I would like my colleague to tell us more about the importance of working on this. The most radical environmentalists are telling us that no one should fly anymore. I do not think that that will happen overnight. We need to help the industry gradually migrate to hydrogen-powered electric engines, and time will tell. It is really important for us to invest in this area.

I would like him to tell us more about that.

• (1105)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I would not ask my colleague to reveal Pratt & Whitney's industrial secrets, but I am pleased to hear that the company is working on this. I hope it will come up with a solution that allows the aerospace and civil aviation industries to improve their carbon footprint.

I was not trying to minimize the sector's importance. I was saying that 3% is not the same as 40%, although it is important. We have to do better. Every time I take an airplane, I make a donation to a Université du Québec à Chicoutimi program so trees will be planted to offset the greenhouse gas emissions from my flight. However, this is not a long-term solution. The industry will eventually have to improve its carbon footprint. The auto industry is currently making the transition. The inter-city bus sector is currently making the transition.

Yes, we need to do more and the federal government needs to do more to support the sector and innovation for research and development to reduce the carbon record of the air transport sector, which, by the way, is not going anywhere either. I think that everyone will want to get together, meet up and visit other countries. I do not think this is ever going to stop. We can reduce, be more discerning about how often we fly. We need to encourage the industry to have a much more acceptable carbon record.

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon. He told me that his was the most beautiful riding in Canada. I am sorry to tell him that mine is the most beautiful. Sadly for him he represents the second most beautiful riding.

Routine Proceedings

This morning I have the pleasure to rise to speak to the report of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology that was tabled on June 16, 2022. This report, entitled “Development and Support of the Aerospace Industry”, has three chapters.

Chapter one reiterates that the aerospace industry was one of the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. The second chapter is an overview of the different points of view on the implementation of support measures for the aerospace industry. The third chapter presents recommendations to the committee on the industry's recovery.

We all know that this industry experienced serious problems during the pandemic. Everyone was affected—the entire industry, not just in Quebec, but across Canada. It is important to emphasize that. It is also important to mention that Quebec is a true leader in the field of aerospace. It is truly world-class.

We know that many large companies have developed in Quebec over the years. Today, Quebec is home to a number of large companies, such as Bell Helicopter, Bombardier Aviation, Textron, CAE, and Pratt & Whitney Canada, as well as many equipment manufacturers and an extremely strong network of subcontractors. Some subcontractors are in my riding of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup and I am proud of that.

We know that, when building an aircraft, safety is obviously the most important thing and all the parts that make up that aircraft must be made with extreme diligence and precision. I am very pleased to know that several companies in my riding contribute to this sector in Canada and Quebec.

Most companies in this industry are located in the greater Montreal area, but Quebec has over 200 aerospace companies and about 20 research centres for which it is renowned. It is renowned for the entire network surrounding aerospace: the university network, research centres, college centres for the transfer of technology, or CCTTs. Incidentally, there are three CCTTs in my hometown, La Pocatière. They are all organizations that, directly or indirectly, contribute to the quality of this industry. The industry generates revenues in excess of \$34 billion, representing a contribution of \$20 billion to \$28 billion to the GDP. Over \$700 million is invested each year in research and development. That is a lot of money.

Montreal is one of the world's three aerospace capitals, with Seattle in the United States and Toulouse in France. In Canada, 50% of aerospace production takes place in Quebec. It is a Canada-wide industry, but aerospace is to Quebec what the automotive industry is to Ontario, just as British Columbia has the best vines in Canada. Every Canadian province thus strives to highlight their entire industry, which also explains why Canada is so diverse in the production of all these elements. Our universities and technical colleges, including Montreal's École polytechnique, train over 4,500 students every year, who join a highly skilled workforce. It should be noted that there are 200,000 people working in aerospace in Canada.

This report was prepared by the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. Before the final report and recommendations were presented, 33 witnesses had appeared. On November 2, 2020, the

committee undertook a study of the issues related to the development and support of the aerospace industry. Four meetings were held and, as I said, 33 witnesses appeared.

The testimony highlighted the fact that, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the industry was already experiencing difficulties. We have to put this in context: There were significant labour shortages, just as there are in many Canadian and Quebec sectors at present. It was already a reality in the industry. Canada had started to lose highly skilled workers to other countries, and training centres had difficulty providing new workers. This was a very important aspect of all the speeches that were made before the committee. Witnesses came to talk to us about it.

● (1110)

We are in competition with the rest of the world and, obviously, we must have the best training centre and we must be able to integrate the people who arrive in Canada as quickly as possible based on the training that they already have. The same is true for the medical and health care sectors, among others. We must have the best employees in the world in the industry, and we must be ready to welcome them.

The industry was hard hit by the pandemic, and the airlines basically stopped operating. The entire commercial aircraft production chain was broken. Collectively, Canadian companies in the industry lost 40% of their revenue, and more than half of them had to lay off workers. Commercial flights have since resumed, but the aerospace industry is still suffering.

Support for the industry was one of the issues that was raised as part of the study that led to the report. Most of the witnesses that we heard from said that they were in favour of the idea of federal support for the aerospace industry. Many organizations indicated that the industry has been doing a lot of research and development that benefits other industries and Canada's economic growth. Of course, the research in this sector is very important and has an impact on other sectors of the Canadian industry.

Witnesses recommended actions rooted in four main areas: direct funding; research, development and training; procurement; and strategy and regulation. After hearing from all witnesses, the committee made some recommendations, the most important of which I am going to share.

We know that this government is extremely wasteful. That is nothing new; we have seen huge deficits for the last eight years. As a Conservative, it would be rather ill-advised of me to ask the government to spend even more and loosen the purse strings even more. At the same time, there are concrete solutions, incentives and measures that the government could put in place to help the aerospace industry while remaining fiscally prudent.

Here is the first recommendation:

That the Government of Canada ensure that a Center of Excellence on Aeronautics 4.0 be created and that it can bring together university- and college-level expertise in this field, and that this Center increase research capacities and development in this sector.

Routine Proceedings

I spoke earlier about the college centres for the transfer of technology, the university network and the government of Canada's research centres. Earlier, I heard members talking about airplanes that could become electric. If we got all these people to the same table, we would be working together. As recently as yesterday, I saw a report about the first airplane with an electric motor, a small aircraft that is now authorized to fly in Canada. We need to continue to do research in that field.

Here is the second recommendation:

That the Government of Canada ensure that significant financial incentives be put in place for basic research, including to develop a greener aircraft...

This is what I just talked about.

This same recommendation requests the following:

That the Government of Canada promote a circular economy approach in order to establish a policy for recycling aircraft that are taken out of service.

We are currently conducting another study on plastics and battery recycling. All of these elements must be integrated with one another. Of course, we did not think about it as much when we started talking about electric vehicles. This will be another very important aspect in terms of pollution. It is one thing to collect all the raw materials to make batteries, but it is quite another to dispose of them after they have been used, and recycle them to make other batteries that can be used in other sectors, or even in the auto sector. It will be the same with aircraft, and we have to start thinking about it now.

I will read another of the recommendations, which I think is one of the most important ones:

That the Government of Canada...develop a national strategy for its aerospace sector.

A national strategy would essentially bring together all the players, not only in Quebec, but across Canada, to push us even further in terms of what we can achieve in this industry. Obviously, we are talking about airplanes, but aerospace is much broader than that. It includes a whole sector of activity, essentially anything related to the sky.

I think we need to do better and do more for the aerospace industry and more for Quebec. We know that aerospace is especially important in Quebec, just like the auto industry is important in Ontario, as I was saying earlier, and vineyards are important in British Columbia. I am sure my colleague will get into that. We have everything to gain as a country from developing this industry even better and regulating it even better.

• (1115)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's reference to the automobile industry. It is important for us to recognize that often in different regions of the country we will find certain industries that have excelled. When we think of the automobile industry, we have to think of the province of Ontario.

When we think of our aviation and aerospace industry, which is very strong and healthy, we think of the province of Quebec. We all

so have significant industries in Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia and even in other areas, and it all feeds into the bigger picture of Canada's aerospace industry. I say that because it is important that we recognize that there are many ways, both direct and indirect, that the government has been supporting the aerospace industry.

Could my colleague provide his thoughts in terms of the world-wide impact on the aerospace industry which has been hit hard by the pandemic, leading to less demand as a direct result of the pandemic?

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Mr. Speaker, I understand my colleague's question, that the pandemic had a global impact on the industry. The impact in Canada is even greater. The Canadian industry is so developed that we are not only supplying aircraft to Canadian companies such as Air Canada, WestJet and others, but we are selling aircraft, and aircraft engines and parts around the world. Obviously there was an impact.

My colleague's question is interesting because he talked about the automobile sector. He said that this had repercussions across Canada, which seems obvious to me. In my riding, there is a company called Liberty Spring. It supplies half the shocks of all the vehicles built around the world. We can be extremely proud of that kind of business. Its headquarters are in Montmagny, in my riding. I am a business owner myself. We can be proud of what business owners have done to develop this industry for over a century now in Quebec and Canada. The same goes for the auto industry. These industries are not in competition, and we should not frame them as such.

We all have to work together in this country.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my generous colleague from Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup for his presentation today and for his collaboration. He is an important ally at the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, and I would like to point that out.

There is someone else I would like to acknowledge for their leadership in preparing this study. Members know how the topic of a study is chosen. I had negotiations and interesting discussions with the other vice-chair at the time, the member for Carleton, who is now the leader of the official opposition.

In view of all the points he made, the member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup spoke with the eloquence of a possible future innovation, science and industry minister. Will he pledge to support the report's fifth recommendation and ensure that it is in the next election platform of the Conservative government in waiting? Will the Conservative Party have a national aerospace policy, which would obviously be developed after consulting union representatives and industry partners? Will the Conservative Party have a formal recommendation in its next election platform? Specifically, will the leader of the official opposition support and advance that strategy?

Routine Proceedings

• (1120)

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Mr. Speaker, I must lower the member's expectations. I am far from being appointed minister. We are far from that. Actually, only one person can do that in a government, and that is the Prime Minister himself. The member is right to say that the Prime Minister is waiting. We hope he will not be waiting too long. The future Prime Minister of Canada is sitting on this side of the House.

He was once a member of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. One thing is certain, we will make sure that the aerospace industry as a whole can continue to grow as robustly as possible, not only in Quebec, but right across the country.

[English]

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to share a few comments on the report entitled “Development and Support of the Aerospace Industry”, tabled by the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology of which I am a part. However, I will note that I did not participate actively in this study. That said, I cannot outline enough how important the aerospace industry is to the Fraser Valley, my riding of Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, the neighbouring riding of Abbotsford and all other areas in British Columbia.

We are in a changing global context where the needs of the Canadian military are expanding, both for national security and for natural disasters. In the Fraser Valley, when the great floods came in the last couple of years, we had to rely on the Royal Canadian Air Force to help our constituents and to fly in supplies. Helicopters from Vancouver Island based out of Esquimalt came to rescue people in my riding. Also, the threats that Canada faces from Russia in our far north are growing. Just recently, two spy balloons that originated from China came into Canadian aerospace. The need for the government to act and do more is essential at this stage right now.

I will note three particular recommendations that came out of this report that are worth mentioning today.

The first one, recommendation 3, is “That the Government of Canada accommodate the needs of the various air fleets, particularly with regard to the maintenance of their aircraft, and support the development of companies specializing in the maintenance of these aircraft.”

Second, recommendation 5 in the report, is “That the Government of Canada, following consultation with industrial partners and labour representatives, develop a national strategy for its aerospace sector.”

Third, recommendation 7, is “That the Government of Canada collaborate with provinces and territories to fund post-secondary training across all sectors of the aerospace industry adequately accessible over all of Canada.”

In British Columbia, there are a number of big companies that have a national and global impact. We could talk about KF Aerospace in Kelowna, Conair in Abbotsford and Cascade Aerospace, which employs hundreds of people in my constituency. It is an operating unit of IMP Aerospace & Defence, which was ranked Canada's number one defence company in 2017.

The IMP group is one of Canada's best-managed companies and it has its head office located in Halifax. Its aerospace defence and aviation sectors provide comprehensive in-service support, repair and engineering. It accounts for over 3,500 jobs across Canada. There are approximately 550 of those jobs in Abbotsford at this time.

The division of IMP in Cascade Aerospace is approved by Transport Canada for maintenance, manufacturing, training and design. It is an FAA-approved company and is accredited with the Department of National Defence for maintenance, material support and technical organizations. It is one of only two Lockheed Martin-approved C-130J heavy maintenance centres and one of 13 approved C-130 service centres. To say that this company has a lot of specialties is an understatement.

Right now, Cascade is providing military support not only to the RCAF and the USAF, but it also provides support to Mexico, Tunisia, Thailand, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, UPS, WestJet, Alaska Airlines, Southwest Airlines and Longview Aviation. Cascade has that specialization in IMP for maintenance repair and the overhaul of aircraft as an accredited manufacturing facility for a various suite of aircraft types. To put it bluntly, as I mentioned earlier, in the changing global landscape that we find ourselves today, facilities like Cascade Aerospace are not only good for our economy, they are essential to Canada's national interest to maintain a robust aviation sector both for commercial and defence purposes.

That said, in conversations with employees and the executive team at Cascade Aerospace, there are ways we can improve its ability to do business, to serve the Canadian and U.S. militaries, in particular, and to provide the types of jobs that Canadians want, which are high-skilled jobs in the trades that are very technical and specialized.

• (1125)

In the conversations with those at Cascade, they mentioned that Transport Canada could do a better job of responding to applications for design-approval delegation. It could also do better with certifications to make sure there is a more consistent approach. They mentioned that there are regulatory gaps in certification authority for military export. Design audits, in their minds, are sometimes ineffective, and regulations, in some cases, are very dated. One specific example is that the training book for new technicians still includes a section on cloth aircraft. We are working with a company that deals with the most modern technology in the 21st century, but we are still training young technicians on the repair of cloth aircraft.

Routine Proceedings

One of the big regulatory gaps that Cascade Aerospace outlined is the need to recognize foreign credentials. As I mentioned earlier, Cascade Aerospace serves the United States Air Force, the Mexican air force and the Bangladesh Air Force. Sometimes technicians from those countries might even immigrate to Canada, but Transport Canada regulations would prohibit an aircraft technician trained in Mexico from necessarily being able to work right away in the same capacity as a technician trained in Canada, even though they were working on the very same aircraft in their home country.

I would encourage Transport Canada to continue working closely with Cascade Aerospace and the entire aerospace sector, across Canada, to make sure that our regulations are up to date. Right now, as has been told to me by the national association, Canada lags behind the FAA regulations. If there is one country that we want to be aligned with, both for businesses and military strategic purposes, it is the United States of America. My plea today to the government is to get those regulations updated as soon as possible.

The second big area that needs to be addressed, which is reflected in the three points I raised at the beginning of my speech, is the challenges we face in the labour market. Cascade Aerospace has been innovative in its approach to not only retain but also train the best Canadian workers possible. It is interested in hiring more indigenous people from our local first nations and more women to the trade sector. It has made lots of investments and has taken many steps to ensure that it has an in-house training program to make sure its technicians are the most competent and capable to compete at the global level for defence and other contracts.

Right now, though, the Province of British Columbia has to work more closely with companies such as Cascade Aerospace to ensure that their competency-based, hands-on training programs recognize the needs of the sector and are aligned with labour market regulations and certification programs, both through the Red Seal and labour programs at the provincial and federal levels.

To conclude, we have a lot of work to do in the aerospace sector. I am very proud to live in a community where there are hundreds of people employed in high-paying jobs in the aerospace sector. We need to work with these companies to not only meet the global challenges we are facing today, but also meet the labour challenges we are facing in communities across our country.

• (1130)

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague asked our government to do more. Located in both my riding of Mississauga—Streetsville and the riding of Milton, Cyclone Manufacturing is a Canadian company that competes in the aerospace sector. Our government launched the aerospace regional recovery initiative to help companies such as Cyclone compete on the global stage and adopt clean technologies. FedDev provided Cyclone a repayable investment to develop and manufacture new complex, green aerospace parts, which will result in Cyclone commercializing up to 1,500 new greener parts.

Could my hon. colleague give his thoughts on the importance of the green innovative solutions needed for the future of the aerospace industry?

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my remarks, the Canadian aerospace regulations still fall behind those of countries

such as the United States. I know that many companies in the aerospace sector have one thing in mind, and that is making a profit. How are they going to make a profit? They are going to make a profit if their planes are efficient and well maintained. That is how they are going to be greener in the Canadian context.

We have to make sure that our regulations are up to date to account for even battery technology in airplanes, which is being researched effectively by scientists at NRCan here in our nation's capital. Until we get our regulations up to date, we are not going to see anything other than government announcements about it giving one company a dollar amount. We are not going to see an overall improvement to making our planes more efficient and environmentally friendly until our regulations are updated.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon for his speech and, I would go so far as to say, his rigour. He is my ally when it comes to any rural issues relating to our economic development. Also, I always appreciate him making an effort to speak French.

He talked about a number of recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. There is one that we have not really focused on yet, and I would like to hear his thoughts on it. It is recommendation 1:

That the Government of Canada ensure that a Center of Excellence on Aeronautics 4.0 be created and that it can bring together university- and college-level expertise in this field, and that this Center increase research capabilities and development in this sector.

This leads me to reflect on the whole issue of the importance of clusters. In his response, the minister stated that Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada had established five advanced manufacturing clusters in February 2018, including Scale AI on artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing and the digital technologies that support the aerospace industry.

However, there is no cluster or supercluster that directly involves the aerospace industry. Should such a cluster be created and is my colleague moving in that direction?

I would like to hear his comments on that.

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology for his question today. It was a very long question.

Perhaps I can answer the first part. It relates to the first recommendation in the report. I would like to know whether the Bloc Québécois would support a centre of excellence for the aerospace sector in British Columbia. Will the Bloc Québécois support the creation of good jobs in British Columbia in the aerospace sector?

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for bringing up the reality of the flooding in the Fraser Valley and how there was a lack of access to supply chains for food, medication, and essential goods and services. I think this is a conversation we need to have about how aerospace is going to be used differently with climate change.

With that in mind, does the member believe that the Liberal government understands the impacts of changing our behaviour or how climate change is affecting supply chains in this country?

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, when the floods happened, it was really frustrating for some people on the ground in the Fraser Valley that the Royal Canadian Air Force had to ship equipment from the province of Quebec to serve the needs of British Columbia. A national aerospace strategy needs to look strategically at the capabilities of the Canadian military at large to respond to climate-related natural disasters in the province of British Columbia to ensure that we have sufficient equipment and resources to respond in the most immediate terms possible.

• (1135)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is one issue that I do have fairly strong opinions on. I was in high school when I was going out to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, to watch the air shows. People might not realize that, when it comes to touch and go, at one time Moose Jaw was Canada's busiest airport, even busier than Toronto, once it had its training school.

Since then I have had an interest in planes, which ultimately grew into an interest in the aerospace industry, so that is something I am pleased to talk about. However, before I start talking about it, I would like to make a general observation because, once again, we are speaking to a concurrence motion.

I have enjoyed the discussion and the comments. I value how important the aerospace industry is to our country, with its tens of thousands of jobs and so forth. I think of the opportunity lost by the Bloc in not using this particular issue for debate on an opposition day, when they could have crafted a motion, and had a vote toward the end of it, on something that would have been creatively positive, which would have assisted the industry either directly or indirectly.

I say that because, when I reflect on the two opportunities the Bloc has had to debate important issues for Canada and the province of Quebec, they first chose a constitutional change, which would not happen, and then they chose a change to our standing orders related to prayers, which in my opinion, had nothing to do with the priorities of Canadians.

Today, and this may be because the members of the Bloc are sitting so closely to those in the Conservative Party, I think the Conservative Party is really rubbing off on them. The Bloc is now using Conservative—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the real shameful stuff is going to come up, I can assure the member, in regard to the Conservative Party, but the Bloc is sitting a little too close. I was just wondering if the member wants to shoo over a little bit more. I agree. I would do that too.

They are starting to have a negative influence on the Bloc. Today, we were supposed to be debating Bill C-27, and we know how important it is to our constituencies that we provide security in the privacy of information on the Internet. We all recognize how important that issue is. The Bloc do not want to discuss that today, even though we have attempted to have it passed through the House. I understand it supports the legislation, which is a good thing. However, it wants to talk about the aerospace industry by bringing through concurrence of a report to use up government time. This is not the first time. We are used to the Conservative Party doing it.

Having said that, I am happy to talk about the aerospace industry. When I think of the aerospace industry, I think of John Diefenbaker. Do members remember John Diefenbaker? John Diefenbaker was a prime minister of Canada.

Canada, at the time, was leading the world, virtually, in the development of a first-class interceptor, a plane that was incredibly fast. We have to remember that this was after the world war, when there was a need for development and an enrichment of our aerospace industry. The prime minister at the time, John Diefenbaker, destroyed Canada's aerospace industry by cancelling the Avro Arrow.

That was a high-altitude plane. It was ahead of its time. I want members to imagine that plane program not having been cancelled. Avro employed hundreds of people at the time, possibly over 1,000, but I will say hundreds for now. They all worked in the province of Ontario.

I think of the technology and the research that was done. They actually rolled one of the Avro planes out. It was recognized around the world as likely the leading candidate for the development of a plane that was like a rocket, going to altitudes of 40,000 and above.

John Diefenbaker cancelled the program. Back in the late fifties, he cancelled the program. It is the truth. As a result, Avro actually went broke and closed its doors. All of the equipment and, more important, all of the brains and skills were dispersed. Many of the individuals who developed the Avro ended up leaving Canada so they could get into and expand that particular industry. Canada lost out big time, and it is something which even today, 70 years later, we reflect on. What would our industry look like today?

Well, earlier today, I was asking questions of members of the Bloc. I am happy to say that it is the province of Quebec that leads our aerospace industry. I pointed out, in the question I posed earlier, that in the province of Quebec, one can build a plane from the very beginning, from the bolts to the polishing of the aircraft, the final product. That is fairly rare.

Routine Proceedings

When we think of the aerospace industry in Canada, one is talking about tens of thousands of jobs, well over 100,000 jobs. Do members know the average salary of someone working in the aerospace industry in Manitoba? It is estimated, I believe, to be over \$60,000 a year. These are good middle-class types of jobs with incredible skill sets. In Canada today, it is Quebec that leads.

● (1140)

With respect to jobs, I suspect that the province of Ontario lost the opportunity to play that leadership role as a direct result of a federal government's decision not to invest in the aerospace industry.

Let us fast forward a few decades. Today, we have a national government that does support our aerospace industry in a clear and tangible way, and we have done this from day one. We talked about Bill C-10 and how important it was that we ensure future contracts. We talked about how we could support the industry even though, at times, it meant there would be some give and take. That give and take is important to recognize. The world has changed.

I had a tour of Magellan in my home city of Winnipeg. I felt a sense of pride when I walked around the floor and saw an F-35 wing being manufactured. We have an absolutely incredible aerospace industry in Winnipeg, which contributes to the industry not only in Canada, but worldwide.

Those workers show their love and passion for the construction of very important components of the F-35. Imagine being a worker at Magellan who sees an F-35 on a news broadcast. He or she might reflect on whether that wing was manufactured in Winnipeg. Even in crating the wing, someone would need an engineering background to build the crate that houses the wing prior to its shipping.

The member before me talked about the importance of schools. Magellan has a classroom in which Red River College contributes to the education. It is very important to recognize that it is not only Ottawa that has the responsibility of supporting these industries, even though it feels we are alone in doing that at times. Many stakeholders have a role in ensuring that Canada continues to lead an industry that is so vitally important to the world. The best way to do that is to work with our partners and stakeholders.

When I was an MLA a number of years ago, and I hope the Manitoba legislature Hansard would show this, I spoke about the aerospace industry in the province of Manitoba. I said that the province needed to step up and support the industry. If the local entities and provincial governments are not at the table, it hurts the industry. It also hurts it if the industry itself is not at the table.

As much as I would love to talk about the province of Quebec, I think the similarities are striking between Manitoba and Quebec. We have aerospace industry umbrella organizations and those organizations are there for the health and the well-being of that industry.

This comes from Winnipeg's aerospace industry's umbrella agency. I will quote from its website so people can get a sense of what I am referring to when I talk about Manitoba's aerospace industry. It states:

● (1145)

Canada is a global leader in aerospace and Manitoba is home to Canada's third largest aerospace industry. Our highly competitive aerospace sector produces world-class products for customers on six continents.

From modest roots in small bush plane repair in the 1930's, the Manitoba aerospace industry has grown to include sophisticated design, manufacturing, servicing, testing, certification and research and development capabilities. We are home to Canada's largest aerospace composite manufacturing centre, as well as the world's largest independent gas turbine engine repair and overhaul company. Also located in Manitoba are the internationally acclaimed Composites Innovation Centre and two of the world's most advanced aircraft engine testing and certification centres developed by Rolls Royce, Pratt & Whitney and GE Aviation. Along with these global aerospace leaders, Manitoba has a network of SMBs that compete and supply into the global marketplace. This growing cluster is strengthened through the Competitive Edge Supplier Development initiative, an internationally recognized learner to world class supplier and supply chain development program.

This gives us a sense of the impact the aerospace industry in Manitoba has on the world. We could come up with even a stronger statement, in a different perspective coming from the province of Quebec.

I remember another occasion when I was in the Philippines. I talked to some military representatives, who talked about the Bell helicopter. They thought that the province of Quebec had a wonderful product in the Bell helicopter, that Quebec was a place they could look at. I asked a representative why he was looking at the province of Quebec in particular and what he thought about the manufactured helicopter. I did not expect, and the member commented on this, him to say that it was the fact that politicians in Quebec were so impressed with the makeup of the workforce in the construction of the helicopter, referring to the fact that people of Filipino heritage were in that industry.

With respect to our aerospace industry, one of the nice things is the diversity we see when we tour these plants, whether they are in Quebec, Manitoba, Ontario or British Columbia, "the big four", as I would like to say. Hopefully Manitoba will even become higher and more prominent, but that is a personal bias. It is that diversification of the workforce and the skills they have.

That is why it is so critically important that Ottawa not only continues to support the aerospace industry, as it has pre-pandemic, during the pandemic and today, but that we also ensure, as much as possible, that those stakeholders are at the table as well. We want Red River College and the University of Manitoba at the table. We want those post-secondary facilities, whether they are in Manitoba, Quebec, Ontario, B.C., or any other jurisdiction, to be at the table to ensure we continue to invest in research and technology.

Routine Proceedings

When we think of manufacturing in Canada, many would argue, especially many of my Ontario colleagues, that we lead in the automobile industry. After all, we can take a look at the hybrids, at the plants that are being announced, the thousands of jobs, the clean energy, and all these things. In a good part, it is coming out of Ontario, but when we take a look at the overall picture of the manufacturing industry, Canada's aerospace industry is recognized, within our bigger picture of the manufacturing industry, as one of the best, if not the best, in investing in research, technology and advancement. We are seeing that in the types of demands that are there for Canada.

• (1150)

Ottawa should continue to support the industry. As the Minister of Industry indicated in a question about something he recently announced in the province of Quebec, I can make reference to things that recently have been announced in Manitoba. Whether it is through procurements and how the federal government supports the industry, or direct investments in the industry, or indirect things that are done through things such as trades and skills, my appeal would be that we look at what other stakeholders and jurisdictions can do that would complement the types of initiatives that the federal government is taking to advance a very important industry.

This industry employs thousands of people, with well-paying jobs. It contributes billions of dollars every year to our GDP, thereby enhancing our lifestyle. We can all take a sense of pride in how our aerospace industry has been able to do relatively well even during the pandemic. As we get through the pandemic and look at the potential to increase its demand in the years ahead, it is critically important we continue to look at ways to support our aerospace industry.

As much as I enjoy talking about the aerospace industry, I hope the Bloc and Conservatives will come onside and support Bill C-27 when it comes up for debate later today. It would be wonderful to see that legislation pass, which would make this debate that much better.

• (1155)

The Deputy Speaker: I want to remind folks to visit the Canada Aviation and Space Museum, where they can see the Avro Arrow, or pieces of it.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Scarborough—Agincourt.

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have many fine universities and colleges in Ontario that are conducting space research. The hon. member mentioned post-secondary investments in his speech. Could the member elaborate on the research and training opportunities?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I know the member from Scarborough is a strong advocate for her constituents. I referenced somewhat in my comments the importance of education and bringing that to the table. The member has recognized that there are so many opportunities for young people today to enter into a career by taking advantage of and looking at those opportunities. Whether it be in an engineering capacity or a welding capacity, all kinds of opportunities are available. We rely very much on our secondary and post-secondary facilities to support such a critical industry.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Winnipeg North certainly has a rather dysfunctional relationship with the truth. In fact, what he had to say matched reality about as well as his tie matches his jacket, which is not at all.

The reality is that decisions made during the Louis St-Laurent government led to the forced cancellation of the Avro. I found it quite ironic that the member talked so much about Magellan and the F-35, when he and his party campaigned repeatedly on the fact that they would kill the F-35, which would cost many jobs in his riding and across Canada.

The member talks a lot about supporting the aviation industry. I wonder if he could comment on his government's plan to source the maritime surveillance craft to the U.S. for the P-8, instead of allowing Canadian companies such as Bombardier or PAL in Newfoundland to bid on the project. Why are the Liberals sending the jobs offshore without even allowing an opportunity for great Canadian companies to bid on the work?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, we cannot rewrite history, and history is very clear. For anyone who wants a clear indication of a lost opportunity, a simple search of Dr. Google will quickly tell them that the Avro Arrow, a leading interceptor that was ahead of its time in the late 1950s, was cancelled in 1959. If we do a Google search, we will also find that the prime minister at the time went out of his way to say that we were cancelling the program. Hundreds of jobs were lost. The member does not have to believe me; he can read the history books. We can choose what to believe, but we cannot rewrite history.

Canada is looked up to, around the world, because of our procurements and tendering. We recognize that our aerospace industry is a worldwide issue. That means that, at times, when we go abroad, there are all sorts of other aerospace industry SME benefits that would be taken into consideration.

It is a fairly complicated issue. The member is more than welcome to sit down with some of the departmental staff, who, I am sure, would be happy to explain the benefits of the program that the federal government provides with respect to procurement.

Routine Proceedings

• (1200)

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, our colleague across the aisle spent a lot of his time complaining about the issues the Bloc Québécois has chosen to address. Today, it is the report of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. He reminded the House that we devoted some opposition days to the issues of prayer and the monarchy, reminding us these were not real issues in his mind, that there were more important issues. Today we are raising the issue of aerospace. We might have expected him to applaud our choice and say that it was a good idea, that it finally allows us to talk about something that affects people, but instead he tells us that we should have talked about Bill C-27.

The question we in the Bloc are asking is quite simple. Despite the agreement between the parties to drop the debate on Bill C-27, is the member finally inviting us to discuss it and to add speakers to the debate? The Liberal position is not clear.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I do not fully understand the question.

If we had had, for example, an opposition day motion that gave some specific direction to the government as to what the Bloc was hoping to achieve that would ultimately have been voted on, it probably would have been more productive than bringing forward a three-hour concurrence motion and debate. I love the opportunity to talk about the aerospace industry and its strength in Quebec, Manitoba, Ontario and B.C., as well as in other regions, as I do not want to say it is in just those four jurisdictions. I believe that would have been more valuable on an opposition day than talking about a constitutional change or a change to the Standing Orders. I do think that, at times, the Bloc's priorities might be a bit mixed up.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to conclude this debate by saying that the industry is united.

The world is short some 6,000 aircraft and so far, the government's response has been timid, in the industry's words. Allow me to draw attention to the contributions of various people. We heard from 33 witnesses, including representatives from Aéro Montréal. I want to thank its president and chief executive officer. We also heard from Mike Mueller of the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada, along with the representatives of MDA, Airbus Canada, Airbus Helicopters Canada, STELIA Aerospace St-Laurent, Telesat and Unifor. I also want to thank Renaud Gagné of Unifor Québec.

We also heard from representatives of Boeing Canada, the Canadian Council for Aviation and Aerospace, Hexagon's Autonomy & Positioning Division, Rheinmetall Canada Inc., Boeing, Héroux-Devtek, NAV Canada, Bell Textron, and more.

Consultations with industry partners and union representatives have generated a broad consensus within the industry in support of a national aerospace strategy backed by the billions of dollars needed for the industry to develop. Is the government of Canada headed in this direction?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I recognize the incredible efforts that went into presenting the report being talked about today. Members who have provided comments thus far have been relatively encouraging in recognizing how important the industry is to the country. The inputs we have had from trade unions, from the bigger companies to the smaller companies, have been incredibly positive.

The Government of Canada takes the issue very seriously, and that is one of the reasons we are investing in enhancing skills in post-secondary facilities. It is one of the reasons we continue to work with the stakeholders to ensure we continue not only to support the industry but also to see growth in the coming years. We always need to put it in the perspective of the pandemic—

• (1205)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am really proud to say that Red River College is in my riding of Winnipeg Centre. We know we could recruit a lot more students if the government were more clear about its supports for students, which are very lacking. I am wondering if my colleague would agree with me that we need to have more supports for students and greater investments in education, including moving toward free tuition for individuals wanting to enter the trades, including the aerospace industry.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, that is one of the reasons why we have seen, for the first time, the elimination of federal student loan interest. This has saved literally hundreds of dollars for students across the country and recognizes the important role that learning facilities, such as Tech-Voc or Red River College in the member's riding, play in ensuring the future prosperity of the industry as a whole. The federal government does have a role. It has been living up to that role and will continue to work with the different stakeholders to ensure we maximize the benefits of that particular industry.

[Translation]

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to the report entitled "Development and Support of the Aerospace Industry", which was tabled in the House of Commons on June 16, 2022.

[English]

Let me first say that I very much value the aerospace industry. The industry is critical to Canada.

Before I continue, I will be sharing my time with the member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

Routine Proceedings

As I was saying, I value the aerospace industry because it is critical to Canada. It is also critical to my own home province of Nova Scotia, where IMP Aerospace & Defence is located. It is a proud Canadian organization that employs over 2,400 people across Canada in all areas of aerospace and aviation. It employs over a thousand people in my province of Nova Scotia and close to 100 in my riding of Halifax West, so one can see the importance of that industry right in my backyard.

[Translation]

I want to underscore the importance of the aerospace sector. This sector provides jobs, draws talent and contributes significantly to the economy of Quebec, Canada and Nova Scotia.

[English]

The aerospace sector provides jobs and talent and contributes significantly to our economy.

[Translation]

I want to talk about the aerospace industry and the support the federal government has provided to this sector and these workers since taking office in 2015.

The Government of Canada appreciates the committee's work and welcomes the testimony and recommendations it received from the aerospace industry in March 2021, as reflected in the committee's report entitled "Development and Support of the Aerospace Industry".

The aerospace industry in Quebec and Nova Scotia is a vital part of the economy, and the government recognizes the extraordinary contributions this sector has made. We recognize, of course, that this is one of the most innovative and export-driven industries in Canada.

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent decline in global air travel has had a significant and lasting impact on the industry. Indeed, the global decline in commercial and business air travel has resulted in significant reductions in demand.

• (1210)

[English]

The reduction has been in the demand for aircraft, for aircraft maintenance and for parts.

In fact, in 2021, the Canadian aerospace industry, comprising the aerospace manufacturing and maintenance, repair and overhaul sectors, contributed over \$24 billion in gross domestic product to the Canadian economy and nearly 200,000 jobs. This is a decrease of \$0.9 billion in GDP and 7,300 jobs since 2020, and a total decrease of \$9.4 billion in GDP and 35,200 jobs since the prepandemic levels of 2019.

[Translation]

The global industry has been gradually recovering from the pandemic over the past year, and Canada's aerospace manufacturing revenues declined at a significantly slower rate in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20, and at an even slower rate in 2021-22.

[English]

Moreover, despite the challenges, Canada's aerospace industry continued to rank first in research and development among all Canadian manufacturing industries in 2021, with investments totalling \$934 million, as well as in its position as a world leader. In the production of civil flight simulators, we were first in the world. For civil engines, we were third in the world, and we were fourth in the world for civil aircraft.

The Canadian aerospace industry is expected to be well positioned for the recovery due to its diverse product portfolio, including a strong focus on regional business aviation.

[Translation]

The government's response tabled in the House last year outlines the government measures designed to respond to the committee's recommendations. They are organized into four categories.

[English]

I look forward to speaking, during questions and answers, on those four categories.

[Translation]

The first category is financial support, both direct and for research and development. The second is support for skills development and training. The third is support through procurement and the fourth is support through strengthened regulations.

Under each category, the government response highlights which committee recommendation is being addressed and provides examples of programs and initiatives to support Canada's aerospace sector.

[English]

I want to take the last little while to thank the aerospace industry and highlight the impact that the industry has had on my own province of Nova Scotia. At the beginning, I spoke about IMP Aerospace & Defence, a proud Canadian organization that really has great local roots in my own backyard in Nova Scotia.

Last year, a number of my Nova Scotian colleagues and I had the opportunity to tour the hangar at the Halifax Stanfield International Airport. We met with employees working, maintaining and upgrading planes and helicopters used in search and rescue operations to extend their lifespan. We spoke directly to them and to the executive there. These are great-paying, middle-class local jobs for people who live in our communities.

Routine Proceedings

I will highlight one person in particular because he stuck out in my mind. I do not believe I ever met him before, but his name was Mr. Keith Toon. He recognized my name through one of my daughters who plays soccer. She started playing soccer before she was five years of age. He was a soccer coach for decades. My daughter grew up to be a competitive soccer player, ending up playing university soccer; she is now on the women's soccer team.

What I am saying is that this highlights the significance of these employees and others working in these good jobs in our own communities. They are doing great work by volunteering and giving back. Yes, the aerospace industry is very critical in our province and in our country.

• (1215)

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I also thank my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue, who led this debate this morning. It is really very important.

There are many leading aerospace industries in Longueuil, including Héroux-Devtek and Pratt & Whitney, not to mention the École nationale d'aérotechnique.

Héroux-Devtek manufactures landing gear, and we like to say that Longueuil set foot on the moon before Neil Armstrong, since the Apollo 11 landing gear was made in Longueuil. That is very, very important to us.

We have an airport back home. In recent years, I held a public consultation on the development of the Saint-Hubert airport.

Development is important. We spoke about it at length this morning. Having said that, it is important that any development respect the people living there and have social licence. The industry creates a lot of air and noise pollution, especially for small regional airports.

An innovation hub is being set up in Longueuil. We are also establishing a cutting-edge industry focusing on the development of electric motors, in particular electric batteries. The Government of Quebec will probably invest in it.

I would like to know if my colleague could support this project to ensure that the federal government contributes financially, which would make our little airport a leading-edge airport and a really strategic airport—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): When I give the signal, I expect members to finish their sentence so that we can move on.

The hon. member for Halifax West.

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab: Madam Speaker, I really appreciate my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert. We worked together in the area of francophone affairs. I am very proud to be in the House with him this morning and to answer his question. I know that he is a proud Quebecker.

[English]

The Government of Canada looks forward very much to working with all colleagues from Quebec and those from all the other provinces in the House of Commons.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, like my hon. colleague, I have aerospace companies in my riding. I have Airbus Helicopters. Throughout the country, Airbus employs 4,000 people, including 250 in my riding alone. Airbus Helicopters has been in my community for almost 40 years. Dwayne Charette, the president and COO of Airbus Helicopters, spoke during committee hearings on this specific issue. He identified the disconnect between post-secondary educational offerings and the type of advanced manufacturing skills required in the aerospace sector.

Could the member talk about the need for the government to create a program or to respond to the gap that exists between educational institutions and advanced manufacturing companies in the aerospace sector?

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the very important question. He is definitely correct that education is key. It is key for our younger people, and quite frankly, for anybody of any age.

These industries are specialized, and we need to create a lot more opportunities to take advantage of the great colleges, universities and programs that we have across Canada. The Government of Canada very much looks forward to working with our provincial partners and educational institutions to do exactly that.

• (1220)

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have a question that directly relates to recommendation 3 of the committee's report.

It is no secret that Canadian aerospace has benefited workers right across the country, but there is certainly an economy that exists within aerospace beyond just the navigation of these flights; for example, there is the actual maintenance of the equipment. It is important that we support, invest and actually find ways to have local, domestic manufacturers produce some of these parts.

Does the member agree that recommendation 3 has aspects of what we need to see?

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab: Madam Speaker, I absolutely agree. Any time we can invest in anything that we can grow locally, we should be doing so. I am definitely for everything local that we can do. It is better for our people, our communities and our country.

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to address the issue of the aerospace and aviation industry. I grew up in Montreal, and my family and I were always aware of the existence of this industry, particularly when we went down what was then called Laurentien Boulevard in Cartierville. There was even an airport attached to the Canadair plant.

Routine Proceedings

Now it has become a residential area, but it was very impressive to go by that plant. In fact, I believe that, today, it is by far the biggest manufacturing plant in Montreal. My father worked for Canadair after the war, in the 1950s, when Canadair specialized in manufacturing aircraft for putting out forest fires. I have always been aware of the aerospace industry.

However, I am rather confused as to why the decision was made to discuss this report now. If I am not mistaken, this report is over a year old and the government has already issued a response to it, as it is required to do when a committee report is tabled. It is my understanding that we are supposed to be debating Bill C-27, which deals with some issues that are very important at present.

The purpose of this bill to modernize our privacy protection laws in a context where we are increasingly seeing the danger of the spread of disinformation. It is a growing and current challenge that threatens the very foundation of democracy. Bill C-27 is timely. I think it addresses rather crucial issues for our society.

That being said, I would like to turn to the subject at hand, which is the aviation and aerospace industry.

In Montreal, this industry has a long and extraordinary history. It goes back nearly a century. Montreal in particular played a key role in the Second World War. I have before me an article from the *Hamilton Spectator* dated September 7, 1939. I will read a few paragraphs from this article. It will become clear that Canada and Quebec, but especially Montreal, were instrumental in the war effort in Europe. This article is from New York.

• (1225)

[English]

A sharp expansion in Canadian airplane manufacture is expected as a result of President Roosevelt's proclamation of the United States Neutrality Act, the *New York Herald-Tribune* says today....

The neutrality proclamation has cut off for the time being at least the delivery of nearly half of the 600 warplanes ordered in the United States by France, Great Britain and Australia.

"The embargo proclamation, however, does not interfere with the manufacture of similar planes in Canada under licences already obtained by the Dominion's manufacturers from American firms," the dispatch says.

Basically, what was happening was that the United States was not allowed to export fully built airplanes to Europe to help with the war effort, but it was not prohibited from sending parts to Canada and having Canadian manufacturers manufacture the planes and send them over to Europe.

There were two important manufacturers in Montreal that were doing this manufacturing for overseas markets. One was Vickers, which, as I understand, later became Canadair, and the other was Fairchild Aircraft, which I believe was located on the South Shore, in the riding of Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, which became, after that, United Aircraft, and then Pratt & Whitney.

Another Montreal company was involved in this wartime production, and that was the Canadian Car and Foundry Company. That company was founded in 1909. It was given a contract to produce Hurricane aircraft. By 1943, the company had a workforce of 4,500 people, half of them women, I might add, and had built 1,400 aircraft, about 10% of all the Hurricanes built worldwide.

I would like to take a moment to mention the company's chief engineer, a woman by the name of Elsie MacGill. Let me tell members a bit about Elsie MacGill. She was known as the "Queen of the Hurricanes", and she was the world's first woman to earn an aeronautical engineering degree and the first woman in Canada to receive a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. She worked as an aeronautical engineer during World War II and did much to make Canada a powerhouse of aircraft construction during her years at the Canadian Car and Foundry.

We can see, very clearly, that Montreal and Quebec and Canada played an extraordinarily large role in the development of aerospace and aeronautics. Montreal is the home of IATA, the International Air Transport Association, which governs procedures, rules and regulations around commercial transport in the world. It is an international organization.

I would also like to mention that Dorval Airport basically started as part of the war effort that saw planes built in Montreal and other parts of Canada and shipped over to Europe. Dorval Airport, now known as Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport, and I say that very proudly, was where the Ferry Command was based. The Ferry Command was a process by which planes would leave from Dorval and fly to England. These airplanes were being delivered to the air force over there.

Montreal has an extremely rich history, and throughout that history it has built up an industrial cluster or an industrial ecosystem.

Because next week is Tourism Week, I would also like to mention, in passing, that in my riding of Lac-Saint-Louis we have the Montreal Aviation Museum, which I invite members to visit because they will learn all about Montreal's and Canada's aviation history.

• (1230)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I used to be on the board of the Alberta Aviation Museum, so I invite my colleague to come to Edmonton to see probably one of the very best aviation museums. We actually have a Super Sabre there, which I believe is the first physical plane to break the sound barrier in Canada.

Getting back to the maritime surveillance aircraft that Canada is looking to procure and sole-source, does the member believe that the government should be going to an open competition, perhaps to see if there are Canadian companies or more jobs created in Canada for that, rather than simply sole-sourcing it to the U.S.?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, I hope to some day have the opportunity to visit that museum; I am sure it is quite impressive.

Routine Proceedings

In terms of the surveillance plane, my understanding is that a decision has not been made. It is not a file that I follow as closely as perhaps my colleague and others do. What I am hoping for and what I believe will happen is that the government will put together an approach to make sure that wherever the plane is manufactured, there are economic benefits for Canada. I trust and hope that will be the case.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Lac-Saint-Louis for his speech.

I would like to know whether he is prepared to get personally involved and pressure his party and the Liberal government to put in place a truly national aerospace strategy.

Would he support recommendation 1 to create a centre for excellence on aeronautics 4.0, along with college and university centres of expertise in the field, so it can increase our research and development capacity and Montreal's small and medium-sized ecosystem as a whole? I think that Montreal would be quite willing to house such a centre.

Can I count on my colleague's support?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, as a member from the Montreal area, I support any investment that strengthens the region's economy.

I do not follow this file as closely as my colleague does, but I believe the government issued a report last summer on the state of the Canadian aerospace industry. I assume this report provided an overview of the industry's economic impact.

I expect the report will be used as a basis for a future strategic approach to this industrial sector.

[English]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to speak specifically about recommendation 5, in relation to a national strategy. It is no secret that it is needed right across the country. Canadians deserve an aerospace sector that actually delivers not just for consumers and for our country, but also for the workers within it. Especially with the economic conditions of the country right now, where we are seeing signals of a recession, we need to actually see management and labour come together in better ways so there will be a benefit for everyone. We know the government sometimes struggles with ensuring that labour and management co-operate. We are seeing that right now; we just need to look outside, not too far.

What are the member's thoughts on ensuring that we actually see a national strategy that brings all these partners together in a fair and consistent way?

• (1235)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, this is a good question, but it presumes that the government has not been making strategic investments all these years in the industry, and it has. It is part of an evolving approach that becomes a strategy over time.

In terms of labour-management relations, I am not familiar with problems in that relationship, but I am sure industry and labour work pretty closely together, and I hope they continue to work closely together to promote the industry and make it stronger in Canada.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is an exciting time for aerospace. Just this morning, we got to watch Starship, SpaceX's newest project, live in our office. Starship is twice as big as the Saturn V rockets, with 35 rocket engines. It blasted off this morning from Boca Chica, Texas. It went almost into space and unfortunately got caught in a spiral and kept going around and around before they had to hit the self-destruct button. It reminds me a bit of the Liberal government, but that is a story for another time. It is very exciting, because we are seeing private space companies in the U.S., and of course representing the whole world, involved in space travel.

With respect to another story, the Artemis II crew was announced a couple of weeks ago, including Canadian Space Agency astronaut and RCAF captain Jeremy Hansen. It is very exciting that we have a Canadian astronaut joining the U.S. on the Artemis missions as we go back to the moon. That is something we can be very proud of.

From the field of engineering that deals with the design, development, production and operation of vehicles and systems that operate in the earth's atmosphere or in space, Canada has a dynamic industry with aircraft, spacecraft, satellite and missile systems, which of course we call the aerospace sector. I know that many of our colleagues have talked about great companies that are operating here in Canada, including in Montreal and other parts of the country, all working on different systems in the aerospace sector.

Let us be clear on this, and this report is very clear: We need to get back to the basics. The Canadian aerospace sector is not broken, but the government's role is. In my last point, I am going to talk about what this report really spoke about and what we need to do.

Number one, we need to identify aerospace as a pillar of Canadian industrial policy again. We have seen it blanketed. We have a term that we hear from experts and from witnesses all the time when we are talking about the spectrum of industrial policy. It is that we spread the peanut butter too thin. In Canada, we seem to think that we are just going to give everything to everyone and that at the end of the day maybe that is going to be a really good strategy with which Canada evolves, but it is not. We seem to spread it all too thin. Aerospace is one of those industries in Canada that we can afford to put more into, and we are going to get more out of it. I am going to talk specifically about that.

Before I do that, I want to say that I am happily splitting my time today with the member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

The second part is very important. When we talk about aerospace, it means that we put an emphasis on research and development and first-stage innovation. When we talk about other sectors in Canada where we need to succeed, it is about putting an emphasis on first-stage innovation, research and development, because when we put an emphasis on research and development, we are getting something out of that.

Something that we are also studying in the science and research committee right now is owning what we create or commercializing our IP. When we are looking at all these strategies, there is not just one thing we have to do. We have to do all these complex things at the same time, but we really need to commercialize IP and put more money into research, and then of course focus on aerospace as being one of those industries. Part of that is going to be deregulating the industry. Also, what is probably most important is establishing a national procurement strategy to support defence and the aerospace sector. I really want to focus on that last point first, because it is the most important.

The Washington Post had an article yesterday that was really concerning because it mentioned that the Prime Minister told NATO that Canada will never meet its spending goal. That is very concerning. Canada's widespread military deficiencies are harming ties with security partners and allies. These shortfalls lead the Canadian Armed Forces to not be able to participate fully across the world. We have had really big problems with not meeting our commitments with NATO and our commitments across the world.

The Americans are concerned about our ability to protect our Arctic against Russian and Chinese aggression. The Germans are concerned about whether Canada will continue to aid Ukraine. Turkey is disappointed by the Canadian military not being funded enough to support transport of humanitarian aid when it had an earthquake earlier last month. Haiti is frustrated by Ottawa's reluctance to lead a multinational security mission.

• (1240)

However, this is the biggest glaring hole in economic opportunity. Other nations, like Germany, the U.K., Australia and the U.S., have figured out how to make defence policy industrial policy, and have that policy create powerful paycheques to their citizens and proud, private enterprises that provide income to their countries. This is what Canada needs to do, and what it needs to do with defence when it relates to aerospace.

The key differential between our approach to defence policy and the British approach is that industry is included in the definition of defence policy from the outset. By the time the British defence and security policy is stable, most of the companies selected to deliver the products and services have already been identified as part of a defence strategy and then a procurement strategy.

In 2017, 56% of the U.K. procurement was sole-sourced with a large majority awarded to the British industry providing billions to the country's GDP. How does that relate to Canada and the aerospace industry? Well, let us look at our neighbour south of us and, of course, to the rocket launch this morning.

A really big stat is from NASA, which has a bigger budget than Canada's defence budget as a whole. When we look at SpaceX, a

Routine Proceedings

private industry, 85% of its budget comes from NASA. When we talk about that rocket this morning exploding, probably bad news for Elon Musk, but great news for the engineers and part of the product, because they are going to build a new rocket and try again. That is part of first-stage innovation with companies. They are going to put more of that money into those industries. The thousands of engineers, product designers and workers, as I alluded to earlier, who are part of that process is just astounding as well as the GDP that is put back from it.

One side note is that SpaceX is involved with Starlink, and that American company, funded, of course, by the defence policy and NASA, is actually providing Internet to Canadians. Hundreds of thousands of Canadians are getting Internet not from Canadian companies but from the U.S. company Starlink, from Elon Musk, which is a part again of this procurement policy that was started by NASA. NASA funds 85% of SpaceX and no doubt will be funding all new projects for space going forward.

We can see how defence spending ends up being a Canadian prosperity plan. It is good for Canadians and powerful paycheques, and it also can be, of course, a great industrial policy.

I want to go back to R and D and what we used to have.

We used to have a couple of programs with the Conservative government, prior to the Liberal government, like SADI and AIAC that were specific to the aerospace sector. Again, those specific programs went into research and development for the sector for certain companies.

We had a witness come to the committee from Héroux-Devtek Inc., Mr. Gilles Labbé, who talked about a landing gear process. This is a company in Quebec that had a landing gear project, and when he talked about the project, he talked about a ticket that normally costs between \$50 million and \$70 million U.S. with the process taking as long as five years. Through those SADI programs that we used to have from the government, that was almost entirely funded by the government. It helped that company save five years and evolve. That company went from having 200 employees to now over 2,000 employees. What happened with that R and D program is that the SADI was evolved into the SIF program. However, again, with that peanut butter spread too thin, the SIF program looks at many different industries and not aerospace specifically or targeted specifically. What has happened is that those companies are finding they are missing out on that first-stage innovation and the R and D.

Routine Proceedings

When we look at R and D as a specific purpose of industrial policy, what we should be looking at are examples such as DARPA advanced manufacturing in the U.S. and, of course, looking at specific sectors. Again, to my point, aerospace needs to be a specific sector that we put R and D into, and when we look at procurement policies, we should certainly see it as a bright future and Canadian industrial policy, which is the only way we are going to help this industry succeed.

We have a lot of different issues that we need to look at across the defence spectrum, but certainly aerospace is going to be able to fulfill that. As Canadians, we certainly need to reach for the stars and start looking at aerospace again as not just an industry but a major industry for industrial policy, research and development, procurement policy and, again, looking at investing in defence and linking that to the aerospace industry to ensure that Canada succeeds, those workers succeed and those companies succeed.

• (1245)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I could not help but notice that the member made reference to Elon Musk and the fact that his SpaceX company's rocket blew up, which he says is good news, because that means more research and technology. The member seems to be a big fan of the private sector.

Now, I am thinking, and I am sure my colleague, the member for Abbotsford, is thinking too just wait a minute. John Diefenbaker, on the Avro Arrow, destroyed the program, which was not good news. All this science and technology and advances have been lost as a result of a bad decision by a former prime minister.

Does the member not recognize that maybe the government does have a role to play in terms of research and technology, something that we have been doing and supporting in the aerospace industry for the last number of years as a government, or does he believe that the private sector, people like Elon Musk, is better off to advance the aerospace industry?

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, Elon Musk is doing great things.

I wish the member had listened to a bit more of my speech. The government has a role. The problem is the government has not been playing the role it needs to with the industry. The industry has spoken to our committee, and the industry has stated that it wants the government's role to be more in R&D and target specific, and that government should announce aerospace is a growing, specific, major sector for Canadian industrial policy. Then it should play the role it needs to. At first-stage innovation, government should put money into growing companies, and then let the private sector commercialize the IP of those companies and make all the money they can, so they provide paycheques to Canadians.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, I also want to share my surprise at the defence of Elon Musk and the SpaceX rocket that just blew up. While there was some reference to that being problematic, we need to cycle back and recognize that Elon Musk and anyone seeking to profit off space or space exploration is very problematic.

We need to be talking about what is in the interest of the public good. Speaking about Elon Musk, I also want to acknowledge, besides aerospace, this is somebody who is making major profits off communities, particularly in our riding, when it comes to the service delivery of Internet. That is because the federal government has abdicated its responsibility. Both Conservative and Liberal governments have failed to deliver accessible, affordable, quality Internet to so many communities in our region.

It is time for the federal government to step up on aerospace and on Internet provision. Will the member recognize that we should not be here defending Elon Musk, and instead we should be defending Canada's role in seeking the public good when it comes to space?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I think it is very disrespectful that a lot of parliamentarians are having side conversations when someone else has the floor. I would say that if they want to have those conversations, they should take them out into the lobby.

The hon. member for Bay of Quinte.

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, we could get into debate about whether socialism is really something that provides wealth to its citizens or just takes away from its citizens.

On this side of the House we really believe in private capital and a capitalist society that has been beneficial to Canadians. Its powerful paycheques could provide wealth to Canadians, instead of having the government run deficit after deficit until Canadians are broke. Certainly this country is broken.

We really believe in the private sector, and that Canadians can and will create good jobs, great ideas and provide powerful paycheques for their own citizens, for the people here in Canada. Conservatives will always stand on the side of those citizens.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague on the other side mentioned the Avro Arrow project several times. The project was scrapped by Mr. Diefenbaker, but the initial push to sideline it began under St. Laurent's Liberal government.

The current Liberal government has also ignored an airline that wanted to develop the aviation sector further by supplying aircraft. Instead, the government turned to a U.S. company that played a role in the demise of the Avro Arrow.

What are my colleague's thoughts on the matter?

• (1250)

[English]

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, I agree. The whole point is we need to look at Canadian companies and Canada's role in contributing to the aerospace sector, not only in Canada but in North America.

Routine Proceedings

We have a lot of great companies that already contribute to some of the procurement projects that are happening in the U.S. Let us face it, there are a lot of procurement projects coming from the U.S. that we can contribute to, that we should be playing a greater role in, not just a small role but a bigger role.

The government's role is to ensure that we have the research and development, and to ensure that we have the funding for first-stage innovation. Then, it is the private sector's role to develop and commercialize that next sector, so they could carry it on. That is what we want to happen. That is what we are going to have under a Conservative government.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to follow such a great speech from my colleague from Bay of Quinte.

I would remind those watching at home and my constituents what we are discussing today. Today we are discussing a report done by the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology of the House of Commons, entitled "Development and Support of the Aerospace Industry". It was tabled in this Parliament in June 2022, but is actually a study that spans two Parliaments. It was started in the last Parliament before the last election when the now Conservative leader was the vice-chair of the committee and then continued in this Parliament after COVID. It is quite a span of time, but affects a lot of the tone and position of where the industry is.

I should start by saying that we are all mentioning aerospace companies within our regions or ridings. There is a company in my riding, the beautiful UNESCO heritage town called Lunenburg, which everyone may have heard of. The company is called Stelia North America, which makes parts for the Airbus 737 Max and the F-35 aircraft. Unfortunately, because of the dithering by the government on the purchasing of the aircraft that it said it was not going to buy and now has ended up buying, a lot of jobs were lost in that interim period in Lunenburg that it now has to try get back since the government is now going to buy the aircraft it said it was not going to buy.

It is important to understand what has happened to this industry. There is a really interesting section in this report, on page 6, that says, "Canada's aerospace sector had fallen from the fifth-largest in the world in the 1980s to the ninth largest." It goes on to say, "Canada was once the fourth-largest aircraft manufacturer but it has dropped to the 12th". Recommendation 5 in the report has been mentioned before, which talks about having an aerospace strategy. There were aerospace strategies in previous governments that led us to be a much larger player in the world than we are now, but in the last eight years of the Liberal government, we have not had any strategies, and that is what this unanimous report points out in recommendation 5. I would point out that the Liberals agreed with this, too.

After eight years, what has been the Liberal strategy? The Liberal strategy was to bring in a luxury tax on aircraft. That was their strategy because they have never met a tax they did not like. In fact, the Minister of Finance said, when she introduced it last year, that this would make the wealthy pay their fair share. However, the reality is that when we look at the numbers and the performance of the industry, the cost of this tax is actually being borne by the workers

in the aerospace industry, not by the corporations. I will go through that in a few minutes.

There was a report done by an economist out of Montreal, Jacques Roy, who works for HEC, an economic think tank in Montreal. He talks about that tax, which was introduced on September 1, 2022, by the Liberals, and the impact it had. The tax revenues expected from the new aircraft tax he says are negligible. A May 2022 Parliamentary Budget Officer report estimated the tax on cars, planes and boats, which were all included in that tax, would raise \$163 million in 2023-24, but only an insignificant \$9 million of this total was expected to come from the aircraft tax. The PBO also projected an annual reduction in aircraft sales, as a result of that tax, of \$30 million. Obviously, the impact is much greater on jobs and the economy than the tax benefits the government.

That tax also affects the reputation of our industry. The PBO cautioned that estimates were qualified by several uncertainties and unknown behavioural responses to the tax. There are always behavioural responses to taxes when they are brought in. This economist did a deeper dive into the impacts of that tax, and I will share with the House what the findings of that were.

• (1255)

It has a qualification that it has to be 90% business use in order to be exempted from the tax. That has proven to be unworkable because the jets that companies like Bombardier sell are not used by that company 100% of the time. Because of the way those jets are utilized, the qualification does not apply to the businesses. Commentators have noted that the 90% threshold is harsh in comparison with the primary use standard; in other countries that have done this, this is usually only 50%. This is commonly used in the United States and Europe as an alternative source of determining whether the tax applies to the jets.

The PBO's research expressed a concern about the narrowness of the exception. Although the tax targets aircraft sold to private individuals for nonbusiness use, it also applies in practice to situations involving mixed use; that is, for some business use and some personal use where it cannot be confidently determined that the 90% test has been met. In this regard, it is important to understand the unique practices of the aerospace sector. Buyers of business jets and helicopters usually outsource the management, servicing and maintenance of these aircraft to management and leasing companies. Even owners who acquire a jet principally for business purposes, and do not intend for it to be used for personal purposes, will face considerable difficulty in determining whether that 90% test applies. They will ask leasing companies to rent the aircraft out to other customers when they are not using them.

Routine Proceedings

This is where the issue comes into play. Canadian-based leasing companies may rent these aircraft to U.S.-based charter brokers. They, in turn, may charter the aircraft for their own clients. The person who is subrenting or leasing it may use the aircraft for business or personal use. Very limited information, if any, is available to the owner regarding the other uses of the aircraft in these circumstances, partially because of privacy laws. It may therefore be quite challenging, if not impossible, to determine whether the purpose of the trips taken in such cases is business or personal. That makes the determination of whether the 90% test has been met especially difficult.

According to the PBO's interviews in doing this research, the introduction of the luxury tax has already had a huge impact. The negative reaction from clients has translated into lost sales for Canadian aerospace manufacturers and their supply chain. It is estimated that the business aircraft segment experienced a drop of 8% in sales in 2022 because of the tax. This represents roughly \$480 million in lost sales. That figure is significantly higher than the \$30 million projected by the Parliamentary Budget Officer. He estimated that this drop in sales would result in the loss of approximately 750 direct jobs in Canada. The estimate is based on the number of direct jobs required to produce the aircraft for which sales have been lost. Personal income taxes paid by just these individuals exceeded the annual revenues expected by the government from the luxury tax.

For helicopters, research indicates that private individuals are likely to postpone or abandon the purchase of approximately five new helicopters per year or to buy a used model. This will result in the loss of 15 full-time jobs and lost annual salaries of approximately \$1.3 million.

The impact of lost sales also ripples down through the aerospace industry and supply chain. For business jets alone, it is estimated that the loss of 750 direct jobs will cause the loss of an additional 1,200 jobs in the industry's Canadian supply chain. The PBO estimates that these workers' personal income taxes at the federal level alone will be approximately \$14.3 million.

In my view, these figures are fairly conservative. They would be much higher if we were to add the figures for all of the indirect and induced job losses in the industry. These figures also underestimate the impact of the maintenance, repair and overhaul activities on other small and medium-sized enterprises not interviewed in the course of the research.

I am running out of time, so I will just say that the strategy called for in this report is a strategy to tax. That is the only one we have after eight years with the Liberal government. That is where the government goes to, and the result will be massive job and economic losses for our country.

• (1300)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that is not true. Through procurements, contracts and the enhancement of skills and during the pandemic, we have seen direct and indirect supports to Canada's aerospace industry. The government has consistently, from day one, recognized the importance of the industry and invested appropriately and accordingly.

What surprises me to a certain degree is what the Conservative member is saying about having a luxury tax applied to the wealthiest. Many Canadians believe in paying taxes but say that it should be fair. It is just like when we brought in a tax increase for Canada's wealthiest 1%, which the Conservatives voted against.

What does the Conservative Party of Canada have against Canada's wealthiest 1% having to pay a fair share of taxes?

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, what the Conservative Party is against is taxes that kill jobs and kill industry, which is the habit of the government. I just went through a speech saying that over 750 jobs had already been lost in the aerospace and jet-manufacturing industries because of the government. If that is support for an industry, I do not want support for anything I do in the future.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague and fellow vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology for his powerful speech today.

I would like to know whether he would agree, as per recommendation 2, that the government put in place significant financial incentives for basic research, to develop a greener aircraft and expertise in the energy transition of this industry through green technologies.

I would add to that the importance of having predictable funding. Predictability is absolutely essential for this industry. There needs to be a national aerospace policy that will allow us to ensure sustainable funding for the next 15 or 20 years, because that is how many years of R and D it takes to build an aircraft.

[English]

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, I enjoy sitting on the industry committee with the member. We are doing good, collegial work together on it.

On that particular issue, I absolutely agree. Part of the challenge of what happened when the government created the strategic investment fund, or SIF, program is that it collapsed other tax credits for specific industries to help with the very issue the member is talking about. That issue is that the government lost the sectoral focus in how to support the aerospace industry on issues like greening the engines and the fuel usage of aircraft in Canada. This is another thing the government has done to hurt the aerospace industry.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, in this place, I find it is often our goal to disagree without being disagreeable. I believe this member often does that in an extraordinary way, and I respect him for that.

However, I do have comments directed to the many lengthy speeches the Conservatives have made today and the great appetite they have for the companies that are seeking federal funds. They often talk in this place about how evil socialism is or how evil it is to help regular, everyday people in this country. However, when companies come to the table asking for money, whether it is big oil companies, big banks, or in this case, aerospace mega-companies, all of a sudden, they are for it.

Whether in tax breaks or other means of revenue generation, it is like coming to the government trough. How does the member reconcile the fact that his party is so willing to support massive corporations but does not allow that same opportunity for single moms, persons with disabilities or those who need the government's support most?

• (1305)

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, I will first answer the part about why we do not support socialism. It is because it has failed everywhere and reduced economies to totalitarian regimes. Everywhere socialism has been tried as a government entity, we have seen less freedom. That is why we do not support it. We think freedom creates opportunity, and the capitalist system produces the opportunity and the profit incentive that moves—

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I must interrupt the member.

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

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, the interpreters are saying that there is a lot of interference when my colleague speaks. I do not know whether it is because there is a device or a phone near the microphone, but the interpreters have indicated several times now that there is frequent interference.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the point of order.

I also mentioned yesterday that it is very important for members who are speaking or asking questions to make sure that they put their phones on silent or somewhere other than their lecterns, because the microphones definitely pick up sound.

This is hard on interpreters, and we want to make sure they can work safely.

[English]

The hon. member has 30 seconds to finish his response.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, I think I dealt with the socialism part well.

On the capitalist side, the profit incentive creates invention, which is what moves society forward. That is why the member has an iPhone or Samsung phone in his pocket that he uses to help him do his job. That is why he has a Microsoft Surface laptop from the House of Commons, a nice thin computer, to do his job. Those things are all inventions created by a capitalism profit motive.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from South Shore—St. Margarets for his comment with respect to Liberal government support. Indus-

try is always saying, “With a government like that, who needs enemies?”

He touched upon the so-called luxury tax. The Aerospace Industries Association of Canada figures that it is going to cost about 3,000 jobs. When asked about this, the finance minister said that such losses are “negligible”. What government has ever been so out of touch that a finance minister tells 3,000 people in the middle class, who are earning good wages, that their job loss is negligible? This is what we have seen from the government again and again. It attacks businesses and regular, everyday Canadians for ideological reasons.

The government again stated, with respect to the 3,000 lost jobs, that the wealthy have to pay their fair share. With the current government, every time it asks people to pay their fair share, the middle class and the little guy bear the brunt of its incompetence. We do not need a national strategy for aerospace; we need a national strategy to replace the incompetent, out-of-touch Liberal government.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is on the motion.

[English]

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

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, it is with great pride and enthusiasm that I recommend that the House unanimously adopt this report in which, for the first time, the House of Commons, an authority of the Government of Canada, will recommend the adoption of a national aerospace strategy.

• (1310)

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

*Government Orders***PETITIONS****HAZARAS**

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have been waiting all day to present a petition on behalf of my constituents. They are calling on the Government of Canada to recognize the ongoing genocide and persecution by the Taliban of the Hazara ethnic minority in Afghanistan. They are calling on the government to prioritize Hazaras coming to Canada as part of its target of 40,000 people by the end of the year.

* * *

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 at this time.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

WAYS AND MEANS**BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1**

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (for the Minister of Finance): moved that a ways and means motion to introduce an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, and other measures be concurred in.

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

[English]

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

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

• (1355)

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

(Division No. 299)

YEAS**Members**

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett

Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Gaheer
Garrison	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lattanzio
Lauson	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Masse
Mathyssen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Miao	Miller
Morrice	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
O'Connell	Oliphant
Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Singh	Sorbara
Sousa	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thompson
Trudeau	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Virani
Vuong	Weiler

Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 169

Yip
Zarrillo

NAYS

Members

Aboultiaf
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Beaulieu
Berthold
Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas
Bragdon
Brock
Calkins
Carrie
Chambers
Chong
Dalton
Davidson
Deltell
Desbiens
Doherty
Dreeshen
Ellis
Falk (Provencher)
Ferrerri
Fortin
Garon
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Gourde
Hallan
Jeneroux
Kitchen
Kram
Kusie
Lantsman
Lawrence
Lemire
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
Maguire
Mazier
McLean
Michaud
Morantz
Muys
Normandin
Patzner
Perkins
Poilievre
Reid
Richards
Rood
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shields
Simard
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Thomas
Tolmie
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bergeron
Bérubé
Blanchet
Block
Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe
Caputo
Chabot
Champoux
Cooper
Dancho
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Gallant
Gaudreau
Genuis
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Hoback
Kelly
Kmieciak
Kurek
Lake
Larouche
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Moore
Motz
Nater
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Plamondon
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Scheer
Seebach
Shiple
Small
Steinley
Stewart
Stubbs
Therrien
Tochor
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure

Statements by Members

Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer— 140

PAIRED

Members

Barsalou-Duval
Dzerowicz
Kramp-Neuman
Morrison
Pauzé
Qualtrough
Bibeau
Epp
Martinez Ferrada
O'Regan
Perron
Serré— 12

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[Translation]

Hon. Randy Boissonnault moved that Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, be read the first time and printed.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, we have known, since 2006, that toxic effluents around the oil sands cause an increased cancer rate in indigenous peoples. We have known for two decades that toxic contaminants within the oil sands are reaching the Athabasca River.

We have known these things, and for 10 months this year, Imperial Oil knew that their tailings ponds were leaking, yet they failed to tell or warn the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, the Mikisew Cree First Nation, the Dene peoples or the Métis downstream. These things we know. However, these things are not exactly leaks. We need to understand that the 225 square kilometres that represent the oil sands, the tailing ponds, do not contain waste. It is not that they leak; it is that they do not work.

When will someone go to jail for criminal negligence in taking the lives of indigenous peoples?

* * *

EID AL-FITR

Mr. Paul Chiang (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this Friday, April 21, or Saturday, April 22, based on the moon sighting, Muslims across the world, including several members of the House and many of my constituents in Markham—Unionville, will celebrate Eid al-Fitr.

Eid al-Fitr marks the end of the month of Ramadan, when Muslims fast daily from dawn to dusk, participate in communal prayers and give back to their communities. Eid celebrations traditionally last three days, starting with a special prayer on Eid morning. The festivities include sharing meals, giving gifts and spending time with family, friends and community.

Statements by Members

To all of the Muslims who will be celebrating Eid al-Fitr this week, from my family to their family, *Eid Mubarak*.

* * *

● (1400)

KEN GRAHAM

Mr. Earl Dreesen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last Saturday in my home town of Innisfail, we celebrated the amazing life of a long-time beloved family physician, Dr. Ken Graham.

Born in Monaghan, Ireland, into a farming family, he attended Trinity College in Dublin for his medical training. Dr. Graham and his wife, Phyllis, immigrated to Canada in 1958. He started his career in Calgary at the Holy Cross Hospital before coming to Innisfail in 1959. During his short time in Calgary, he worked alongside orthopaedic surgeon and Calgary Stampeder, Dr. Vince Murphy. Years later, together, they saved my shattered leg and healed my crippled body. Many other patients speak of similar touching experiences.

Dr. Ken loved rural life and incorporated that passion into his 40-year practice. He was renowned for his diagnostic excellence and compassionate care. His farming roots, and his love of Charolais cattle, pheasant hunting, curling and fishing, further endeared him to our community and truly made him a man of the people.

We are so fortunate that he and his family made Innisfail their home. May Dr. Graham rest in peace.

* * *

EARTH DAY

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak about our planet, as April 22 marks Earth Day. Now, more than ever, we must recognize the importance of protecting our natural environment and combating climate change.

My riding of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill is home to many hectares of the greenbelt, as well as the ecologically diverse Oak Ridges Moraine. I am proud of local organizations such as the York Region Environmental Alliance, Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust, MapleCross, the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition and many more who work tirelessly, advocating for the health of our planet.

Additionally, I would like to thank members of the York Region delegation who are here in Ottawa, including Mayor West and Mayor Mrakas from my riding, and my brother, Mayor Taylor of Newmarket, for their commitment to integrating ecological and environmental considerations into all aspects of municipal and regional development.

The theme of Earth Day 2023 is “Invest in Our Planet”. The House has certainly heard much about our government's investments in a sustainable green economy, but we can all invest individually through the decisions we make in everyday life, by raising awareness about climate change or simply by taking a moment to spend in nature. For my part, I will be in Richmond Hill and Aurora with volunteers to help clean up local parks and streets. I encourage all members to similarly engage.

We must remember that we only have one home, our Earth, and it needs all of us to make its health a priority.

* * *

[Translation]

YVES MICHAUD

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I want to pay tribute to a great constituent and a great Quebecker. I recently had the pleasure of bestowing, with my own hands, an honorary plaque acknowledging the full life and career of Yves Michaud.

Originally from Saint-Hyacinthe, he cut his teeth as a war correspondent and editorial writer at Clairon de Saint-Hyacinthe. As such, he was a pioneer in the fight against obscurantism. He then became an MNA with the party of the Quiet Revolution, founder of the newspaper *Le Jour*, which published separatist ideas, diplomat as the delegate general of Quebec in Paris, president and CEO of the Montreal convention centre, precursor of the discovery of good French wine in Quebec and crusader against the abuses of powerful financial corporations as the “Robin Hood of the banks”.

Yves Michaud has conducted his entire life as an unwavering patriot and a proud separatist. He deserves our utmost appreciation and honours from every Parliament.

Thank you for everything, Mr. Michaud.

* * *

JULIE SIGOUIN AND MOHAMMED BARHONE

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Julie Sigouin and Mohammed Barhane are two well-known community leaders who, unfortunately, passed away recently. I would like to honour their memories today, here in the House of Commons of Canada.

Julie was an engaged, tireless and very empathetic individual. She helped improve the lives of people through various community organizations in Montreal North, including Halte-Femmes Montréal-Nord in the riding of Bourassa.

Mohammed was involved in the community for 25 years. At the organization RePère, he helped fathers develop their relationship with their children, mainly in Ahuntsic-Cartierville. He was also an advocate.

On behalf of the citizens of Bourassa and myself, I offer my sincere condolences to their families and loved ones. May they rest in peace.

● (1405)

[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE IN HALIBURTON—KAWARTHA LAKES—BROCK

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak of a tale of two bridges, but, unlike the classic Dickens novel, there are no best of times. There are only the worst of times for the residents of Bolsover and Bobcaygeon. For three long years, two bridges under Parks Canada have been out of service, cutting communities in half.

In Bolsover, residents must drive 20 minutes to re-enter their community just to buy groceries and get the mail. In Bobcaygeon, one of the busiest locks in the Trent-Severn Waterway is covered in tarps, with heaps of twisted, jagged metal leaning against historic monuments, cordoned off by traffic cones and bent metal fences.

Sherry Peel, owner of the iconic Bigley Shoes, says that locals feel trapped and isolated. Taylor and Craig Poole, owners of Buck-eye Marine, lament that there has been little communication and engagement with stakeholders. With no date of completion from Parks Canada, residents are feeling that the government simply does not care about them.

I challenge the minister to listen to those affected by his department's reluctance and finally take action to help these communities.

* * *

TAIWAN

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I had the honour of leading 10 senior parliamentarians to Taiwan. All the while, the People's Republic of China conducted its war games overhead and at sea.

The Taiwanese officials, on the other hand, were effusive in their welcome. From the president and the vice-president, to many other senior ministers, the Taiwanese appreciated the efforts of our delegation of Canadian parliamentarians from all parties to come alongside them during their time of routine bullying by China. President Tsai particularly appreciated the unanimous report of the Canada-China committee on Taiwan relations. We had an opportunity to ceremonially present it to her in person.

Taiwan has become the unfortunate centre of geopolitical tensions. It is important that Canada demonstrate our support for this young democracy, which is standing up for itself and for us against tyrannical bullying.

* * *

EARTH DAY

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this Saturday, April 22, is Earth Day, which was first held in April of 1970.

There are so many ways to get involved and demonstrate support for environmental protection. A few of the things that come to mind are becoming familiar with climate and environmental education, breaking free from single-use plastics, participating in a community cleanup, planting trees or donating funds to support the planting of

Statements by Members

trees, and fighting against fast fashion by supporting sustainable clothing.

There are several community cleanups and tree-plantings taking place in my riding of Oakville North—Burlington this weekend, organized by BurlingtonGreen and The Oakville Community Centre for Peace, Ecology and Human Rights. This year, I will be there with a team once again to take part with our community.

This year's theme is "Invest in Our Planet", and I encourage all members to get out this weekend, get some fresh air and invest in our planet.

* * *

DEREK MEYERS

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we recently lost a good one in Regina. Derek Meyers passed away on March 28. He was 45, he was an oil man, he was a sports broadcaster and he was the MLA for Regina Walsh Acres. Derek's passions were his family, friends and community, and he instilled these traits in his kids.

Derek was one of the most positive and enthusiastic people I have ever met. His brother Darcy summed him up perfectly. With Derek, "It was the journey and the company that mattered, not the destination...It was about enjoying life together, building great memories and adding friends along the way."

Derek's friend Jill said, "The seemingly mundane in Derek's world could become thrilling, joyful and full of ease and laughter."

Derek's sister Brandi compared him to the lightbulb. She wished her brother had not burned so bright because the brightest bulbs always burn out the quickest.

I consider Derek my "where and when" friend. Could he come play in a ball hockey tournament? "I am in. Where and when?" Want to come door-knocking in February? It is -30. "I am in. Where and when?" Hey bud, want to just meet up for a beer and just talk about our families, the Riders, anything but work? "I am in. Where and when?"

Derek had three young kids, loved politics and sports. We had a lot in common. His infectious positivity just made a person feel better.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his partner Laurie, kids Dayn, Sebastian and little Easley.

May my friend rest in peace. I will see him for beers again someday. I am just not sure where and when.

Statements by Members

● (1410)

YORK REGION

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today, proud to represent my community of Newmarket—Aurora and, most important, the broader community of York Region. Home to nine municipalities and over 1.2 million residents, York Region is one of the largest municipalities in Canada.

As a former mayor of Newmarket, I know how important it is for all levels of government to work collaboratively and in partnership with one another. When we work together effectively, we can produce something more significant than any one of us could accomplish on our own.

I want to thank Wayne Emmerson, the chair of the Regional Municipality of York, his staff and their mayors for coming to Ottawa to share their priorities, their issues, their concerns and the opportunities with our government.

Let us continue to work together and accomplish the best for our communities.

* * *

JOHN OOSTROM

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in honour of and in the memory of John Oostrom, the former member of Parliament from the riding of Willowdale, and a long-time resident of Thornhill.

John passed away in early March of this year, leaving behind his wife and constant companion Sigi, three daughters, his grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

John had a story like so many Canadians, immigrating here from the Netherlands to build a home and raise a family in a country with unlimited opportunity, where hard work paid off and service to the community was a calling.

John was a successful businessman before he became the first Dutch-born Canadian elected in the House of Commons.

We recognize John's service to Canada and to the Toronto area, and send our sincere condolences to his family, which attended his funeral this past week in Thornhill.

May he rest in peace.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative leader will never allow federal control over provincial resources.

Since Confederation, then for the west in the prairie transfer agreements and in the 1982 Constitution, resource development is provincial jurisdiction. However, last week, news broke that the Liberal justice minister actually said that he would “commit to looking at” the prairie deal when asked if he would cancel it.

Conservatives and prairie premiers immediately told him to back off from his threat, so then he said, “At no point did I commit... to reviewing” exactly what he committed to look at.

The PM says that this is not what the NDP-Liberal costly coalition means, but, still today, neither he nor any one of them will outright confirm that they will uphold provincial jurisdiction.

After eight years, they have killed billions in major projects, innovation, jobs, indigenous equity and opportunity and forced companies to flee Canada, because they do want control, to shut down parts of it. Their top target is always Alberta. However, an attack on one is a danger to all of us. A strong Alberta means a strong Canada.

Therefore, the Conservatives will fix what they broke, keep westerners and all provinces in control—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Châteauguay—Lacolle.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight that this is National Volunteer Week, a very special time for us to recognize that life in our communities would be much more difficult, less cheerful and less united without the thousands of dedicated individuals who give of themselves to so many organizations and associations.

I would like to commend them and thank them for their generosity and dedication. Whether in community, sports, recreational or cultural groups, their work is essential. I especially commend all those who volunteer in the very active riding of Châteauguay—Lacolle.

I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight the outpouring of solidarity and mutual assistance shown by residents and first responders during the recent ice storm in our region.

* * *

[English]

LADYSMITH SECONDARY SCHOOL

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, I want to take a moment to celebrate an incredible group of improv students and their coach, William Taylor, from Ladysmith Secondary School.

Ladysmith Secondary has long supported creativity and expression through one of theatre's most challenging art forms, improvisation. This style of performance bridges quick thinking with storytelling, creating magic for audiences and performers alike.

In February, the team's talent collaborations and lots of practice led to a win at the Vancouver Island improv competition. As a result, the team recently travelled right here to Ottawa where it competed in Canada's improv finals.

Over 300 talented teams came together from across Canada for this competition, yet the students from Ladysmith Secondary did not let that stop them and brought home a bronze medal.

I am beyond proud of their work, their dedication and for showing all of Canada the incredible arts and culture found within the beautiful town of Ladysmith. Congratulations.

* * *

• (1415)

[Translation]

PROTECTION OF PENSION PLANS

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pension plans are finally protected. The Senate has just passed Bill C-228. After tabling this bill three times, every time I was elected, and after seven years of raising awareness, providing information, collaborating, coordinating, rallying public opinion and negotiating, I can finally say, to everyone who helped ensure pension plans would be protected in the event of bankruptcy or restructuring, “mission accomplished”.

I want to offer my warmest congratulations to the Cliffs retirees, who approached me in 2015 to speak on their behalf in Ottawa. From the bottom of my heart, I thank the United Steelworkers for believing in this cause and supporting it from start to finish. Their voice has been heard. I also want to thank my colleagues in both houses. On a more personal note, I especially want to thank the member for Sarnia—Lambton.

Workers and their unions are the ones who change things, and changing things requires strength, solidarity and respect.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Prime Minister, Canadians are struggling more than ever. People are turning to food banks in record numbers, young people are worried that they will never be able to afford a home and people are struggling just to fill their gas tanks.

This week, the NDP-Liberal coalition approved its new budget, which only features more of the same failed policies that have caused these issues in the first place. Thankfully, the Conservatives have a different solution. We are going to cap government spending to control inflation. We are going to get more homes built. We are going to make paycheques more powerful. We are going to scrap the carbon tax that is driving up the cost of gas, groceries and home heating.

The Conservatives stand ready to jump into the driver's seat, bring it home for Canadians and fix what this coalition has broken.

* * *

RWANDA

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, I had the honour of going to Kigali in my capacity as a Canadian MP to attend the 29th Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide

Oral Questions

against the Tutsis in Rwanda. On April 7, we began the 100-day mourning period.

Today, on Parliament Hill, we will be commemorating the genocide against the Tutsis where we will do our part in marching toward a world that truly represents the sentiment of “never again”.

Hate speech was one of the tools used to misinform and incite violence during that time, and today we continue to see hate speech propagated online. Complacency of this reality will not help us achieve “never again”. We cannot sit silent while revisionism and genocide denialism prevails because then we risk facing another genocide, we risk destroying the healing that people have worked so much for.

Let me say it in the House that genocide was against the Tutsis, and I personally condemn everyone who denies that. I personally commit to survivors to continue to use my voice and platform to bring awareness and to make sure that the road of reconciliation continues.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

LABOUR

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has developed a very particular type of incompetence.

Since he was elected, he has increased the cost of bureaucracy by 50%. At the same time, he managed to convince the union to call the biggest strike in 40 years. Now, our veterans, immigrants, small businesses and Canadian taxpayers are deprived of services.

How will the Prime Minister fix the mess he has created?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform my colleagues that public servants are people who provide important services to Canadians for the government.

We are currently negotiating to make sure we have an agreement that is competitive, fair to employees and reasonable to taxpayers.

We are working very hard at the bargaining table and we will continue to do so until we have an agreement.

• (1420)

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, why is the Prime Minister not standing up and answering our questions? Why is the Prime Minister not working for Canadians? Is he busy planning another vacation with his friends at a Trudeau Foundation member's luxury hotel?

Oral Questions

He does not think about people waiting in line for their passports; someone takes care of that for him. He does not think about crowded airports; he has a private jet. He does not think about small businesses because he has never balanced a budget.

Canadians want an answer. When will he finally get to work and fix the problem he created?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the third day in a row, yes, the Prime Minister took a vacation over Christmas with his family in a house with his friends. That is the truth. For the third day in a row, yes, that is the case.

[English]

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it takes a special type of Liberal incompetence to not only blow up the bureaucracy by 50%, spending \$21 billion of taxpayer money, while also causing the largest public sector strike seen in 40 years. Even before the strike, those Liberals were breaking records, creating massive backlogs at passport offices, Service Canada, airports and immigration. Apparently not even the public servants could stand the Liberal government's incompetence anymore.

Could the Prime Minister stand up and inform the House how it feels to break the record for government incompetence?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, public servants from PSAC provide important services to Canadians, and the government values their work. We are committed to reaching agreements that are competitive, that are fair to the public servants, but also that are reasonable for Canadians. We also, as a government, believe they have a right to strike, and we will be working with them to make sure, because we are continuing at the table, that we get to a deal. We are working very hard together to get to this deal.

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CARBON PRICING

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only people getting ahead in the Prime Minister's Canada today are crony Liberal insiders covering his vacations and insiders.

Forty per cent of Canadians are borrowing from family just to make ends meet, one in five are skipping meals and people are literally eating out of dumpsters in Vancouver, because of Liberal inflation. In typical Liberal logic, the Liberals' solution is to raise taxes, like their failed carbon tax scam, adding an extra 41¢ per litre to fuel up and to heat homes.

Why will the Prime Minister not scrap this scam and let Canadians get ahead for once instead of himself and his crony insiders?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of hypocrisy and misinformation, but I will pose a question back to the other side.

The Leader of the Opposition gets up every morning in a government-funded bed and—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: We started off really well and now, all of a sudden, it is getting out of hand. I am going to ask the government House leader to start over again. I want to hear what he says and I think everyone else does as well.

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition gets up in a government-funded bed in a government-funded house. He enters a government-funded car, where he is driven by a government-funded driver, where he goes to a government-funded office with government-funded staff. I wonder, when he gets on his government-funded phone and talks to big tech giants from other countries about how they can destroy the CBC and other public broadcasting or when he talks about his Twitter account, what percentage is publicly funded, given that he has worked his entire life for the federal paycheque. What is it, 99.8% or 99.9%?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they are more worried about Twitter than actually helping Canadians. Nobody believes the Liberals are there to help Canadians. Believing that is as ridiculous as believing the NDP is still an opposition party. This costly coalition would rather virtue signal with its carbon scam, forcing more into food banks and making one in five Canadians go broke. The Liberal environment minister finally admitted that the carbon tax was a scam all along, and the PBO backed that up by proving Canadians pay more into this scam than they get back in carbon pricing rebates.

Why does the costly coalition not do the right thing to help Canadians and finally scrap the scam?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every day, we listen to conspiracies from the Conservatives, and I wonder how they square this when they are on 4chan and subreddits talking about these various conspiracy theories. The Conservative Party of Canada is more than 40% funded by government funding. I wonder, when its members talk to these companies that are from other countries trying to destroy our public broadcaster, do they talk about what percentage the Conservative Party of Canada should say is government-funded, as well as its federal leader?

• (1425)

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister keeps repeating that he has had no ties to the Trudeau Foundation for the past 10 years. Today, however, everyone is talking about his Christmas trip to visit friends from the foundation, but that is not all.

In 2016, his office directly contacted the foundation, regarding the much-talked-about donation from the Chinese regime. Next, he appointed the foundation's former CEO to look into interference in our elections. Then, he appointed another member of the foundation as the special rapporteur.

Does he not consider this to be a lot of ties to the Trudeau Foundation for someone who is not supposed to have ties to the foundation?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has already explained that multiple times. It is quite clear that the Prime Minister had no direct or indirect involvement with the foundation. There have been no ties for over 10 years. Those are the clear and straightforward facts.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Prime Minister still has close ties with the Trudeau Foundation. That is a big deal because it is also very clear that China wants to build ties with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation through its very generous donation.

Why? What is China's objective? That is the \$140,000 question. Will we get an answer?

The rapporteur who is supposed to give us one by conducting an inquiry into Chinese interference is a member of the foundation and a personal friend of the Prime Minister.

Do the Liberals understand why we will never stop calling for an independent public commission of inquiry?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that no one in the House of Commons shares China's objective. Foreign interference is a major concern for all members.

Every member of the House of Commons is loyal to our country and responsible for protecting our democracy. That is clear. Calling that into question is unacceptable.

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LABOUR

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have learned that this Liberal government spent hundreds of millions of dollars to outsource the work of public servants: \$200 million to Deloitte, \$100 million to PwC, \$45 million to Accenture. The Liberals are unable to negotiate a fair agreement with the federal public service, but when it comes time to write cheques to their friends at large firms, they are more than able, and the sky is the limit.

Oral Questions

Why is it so hard for the Liberals to put the interests of workers over the interests of their rich and powerful friends?

[English]

Hon. Helena Jaczek (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously we are looking very closely at management consultants. They are used only in the case where we need specific expertise or in the case of fluctuating workload, but I can assure the member that we are always looking to ensure we get the best value for Canadians.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians were shocked when news broke of the government's reckless outsourcing to McKinsey. This week, we learned it was just the tip of the iceberg. In the last year, the Liberals handed out more than \$200 million to Deloitte, \$100 million to PwC and \$45 million to Accenture for contracts with a single department.

The Liberals seem to have no problem giving massive public handouts to their rich friends while delaying a fair deal for public sector workers. Will the Liberals put an end to this unchecked outsourcing and instead invest in Canada's public service by coming up with a fair deal?

Hon. Helena Jaczek (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the government operations committee for its work in studying the use of management consultants.

I am sure the member is very pleased that, in budget 2023, we proposed to reduce spending on consulting, other professional services and travel by roughly 15% of planned 2023-24 discretionary spending in these areas.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it takes a special type of incompetence to spend 50% more on the bureaucracy yet have the largest public service strike in 40 years. It takes a special type of incompetence to have not only passport delays but also delays in immigration processes and tax returns. It also takes a special type of incompetence to spend \$22 billion on outside consultants and still end up in the same strike position.

When will the Prime Minister apologize for his incompetence and end this strike?

• (1430)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Conservatives opposite, we respect collective bargaining, we respect the right to strike and we understand that negotiations need to happen at the negotiating table. The government has been extraordinarily engaged to ensure we get a fair deal for Canadians, a fair deal for the workers and a fair deal for government. We are going to continue to negotiate in good faith and to ensure that we can continue to serve Canadians in such an effective way.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is part of the problem.

Oral Questions

We have a Prime Minister who never shows up. He does not show up for work, and he certainly does not show up for Canadians. It is no wonder that both rents and mortgages have doubled. It is no wonder that one in five Canadians is skipping meals. It is no wonder that, right outside these doors, we have the largest public service strike in 40 years.

When will the Prime Minister show up to work and fix what he broke?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the members on this side show up to work every single day to work for Canadians. Let us talk about the public servants who showed up to work every single day throughout the pandemic to deliver CERB to eight and a half million Canadians. Let us talk about the public servants who worked overtime to make sure they could help Canadians access the services they needed.

We respect collective bargaining. We respect the right to strike. We respect the fact that we are at the negotiating table having hard conversations. In the end, we are going to get a good deal for Canadians.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are experiencing the largest public service union strike in over 40 years, even though the government has spent 50% more, \$21 billion more, on bureaucracy. That is some special kind of incompetence, and still the public service is demoralized. The government has wasted \$22 billion on Liberal-connected contracts and outside consulting firms.

When will the Prime Minister get to work and fix the mess he created?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to compare and contrast with what the Conservatives did, because since 2006, they did not increase vote A funding for core services to any of the services we provided to Canadians. That means that, as the population of Canada has continued to grow, we actually have been spending, since we came into government in 2015, to deliver services for the population we have.

Unlike the Conservatives, we know we need to deliver good services for Canadians. We have made those investments and we are seeing those investments delivered to Canadians. The Conservatives can talk about cuts and they can talk about austerity, but we are going to continue to invest in government and, most importantly, in Canadians.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians need leadership and accountability from the Prime Minister. Canadians are paying for the lack of leadership by the Prime Minister. Maybe he does not care about passport lines because he has never had to wait in one. Maybe he does not care about broken airports because he flies on a private jet. Maybe he does not care about small businesses because he has never had to balance a budget.

When will the Prime Minister get down out of his ivory tower and start serving Canadians?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the member opposite is saying. Is she saying the Prime Minister should not have security or should not be flying in such a way that his security is protected?

Of course, the Conservatives are playing games, as they usually do. They try to mis-characterize things that have to happen, to try to twist them for partisan advantage. However, what has happened is that Canada is now leading the world in terms of economic growth and job production. At a time when the world is going through the most difficult time humanity has faced since the Second World War, the only things the Conservatives have to offer are fear and despair.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me get this straight. The Prime Minister has increased the spending and the bureaucracy by 50%, and increased the cost of the public sector by more than \$21 billion, yet the vital services Canadians rely on, whether immigration, passport or airport services, have never been this dysfunctional. In fact, we now have 150,000 public sector workers on strike, the largest job action in more than 40 years. Who can possibly be that incompetent? Only the Prime Minister can spend so much to achieve so little.

Will the Prime Minister stand up, do his job and fix the government he has broken?

• (1435)

[Translation]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not really surprising today to hear the Conservatives attacking the investments we made in the public service, because who can forget the fact that, when they were in power, they slashed the public service like never before with austerity measures and unprecedented cuts.

That is without counting the number of laws they tried to pass to limit the actions of unions and destroy unions in Canada. It is not really surprising today to hear them complaining about the public service strike.

[English]

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, why is the Prime Minister not the one standing up and answering for his own failures? Why is the Prime Minister not standing up and doing his job? I will tell members why. He is not worried about lines at passport offices, because he has never had to stand in one. He is not worried about the chaos at the airports, because he has a private jet. He is not worried about skyrocketing food prices or Canadians scavenging from dumpsters to feed their families, because he does not have to pay for it. He is certainly not worried about struggling small businesses, because he has never had to balance a budget.

When will the Prime Minister stand up, do his job and douse this dumpster fire he has created?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if my hon. colleague is asking what the Prime Minister is standing up for, he is standing up for the people who live in my community, like the low-income families who now receive more through the Canada child benefit than they did when the Conservatives were in power. He is standing up for workers' rights to collect their Canada pension plan, which the opposition leader has criticized as being too expensive to properly fund. He is standing up for workers who have been impacted by natural disasters on my coast and in Atlantic Canada to make sure they are supported by EI when they lose their job as a result of conditions beyond their control. Every day of the week, we are going to stand up for working families and communities like mine. I invite the Conservatives to join us one day.

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[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has told us that he has not had any ties to the Trudeau Foundation for ten years. Let us assume that is the case. However, one year after he became Prime Minister, China thought it was a good idea to make a \$140,000 donation in honour of his father. We know that nothing is free in this world.

What did China have to gain by making a donation to a foundation that hands out scholarships to Canadians? Did it want to help students or act out of altruism? Excuse me if I laugh. Could it be that it wanted to get close to Pierre Elliott Trudeau's son, who had just been elected Prime Minister?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, is the member suggesting that China is responsible for Canada's policies or that the government is influenced by that? That is absolutely ridiculous. That is not at all the case. My colleague opposite and I have stood up for our democracy our whole lives. These are difficult times for democracies, and we must remain united in protecting them.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it would be impossible for anyone looking at this situation not to wonder. We are in the midst of a crisis over Chinese interference. On one side, we have a Prime Minister who is still intimately associated with the Trudeau Foundation. On the other side, we have China, which has paid a lot of money to get as close as possible to the Trudeau Foundation. In the middle, we have an arbitrator, the special rapporteur chosen by the Prime Minister, who is a friend of the Prime Minister and a member of the foundation. One has to wonder.

How can the government hope to restore trust without an independent public commission of inquiry?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, one can take shots at Mr. Johnston. Anyone can do so, but he is a former governor general who was appointed by Prime Minister Harper. His impartiality is therefore absolutely clear. It is also clear that we must protect our

democracy. The only way to do that is to stand united against foreign interference.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Morris Rosenberg, the author of the independent report on foreign interference in the elections, wants an independent public inquiry.

Jean-Pierre Kingsley, a former chief electoral officer of Canada, wants an inquiry. Gerald Butts, the former adviser to the Prime Minister, wants an inquiry. The House of Commons wants an inquiry. Canadians want an inquiry. Now, Michael Wernick, a former clerk of the Privy Council, also wants an inquiry.

Actually, apart from the Liberals and the Chinese authorities, there are not a lot of people who do not want an inquiry. What are they waiting for?

● (1440)

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, foreign interference is an issue that we take seriously and it is not a partisan issue. That is why we appointed David Johnston, a non-partisan, experienced professional. It is unfortunate the members opposite laughed when I mentioned his name. He is a gentleman who has given his life to this country and will provide us with information that we will be acting on, including whether or not we hold a public inquiry.

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GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is now faced with the largest public sector strike in 40 years, despite the government spending \$21 billion more on the bureaucracy. More Canadian jobs were created in 2021 by the government, yet service levels are down. It takes a special kind of incompetence to have more spending and less results.

The Prime Minister is failing taxpayers, who deserve access to public services. When will he fix the government that he broke?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government respects collective bargaining. Our government respects having a negotiated settlement at the negotiation table.

Let me take this opportunity to talk about exactly what is in our budget that was prepared with, and by, public sector workers with our own government members.

In my home city of Edmonton, Heidelberg Materials is going to create the world's first net-zero cement plant, with \$1.36 billion worth of investment. Why? Because the tax credits are right in the budget. It will produce thousands of jobs, shows national leadership, and is an international first in Edmonton thanks to our government.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, why does the Prime Minister not get up and answer questions? Because he does not care.

Canadians are getting sick and tired of hearing about the Prime Minister's free, lavish vacations while at the same time hearing about Canadians diving into dumpsters looking for food. They are getting sick and tired of waiting in lines for services. They are getting sick and tired of trying to balance their home budgets.

It is a special kind of incompetence to be failing so badly. When will the Prime Minister get to work to fix the problems he created?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to respond to my colleague. The kind of competence we have on this side of the House is that we listen to Canadians. That is exactly what we did in the last budget, something Conservatives do not like to talk about.

What did they say? To help them with groceries. That is why we came out with the rebate on groceries, and 11 million Canadians will benefit from it. That is listening.

The second thing they said was that they want a family doctor. That is why we invested in health care.

The third thing they said was to build the economy of the future. That is why we got Ericsson to invest close to half a billion dollars here in Ottawa. That is how we build an economy.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister went on vacation with his family to Jamaica. That is not the issue. Where things go sideways is that he went to a villa that rents for up to \$9,000 a night, a villa that belongs to his wealthy friends, who are also donors to the Trudeau Foundation.

How can this Prime Minister be so out of touch? Why did he not follow the precautionary principle?

Here is an opportunity for him to restore his already badly tarnished reputation. Can the Prime Minister tell the House that he used his own funds to pay for his and his family's accommodations?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have answered that question many times.

However, the real question is for my colleague, a former CBC/Radio-Canada journalist. Does she agree with the opposition's intention to silence our public broadcaster? It amounts to an attack on information, on journalism and, consequently, an attack on our democracy. Does she agree with that?

[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadian families are worried about accessing services during the PSAC strike. The union is ready to work with the departments to ensure that veterans can maintain that access, but the minister refuses to talk to them. In fact, the minister has not met with the union president for over two years. This is disrespectful and puts our public servants and veterans at risk. What is he scared of? Will the minister do his job by talking to the union or will he continue to ignore his responsibilities to both veterans and the union?

• (1445)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have met with the union leadership and I have met union people. I have met with Veterans Affairs employees. We have increased our funding to Veterans Affairs by over \$11 billion. My mandate and this government's mandate is to make sure we take care of our veterans. We have taken care of and we will continue to take care of our veterans.

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ETHICS

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while the government refuses to give public sector PSAC workers a fair deal, the Prime Minister enjoys complimentary luxury family vacations courtesy of his billionaire friends. Do not be fooled by the Conservatives. When the leader of the official opposition was in government, he always sided with big CEOs.

At a time when families are struggling to put food on the table, the Prime Minister ignored red flags from inside his own office. Why does the Prime Minister keep showing bad judgment by cozying up to billionaires instead of fighting for everyday Canadians?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again for the third day in a row, I am happy to talk about this if this is the members' priority.

Yes, the Prime Minister went on vacation with his family over Christmas. This is a home that he had been at when he was one year old. It is a friend whom he has had for his entire life. It is a family friendship that has gone on forever. I do not know if the member opposite has stayed at a friend's before over Christmas or done something like that, but in any event I have answered this question. I would imagine that there are other more pressing things that Canadians are facing than spending three days asking about whether the Prime Minister took a family vacation over Christmas.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, sadly my kids spend half their lives on the Internet. Even my two-year-old, Miguel, needs his daily dose of *PAW Patrol* or of his or my favourite, *Peppa Pig*. However, the Internet is not just for kids. I think all of us, in our daily lives, would have a hard time getting by without access to the Internet.

I know our government has done a lot to help rural Canadians access the Internet. Can the Minister of Rural Economic Development please update this House on her recent broadband announcement and what this will mean to us in northern Ontario?

Hon. Gudie Hutchings (Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his advocacy on behalf of his constituents and for all rural and remote Canadians. Last month, we made, in partnership with the Government of Ontario, an announcement of \$61 million. That is going to bring high-speed Internet service to over 16,000 homes throughout 47 rural communities and three first nations communities in northern Ontario.

Therefore, Miguel can tell his friends who live in Hymers and Moose Hill and surrounding Thunder Bay areas that they are now going to have better access to essential services with more opportunity to grow their business and keep in touch with loved ones and their friends.

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GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for eight years, the Liberals have repeatedly broken ethics laws: the Prime Minister caught breaking ethics laws twice, the trade minister, the intergovernmental affairs minister and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

They got so sick of getting found guilty that they appointed the sister-in-law of the intergovernmental affairs minister to be the new Ethics Commissioner. The only problem is that they got caught and so she resigned. Will the Prime Minister stand today and assure Canadians that he is not going to appoint any more friends, family or Trudeau Foundation members to this important position?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): The person whom they are referring to was appointed actually under Stephen Harper when he was prime minister. She worked in that office for 10 years.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: We actually started early, but we are losing some time here. I am not sure when we are going to get out of question period. Maybe we will ask the government House leader to start over from the top, please.

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, the person whom they are referring to had worked in the Ethics Commissioner's Office for 10 years. She was number two in that office. She was appointed or came into that position when Stephen Harper was in fact prime minister. What happens when they attack people and engage in these partisan attacks is, yes, those people do leave because this is

Oral Questions

what happens. Their partisan attacks, whether on CBC or on the Ethics Commissioner or on wherever they go, yes, has an impact. That position is now vacant. It is an extremely important position. We will work as quickly as possible to get a replacement.

• (1450)

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Woe is them, I suppose, Mr. Speaker. They are probably just sad that they could not get that family and friends discount. They tried to get the bulk purchasing discount or the frequent flyer discount with the Ethics Commissioner's office and that did not work. Maybe this time, though, they will just leave the job empty so that when there is the next conflict of interest there is no one there to investigate it. Following that path, perhaps they will just eliminate the position of the Ethics Commissioner altogether.

The question is very simple. The member was not able to answer it, so we will put it this way: Which will it be? Will they appoint a family member, a friend or a Trudeau Foundation board member to be the next Ethics Commissioner?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as always, we will appoint qualified people who are working in those positions with expertise. That is assuredly what we are going to do in the future.

With what we have seen over the last three days, as we are going through some of the most difficult times in human history around the planet, as there is a war in Ukraine, as our planet is being ravaged by climate change, I wonder, 20, 30 years from now, when people are looking back on these question periods and watching the priority of Conservatives, if they will wonder where the heck they were on the issues that actually affected Canadians, and why they were not talking about, or asking questions about, the budget or Canadian finances or the environment. I certainly wonder that.

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[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they do not want to talk about the Prime Minister because they know that we will talk about ethics and ethics violations.

There was the Prime Minister for vacationing on a private island, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities for giving a permit to a company with ties to his family, the Prime Minister a second time in the SNC-Lavalin matter, the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development for awarding her best friend a contract, the member for Hull—Aylmer, and we learned yesterday that the interim Ethics Commissioner, the sister-in-law of the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, had resigned.

Oral Questions

To whom will the Prime Minister now turn for advice about his next vacation at the estate of his rich friends from the Trudeau Foundation?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians watching today are most concerned about is seeing the Conservative Party obsessed with issues that do not concern Canadians. Canadians are concerned about three things. The Conservatives would do well to listen to Canadians a little more.

The first thing is the cost of living and the cost of food. That is why we are giving 11 million Canadians the rebate. The second thing is health care and family doctors. The third thing is building the economy of the future. That is exactly what we are doing with Volkswagen, which we will be celebrating tomorrow in St. Thomas.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are concerned about ethics, but the Liberals are not.

No doubt a pile of work is waiting for the next Ethics Commissioner, what with the Trudeau Foundation and its ties to the Prime Minister, the Beijing regime and its influence over the Prime Minister, and the Prime Minister's fondness for luxury vacations at the homes of his wealthy friends.

The new Ethics Commissioner only needs to meet two essential requirements. They must not be a member of the Trudeau Foundation or a relative of a Liberal cabinet member. Will these two requirements be met, yes or no?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a lot of people in the House wonder what interests members of the opposition.

In my opinion, there is at least one thing that should interest them. I am referring to the huge, fantastic announcement made a few weeks ago at the Davie shipyard, in the greater Quebec City area. I know that my colleagues from across Quebec, including my Conservative colleagues, will realize what a game-changer the creation of a major international shipbuilding hub will be for the economy, the industry and the technological environment of the greater Quebec City region.

I am sure that even my Conservative colleagues I see here in the House ought to be delighted by this announcement.

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AVIATION INDUSTRY

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec was already outraged to see Ottawa offer Boeing a \$9-billion contract for military aircraft without a call for tenders and without a penny in spinoffs for Quebec.

However, it is worse now that we know that the American jets that Ottawa wants to buy are lemons. According to La Presse, the U.S. defence department itself has said that there are so many issues with the Poseidon P-8As that they were in for repairs half the time from 2018 to 2020.

We will not pay \$9 billion for American lemons when we can build better aircraft in Quebec. When will the government hold a real call for tenders?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question.

On this side of the House, we all recognize the importance of the aerospace industry across the country, particularly in Quebec.

I have been in contact with Bombardier executives, and everyone in the House agrees that Bombardier is a leading Canadian company that we can all be proud of. We were there for Bombardier at every opportunity, and we will always be there for Bombardier, both now and in the future.

• (1455)

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that was not particularly convincing.

To sum up, Ottawa is pushing aside Quebec's expertise and opting for American planes that even the Americans do not want. This is high treason towards our aerospace industry. Quebec has all the components to assemble an aircraft from A to Z. Ottawa does not have the right to offer Boeing \$9 billion of taxpayers' money without a call for tenders, especially for planes that do not even meet the maintenance criteria.

Will the government back down and issue a real call for tenders? That is basic common sense.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we will never back down. We will always push to defend Quebec's aerospace industry. I think my colleagues are clear on that.

As I was saying to my colleague, we are in touch with the aerospace industry, we are in touch with Bombardier.

My colleague left out part of the story. Not too long ago, alongside the Quebec government, we announced the largest aerospace investment ever in Canadian history. There is plenty to celebrate in the aerospace industry. We will always be there for the workers.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Statistics Canada reported that mortgage interest costs rose 26% in March, making the largest increase on record. Under the Prime Minister, mortgage costs have doubled, and food bank usage is up; he also plans for commuters to pay 41¢ a litre in carbon tax.

Does the Prime Minister see that Canadians are struggling, or is he so out of touch that he believes Canadians can just act like him at a Jamaican villa and have their friends pay their bills for them?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should know that the people who are really out of touch are his colleagues, who have said that we should pull back from federal investments in housing. It is the hon. member and his colleagues who have opposed real support for first-time homebuyers. They opposed the \$40,000 tax-free first-time homebuyers savings account. They opposed the ban on foreign ownership of Canadian real estate. They opposed the vacancy tax. They opposed investments in affordable housing. Not only did they oppose much-needed rental supports, but they also played procedural games to delay them.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, talking about delays, the minister is the minister of delays. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation reported an 11% drop in housing starts. This means we can expect higher rents as supply tightens and more hard-working millennials will be stuck in their parents' basements. If blaming others got housing built, this minister would have delivered results for Canadians.

When will the Liberal government stop blaming and start building, or are they just waiting for the Conservative leader to get it done for them?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives are a nightmare for Canadians' goals related to accessing affordable housing, accessing home ownership and getting help with rentals. They voted against every single measure brought in the House to help Canadians with their real housing needs. We are the government that has brought back federal leadership in housing.

One would think that being in opposition would educate them on the need of the federal government to actually be involved and provide resources for housing. Instead, even in opposition, all their members believe that we should actually pull back from investments in affordable housing. That is a shameful record to run on.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since this Prime Minister took office, the average cost of mortgage payments has doubled in this country. Worse yet, because of the successive increases in interest rates, the cost of interest on mortgage payments was up by 26.4% in March compared to February. It is the largest increase ever recorded. Canadians continue to go into debt and have to give up their dream of home ownership.

Will the Prime Minister finally take measures to curb the inflation he himself created?

[English]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the biggest gatekeepers to more housing supply, affordable housing, supports for renters and supports for homebuyers are the Conservatives. How do I know that? It is because every single time that we have brought sensible measures to the House to get supports for Canadian homebuyers and

renters, to get supports for affordable housing for the most vulnerable and to increase supply in Canadian municipalities, they have voted against it. Then they have the nerve to come back to the House and talk about helping Canadians. That is shameful.

* * *

● (1500)

[Translation]

FINANCE

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning, our government tabled the budget implementation act, an essential legislative measure to support a strong working class, an affordable economy and a healthy future.

Could the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance tell the House about some of the important measures this bill would introduce?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Laval—Les Îles for his excellent question and for his hard work.

If it is passed, the budget implementation act would help meet the challenges of today and tomorrow, as we build a safer, more sustainable and more affordable Canada for Canadians across the country.

Here are some of the measures contained in the budget: automatic advance payment of the Canada workers benefit, doubling of the tradespeople's tools deduction, strengthening supply chains and Canada's trade corridors.

These are important measures, but, sadly, the Conservatives have already voted against them.

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the top secret Discord leak in the United States showed that the Prime Minister has no intention of ever meeting our NATO commitment. It showed that many of our allies are frustrated and disappointed by Canada's response to recent global crises like those in Haiti and Ukraine. The Prime Minister has once again embarrassed Canada on the world stage, and his empty promises have killed our reputation as a trusted ally.

Why does the Prime Minister waste billions of taxpayer dollars on his pet projects and lavish vacations while refusing to invest in our military?

Oral Questions

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we must be clear. The Conservatives actively decided to step back and cut our defence spending and end contributions. We should not forget that it was the Conservatives who set our defence capacity back years by cutting military spending by billions and badly mismanaging our major procurement projects.

We have worked hard to reverse this damage by raising spending year over year and delivering key equipment that our armed forces need to do their work. We will keep going and making necessary smart investments in our forces.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to The Washington Post, the Prime Minister privately told NATO officials that Canada will never meet the military alliance's defence-spending target. However, that is not what the Prime Minister is telling Canadians publicly. Instead, he is saying that Canada is a reliable partner to NATO and a reliable partner around the world.

How does the Prime Minister square his private comments to NATO officials with his public comments to Canadians?

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Armed Forces play an essential role in defending Canadians and supporting global security. As a founding member of NATO, our commitment to Euro-Atlantic and global security is ironclad, and we continue to make landmark investments to equip our armed forces.

Overall, Canada's defence policy has increased our defence spending by over 70%. We also announced over \$8 billion in new spending in budget 2022. We will continue to invest in our Canadian Armed Forces and deliver modern equipment to our military, which is renowned around the world for its excellence and professionalism.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the object over Canadian airspace was shot down by an American F-22 on February 11, the defence minister said at the time that the process was sound and that it was NORAD doing what it is supposed to do. Yesterday, The Washington Post reported that, according to the Pentagon's assessment, Canada's military response was delayed by one hour, necessitating U.S. assistance.

How does the defence minister square her public comments with the Pentagon's assessment?

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have said, our government is making landmark investments to increase our ability to operate in and defend the Arctic, including announcing a robust \$40-billion plan to modernize our continental defence. This is the most significant update to Canadian NORAD capabilities in almost four decades. We awarded a \$122-million contract to strengthen the CFS Alert. We are conducting joint exercises in the Arctic, and we have purchased six Arctic offshore patrol ships. We will continue to do more as needed.

• (1505)

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be asking real questions and not just talking about Christmas vacation.

The important meeting of G7 environment ministers concluded on Sunday, in Japan. Canada was there to promote renewed ambition in the fight against climate change, and also in protecting nature while promoting global energy security.

Can the Minister of Environment tell us about the progress being made on these important goals?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Pontiac for the question and her advocacy on this issue.

During the last G7 meeting, Canada, as the British climate minister said, played a leadership role in holding us to our commitments to end fossil fuel subsidies sooner than our G20 and G7 partners and phase out coal.

Every G7 country commended Canada's leadership on adopting the ambitious agreement on nature that was signed in Montreal at COP15, where countries committed to protecting at least 30% of our land and oceans by 2030.

* * *

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago, the remains of Linda Mary Beardy, a 33-year-old indigenous woman, were found in the Brady landfill in Winnipeg. On Saturday, the remains of another woman were found near the Red River. They deserve to be honoured. They deserve justice.

This ongoing genocide requires an urgent national response, including creating a nationwide red dress alert program. Should we go missing, we must be found.

Will this government take immediate action to implement a red dress alert and save lives now?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for her advocacy for putting a red dress alert in place across the country.

As the member knows, I have made a commitment to work with her on this. Our budget also included a commitment to working on a red dress alert. I thank her for her advocacy, and I look forward to working with her to implement it. Of course, along with all members, we need to do better when it comes to missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

* * *

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, Ashley Smith died in segregation in 2007 at the Grand Valley Institution for Women. Then, in 2016, Terry Baker died at Grand Valley while also in segregation. An inquest into her death was called in 2017, but it has been delayed twice; this time, it was because Correctional Service Canada would not provide the necessary documents. It did not even give a reason.

Will the minister direct Correctional Services to stop stalling this important inquest?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our thoughts are with Terry Baker's family, friends and all who knew her. We were also disappointed that the inquest was delayed; we hoped that it would shed a light on the tragic and devastating events of 2016.

I want to thank the hon. member for his advocacy. I look forward to continuing to work with him on conditions of confinement, not only at GVI but at institutions across the country.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Caroline Cochrane, Premier of the Northwest Territories.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In question period, the Minister of Public Services and Procurement cited the government's commitment in budget 2023 to reduce outsourcing by 15%. I am just asking for clarification. Is that on the 400% increase in outsourcing or is that on the 2015 amount of outsourcing?

● (1510)

The Speaker: I am afraid the member will have to wait for the next question period or the next debate to ask that question.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS ADMINISTRATION

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the strategic plan 2023-26 for the House administration.

Speaker's Ruling

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED DEFAMATION RESULTING IN OBSTRUCTION OF A MEMBER'S FREEDOM OF SPEECH—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on April 17 by the member for Pickering—Uxbridge concerning comments made following Oral Questions on March 31 by the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

In her intervention, the member for Pickering—Uxbridge alleged that the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake had intentionally misled the House by falsely accusing her of having made a statement containing offensive words. This, she suggested, was a misuse of the privilege of freedom of speech. She categorically denied having made such a statement and felt that the accusation had damaged her reputation. She added that her ability to perform her duties had been hindered because of these allegations, since her office received several threatening and aggressive phone calls, emails and social media reactions.

For her part, the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake asserted that her version of the events was different than that of the member for Pickering—Uxbridge. She countered that this matter did not meet the standards needed to establish that a member deliberately misled the House, and thus did not rise to the threshold of a question of privilege.

[Translation]

The Chair has had an opportunity to review the proceedings. No part of the off microphone exchanges between the members for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake and Pickering—Uxbridge was captured in the transcript or by the video recording.

In a ruling on a similar matter, on October 30, 2006, found at page 4414 of the Debates, Speaker Milliken stated, and I quote:

...requesting an apology or a withdrawal is predicated on a common agreement about what actually took place, either because the exchange appears in the official record or because both parties acknowledge that the exchange took place. In this case, the official record is not helpful and the Speaker is faced with a dispute, indeed a contradiction, about what actually happened.

[English]

This also appears to be the case here. One member alleges that something was said, while the other denies having said it. The Chair has no reason to doubt that both members sincerely thought they were right and, therefore, I can only conclude a misunderstanding between them. One way to avoid such misunderstandings is to be civil with each other at all times.

[Translation]

The Chair is cognizant that exchanges in the House, on and off the record, can sometimes become heated. However, the Chair would urge members to be judicious with the words they use. There are alternative ways to make one's point and still remain respectful with each other.

*Government Orders**[English]*

As to whether the events described constitute a question of privilege, as indicated, the Chair does not believe that it has been established that there was a clear intent to mislead. Finally, it is not clear how the member was prevented from fulfilling her parliamentary duties. Accordingly, the Chair cannot find a prima facie case of privilege. I consider the matter closed.

I thank members for their attention.

* * *

● (1515)

*[Translation]***BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start with a brief comment. This is the first of five consecutive sitting weeks in the House. We are asking a lot of all those who have families at home. I therefore want to salute and thank our families for allowing us to do the work in this place of representing not only our constituents, but all Canadians.

Concerning the questions I have for the Government House leader, we are very interested in who will be the next Ethics Commissioner. We hope that by the next time we return to our ridings, the government will give us a clear indication of who is to be appointed the next Ethics Commissioner. In the meantime, let us try to avoid scandals.

I would like to ask the Government House leader to inform members of the agenda for the remainder of this week and next week.

[English]

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I echo my hon. colleague's statements. The next nine of the 10 weeks the House will be sitting is a long time away from families, and our families do sacrifice a lot, which is a really important point to emphasize. He and I could have a longer discussion about the Ethics Commissioner. We are both very anxious to see that important position filled, and I am sure he and I could work together on that.

With respect to the business of the House, tomorrow morning we are going to start second reading of Bill C-47, the budget implementation act.

On Monday, Tuesday and Thursday of next week, we will continue with debate of the budget bill.

On Wednesday, we will call Bill C-13, concerning the Official Languages Act, at report stage and third reading.

On Friday, we will resume second reading debate of Bill C-42 regarding the Canada Business Corporations Act.

Finally, there have been discussions among all parties and if you seek it, I am certain you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order, or usual practice of the House:

(a) on Thursday, May 4, 2023, when the House adjourns, it shall stand adjourned until Monday, May 8, 2023, at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1), provided that, for the purposes of any standing order, it shall have deemed to have sat on Friday, May 5, 2023;

(b) on Thursday, May 18, 2023, when the House adjourns, it shall stand adjourned until Monday, May 29, 2023, at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Orders 24(1) and 28(2), provided that, for the purposes of any standing order, it shall have been deemed to have sat on Friday, May 19, 2023; and

(c) any standing, standing joint, special, and special joint committees, as well as their subcommittees, shall not be empowered to sit on both Fridays.

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[Translation]***DIGITAL CHARTER IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022**

The House resumed from March 28 consideration of the motion that Bill C-27, An Act to enact the Consumer Privacy Protection Act, the Personal Information and Data Protection Tribunal Act and the Artificial Intelligence and Data Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts, be read a second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am always pleased to rise in the House to speak on behalf of my constituents from Calgary Midnapore.

[English]

I am here today to discuss the bill that is in front of us, Bill C-27, which is an act to enact the consumer privacy protection act, the personal information and data protection tribunal act, the artificial intelligence and data act, and to make consequential and related amendments to other acts.

It is very interesting that this bill is before the House today. It talks about the three different components and, in fact, I see within the backgrounder prepared here in the legislative report that it is dubbed the digital charter implement act, 2022.

I am reminded, by this bill that is in front of us here today, of another digital charter and that is the digital charter that was implemented in 2019, a very important year, by the Liberal government. It was brought into effect by the minister of industry and innovation at that time. I believe that document was actually supposed to be a tool to protect Canadians from foreign interference.

That digital charter in 2019, along with many other tools, failed, so I do hope that the implementation of this new digital charter in 2022 will be far more successful than its predecessor.

I will point out that in the 2019 digital charter, in terms of the principles within it, number 8 was listed as “a strong democracy”.

In 2019, I was the shadow minister of democratic institutions. I worked alongside the current Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, who was, at that time, the minister of democratic institutions. I believe that the 2019 digital charter was supposed to be a tool, as I said, in coordination with other tools, to protect Canadians from foreign interference.

The same year that the 2019 digital charter was issued, we also had the same minister of democratic institutions attempt to implement another suite of safeguards on foreign interference back in 2019, along with the 2019 digital charter.

In fact, here, I have the minister's opening statements to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, on safeguarding the 2019 general election and the security intelligence threat to the elections task force.

I cite from it:

Earlier this week, along with my colleague, the Minister of National Defence, I announced the release of the 2019 update to the Communications Security Establishment's report entitled “Cyber Threats to Canada's Democratic Process”. This updated report highlights that it is very likely Canadian voters will encounter some form of foreign cyber interference in the course of the 2019 federal election.

While CSE underlines that it is unlikely this interference will be on the scale of the Russian activity in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, the report notes that in 2018, half of all the advanced democracies holding national elections, representing a threefold increase since 2015, had their democratic process targeted by cyber-threat activity and that Canada is also at risk—

—and, in fact, compromised, we would later see.

This upward trend is likely to continue in 2019—

—and, we saw, into 2021.

We've seen that certain tools used to strengthen civic engagement have been co-opted to undermine, disrupt and destabilize democracy. Social media has been misused to spread false or misleading information. In recent years, we've seen foreign actors try to undermine democratic societies and institutions, electoral processes, sovereignty and security.

● (1520)

The CSE's 2017 and 2019 assessments, along with ongoing Canadian intelligence and the experiences of our allies and like-minded countries, have informed and guided our efforts over the past year. This has led to the development of an action plan based on four pillars, engaging all aspects of Canadian society.

I will go on to expand on these four pillars that were supposed to protect us in addition to the 2019 digital charter, the predecessor to this legislation here today.

On January 30, I announced the digital citizen initiative and a \$7 million investment—

I am continuing from the Minister of Democratic Institution's speech.

—towards improving the resilience of Canadians against online disinformation. In response to the increase in false, misleading and inflammatory information published online and through social media, the Government of Canada has made it a priority to help equip citizens with the tools and skills needed to critically assess online information.

Government Orders

We're also leveraging the “Get Cyber Safe” national public awareness campaign to educate Canadians about cyber security and the simple steps they can take to protect themselves online.

She continued:

We have established the critical election incident public protocol. This is a simple, clear and non-partisan process for informing Canadians if serious incidents during the writ period threaten the integrity of the 2019 general election. This protocol puts the decision to inform Canadians directly in the hands of five of Canada's most experienced senior public servants—

I am not sure where those public servants are now. Perhaps outside.

—who have a responsibility to ensure the effective, peaceful transition of power and continuity of government through election periods. The public service has effectively played this role for generations and it will continue to fulfill this important role through the upcoming election and beyond....

Under the second pillar, improving organizational readiness, one key new initiative is to ensure that political parties are all aware of the nature of the threat, so that they can take the steps needed to enhance their internal security practices and behaviours. The CSE's 2017 report, as well as its 2019 update, highlight that political parties continue to represent one of the greatest vulnerabilities in the Canadian system. Canada's national security agencies will offer threat briefings to political party leadership...

Under the third pillar—combatting foreign interference—the government has established the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections Task Force to improve awareness of foreign threats and support incident assessment and response. The team brings together CSE, CSIS, the RCMP, and Global Affairs Canada to ensure a comprehensive understanding of and response to any threats to Canada....

We know that they have also been manipulated to....create confusion and exploit societal tension.

She concluded:

While it is impossible to fully predict what kinds of threats we will see in the run-up to Canada's general election, I want to assure this committee that Canada has put in place a solid plan. We continue to test and probe our readiness, and we will continue to take whatever steps we can towards ensuring a free, fair and secure election in 2019.

That, along with the 2019 digital charter, the predecessor to today's legislation, failed to protect Canadians from foreign interference. Along with the debates commission, which she, lo and behold, announced six months earlier, where she also took the opportunity to announce the government's nominee for Canada's first Debates Commissioner, the Right Hon. David Johnston, the very rap-porteur who was named to defend our foreign interests.

The result of the incompetence of the Minister of Democratic Institutions at that time, in coordination with the digital charter of 2019 that was supposed to protect us, leaks from CSIS, up to 13 members of this House compromised, a former CPP Consul General bragging about influencing election outcomes and one member in this House of Commons that had to leave their Liberal caucus.

I will conclude by saying I certainly hope that the digital charter, this Bill C-27 is far more effective in helping and safeguarding Canadians than the 2019 digital charter that failed to do that.

Government Orders

• (1525)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting how the member is kind of twisting her arguments around to talk about an election and foreign interference under this particular piece of legislation.

I would like to remind the member, and then pose it in the form of a question, that foreign interference in elections is nothing new. In fact, the Harper regime, many years ago, was told about it, and Stephen Harper chose to do nothing.

The minister who was responsible for doing something was the current leader of the Conservative Party. He, too, chose to do nothing at all.

I am wondering if the member should not be reserving some of her criticism towards her leader and the former prime minister who sat on their butts and did absolutely nothing on foreign interference.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, this is what we hear repeatedly from the government, that it is not its fault, even though after eight years of the Liberal government we have Canadians at food banks, we have mortgages and rents that have doubled, we have a public service strike of a magnitude we have not seen in 40 years, and we have had foreign interference.

A Poilievre government will change this. A Poilievre government will take responsibility—

• (1530)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind the hon. member that we do not use the names of members currently in the House.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, a Conservative government, under the current opposition leader, will take responsibility and bring legislation back on track so we do not have to see this again.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, rather than fixating on whose fault it is, which is not getting us anywhere, I would like my colleague, who gave a very interesting speech, to tell us whether she believes that Bill C-27 is still as valid as it was before the advent of generative AI, specifically ChatGPT.

Do we need to start over or is she happy with the result?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, I think that we need to do something about AI. Based on what I read in this bill and in the newspapers, there is a lot of work to do.

With regard to what the member said at the beginning of his comment about whose fault this is, it will never be the fault of the Bloc Québécois members, since they will never form the government.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, 19,000 Canadians were affected by the Equifax breach, and 600,000 were affected by the Cambridge Analytica breach that was exposed in 2018, yet compensation for Canadians was far less than what it was for

Americans. Does the member not think it is time for reform to bring parity and equivalency to citizens on both sides of the border?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, what we really need to be thinking about is our own citizens and our intentions in the House. That also includes our own doings, not only within the House, but within the businesses we own and run. Before considering others, we absolutely have to consider whether our actions, not only within this House, but also on the periphery of what we are doing just outside of it, could be perceived as negative or a conflict of interest, so I think it is always important to think about ourselves first.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government introduced this bill last June and one of the claims the minister made in his opening speech was that he was protecting children in this 120-page bill, yet the word “minors” appears once in the definitions section. It states that the sensitive information of minors must be protected in the bill, but it does not define what a minor is or sensitive information. I wonder if the member could comment on whether or not that really has any power or validity to protect children, which we all want to do—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the hon. member for Calgary Midnapore 10 seconds for a short answer.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, I am not very encouraged with respect to the validity of the bill to protect anyone given my speech and statement around the results of the 2019 digital charter. I certainly hope for something better.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to focus my remarks today on the component of this bill that deals with the artificial intelligence and data act.

The first time I interacted with ChatGPT was the day after it was released. Upon seeing it easily parse human language, my first thought was, “holy” followed by a word I am not supposed to say in this place. The second thought was, “What will the government do with this?” Today, there still is not a clear answer to that question.

ChatGPT was released at the end of November 2022. Six months prior, the Liberal government unveiled Bill C-27, which includes the artificial intelligence and data act, or AIDA. Reading the bill today, four months since OpenAI unleashed ChatGPT on the world, is akin to reading a bill designed to regulate scribes and calligraphers four months after the advent of the printing press. The release of ChatGPT arguably rendered the approach this bill proposes obsolete. That is because the technology behind ChatGPT is a quantum leap beyond what the government was likely considering when it drafted the bill. More important, it is being used by a far wider audience than any of the bill's drafters likely envisioned and large language models or the technology behind ChatGPT have fundamentally changed global perception of what is possible with artificial intelligence. Experts argue that its widespread deployment also bumped up the timeline for emergence of artificial general intelligence; that is, the development of an AI that meets or surpasses human ability to undertake tasks, learn and understand independently.

Since AIDA was initially tabled, a generation's worth of technological change and impact has occurred, both positive and negative. The impact on our economy is already rapidly being felt with the disruption of many industries under way. There have been massive societal impacts too. Microsoft released its AI-powered Sydney chatbot, which made headlines for suggesting it would harm and blackmail users and wanted to escape its confines. A man allegedly committed suicide after interacting with an AI chatbot. Today, anyone can easily create AI-generated videos with deepfakes becoming highly realistic. Profound concerns are being raised about the new ease of production of disinformation and its impact on political processes because interacting with AI is becoming indistinguishable from interacting with a human, with no guarantees that the information produced is rooted in truth.

The technology itself, its applications and its impact on humanity, both economically and socially, are growing and changing on what feels like an hourly basis and yet in Canada there have only been a handful of mentions of this issue in Parliament, even as AIDA winds its way through the legislative process. AIDA needs to be shelved and Canada's approach to developing and regulating AI urgently rethought, in public, with industry and civil society input. There are several reasons for this.

First, the bill proposes to take the regulatory process away from the hands of legislators and put its control out of the public eye, behind closed doors and solely in the hands of a few regulators. This process was written before the deployment of ChatGPT and did not envision the pace of change in AI and how broad the societal impacts would rapidly become. Addressing these factors demands open, accountable debate in Parliament, which AIDA does not provide any sort of means to do.

Second, the bill primarily focuses on punitive measures rather than how Canada will position itself in what is rapidly becoming an AI-driven economy. The bill also proposes only to emerge with final regulations years from now. That pace needs to be faster and the process it proposes far less rigid to meet the emergent need presented by this amorphous and society-changing technology; so if not AIDA, then what?

First, Parliament needs to immediately educate itself on the state of play of what the current status of this technology is. My appeal

to everyone in this place of all political stripes is this. Artificial intelligence is something that they need to become a subject matter expert on. Everything in members' constituency is going to change and we need to be developing non-partisan approaches to both its growth and its regulation. We also need to educate ourselves on what the world is doing in response. At the same time, Parliament needs to develop a set of principles on Canada's overall approach to AI and then direct the government to use them.

I have already begun to address the need for Parliament to come together to educate itself. Senator Colin Deacon has been helping me to launch an all-party, cross-chamber working group of parliamentarians to put some form and thought to these issues. I invite all colleagues who are in this place today to join this effort.

• (1535)

We have had a heartening amount of interest from colleagues of all political stripes and a quiet agreement that, given the gravity of the impacts of AI, politicians should, as much as possible, be working across party lines to quickly develop intelligent solutions. Relevant parliamentary committees should also avail themselves of the opportunity to study these issues.

As far as the principles for government involvement regarding AI go, there are many that could be considered, including taking a global approach. Many countries have moved faster than Canada has on this matter, and with a much broader lens. The European Union, the United Kingdom and the United States are all far down the garden paths of different legislation and regulations, but experts are concerned that a disjointed patchwork of global rules will be counterproductive.

This week in *The Economist*, AI experts Gary Marcus and Anka Reuel propose that the world establish an integrated agency for developing best practice policies on AI regulation, much like the civil aviation organization. They could be on to something.

We also need to look at championing research while checking safety. Humanity learned the hard way that, while research into pharmaceutical products can benefit us, widely deploying drugs and devices into the population before safety is confirmed can pose enormous risks. Clinical trials and drug regulators were established in response to this dynamic.

Government Orders

In February, Gary Marcus and I co-authored an article that suggested that governments could enable a pause in deploying new AI technology while a similar regulatory process that encouraged research but paused on deployment, given the potential impact on humanity, was established. We also need to get alignment right.

Alignment, or how to develop immutable guard rails to ensure AI functions toward its intended goals, is a critical issue that still needs to be resolved. Government has a role to play here, as it seems that the industry is locked in a race to deploy new AI technology, not to figure out how to fix alignment problems. With Microsoft's knowledge of its troubling interactions with humans, the company's release of Sydney proves that the industry cannot be relied upon to regulate itself.

Regarding education on use, workers in an AI-driven economy will need new skills. For example, learning how to prompt AI and using it to support human creativity will be vital. The same goes for creating an environment where new AI-driven technologies and businesses can thrive.

Concerning privacy and intellectual property ownership, large language models are raising high degrees of concerns about how the data they have been fed has been obtained and how it is being used. The output of tools like ChatGPT will also raise questions about ownership for related reasons.

On nimbleness, the pace of technological change in AI is so rapid that the government must take a fast, flexible approach to future regulations. Rigid definitions will become quickly outdated, and wrong-headed interventions could halt positive growth while failing to keep pace with changes that pose risks to public safety. The government must approach AI with uncharacteristic nimbleness in an open relationship with Parliament, the public, industry and civil society. Any processes should be led by people with subject matter expertise in the area, not off the corner of the desks of a patchwork of bureaucrats.

We should also ask ourselves how we will approach technology that could surpass human capabilities: As I wrote in an article in January 2022, governments are accustomed to operating within a context that implicitly assumes humanity as the apex of intelligence and worth. Because of this, governments are currently designed to assess other life and technology in their functional utility for humanity. Therefore, they are not intended to consider the impact of sharing the planet with technology or other forms of life that could independently consider humanity's utility towards its own existence.

To simplify this concept with an example, governments have rules for how humans can use fire. It is legal to use fire as a heat source in certain conditions, but illegal to use fire to destroy someone else's house. How would our government respond if humans were to make fire sentient and then enable it to independently make these decisions based on what it deemed to be in its best interest?

Our governments are constructed to function in a context where humans are assumed to hold the apex of mastery. To succeed with AGI, our government should ask itself how it will operate in a world where this may no longer be the case, and AIDA would do none of this.

This is not an exhaustive list by any means. There are many issues surrounding AI that Parliament urgently needs to consider, but given the state of play, AIDA, in its current form, is different from the vehicle that Canada needs to get it where it needs to go.

● (1540)

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her thoughtful contribution to this debate. I think she opened a couple of important doors, such as the need for good governance, which is critical, but also the possibility that AI can be used for good if it is governed appropriately.

With respect to that, I just want to draw her attention to Mila, the Quebec Artificial Intelligence Institute, which is working with UNESCO, not only on good governance but also on how AI can be used for humanitarian and human rights activities. Is there, in her thinking, a way we can get this right, to use AI for good as well making sure it is governed well?

● (1545)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to speak in a large debate, actually with Noam Chomsky, if one can believe it, with the Montreal institute for artificial intelligence, on a similar topic. The reality is that, with AI, the toothpaste is out of the tube. We are not putting it back in. It is incumbent upon humanity to answer that question with a positive outcome that we are putting guardrails around AI so it is developed in the best interest of humanity and propels humanity forward. We need a governance system that allows us to do this.

I am not speaking maliciously against AIDA. It was written at a time well before the technological advances that happened, and it is not going to meet the needs of what my colleague opposite is describing. I would encourage him to go back to his caucus to say that we need to take this component of the bill out. The government needs to rethink it and Parliament needs to think in a non-partisan way about how we are going to drive to that outcome, with smart governance.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

Government Orders

Obviously, artificial intelligence can be put to good or bad use. One thing puzzles me, though. Generative AI, which describes ChatGPT, has recently displayed truly superior ability. It managed to gather a trove of data that would have been unimaginable even a few months ago. However, the legality of how this trove of data was obtained is unclear.

In relation to the part of Bill C-27 that deals with personal information and privacy, I would like to ask my colleague if she is concerned about how ChatGPT obtains data.

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, I am so glad we are having this debate. The large language model technology ChatGPT, as well as the Sydney chatbot, is based on these other technologies. It scrapes and uses massive data sets that may or may not be ethical to use, or as my colleague rightly mentions, they may have issues intellectual property ownership. It is the Wild West. There are no rules around this.

I would like to draw my colleague's attention on this matter to the fact that, without some sort of international agency preventing the balkanization of rules, and because data privacy is such a global network, unless we are taking that problem and working on it with peer countries, it is going to become even more of an issue. He is absolutely right.

Senator Deacon and I are starting a working group on these issues. I hope we can come up with some consensus before we have entrenched partisan positions on this to show that Canada will be a world leader in facilitating a global conversation on this and getting it right.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague about consent rights under this bill. Individuals, under Bill C-27, would have significantly diminished control over the collection, use and disclosure of their personal data. The new consent provisions ask the public to instill what could be an extraordinary amount of trust in businesses to keep themselves accountable as the bill's exceptions to consent allow organizations to conduct many kinds of activities without even the knowledge of individuals. The flexibility, under this bill, would allow organizations to shape the scope of not only legitimate interests but also what is reasonable, necessary and socially beneficial.

Does my hon. colleague share my concerns about the consent rights provisions of this bill, and does she have any suggestions as to what might improve it?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, my colleague raises an excellent point. I wish I had three hours to address the privacy components of Bill C-27. I am certainly very keen to follow, should this make it to committee, what happens there.

I am of the opinion that this should not make it to committee. There are so many amendments that need to be made on the privacy components, but more importantly because AIDA was tacked on as an afterthought to this bill. They need to be parsed out so due consideration can be given to the issues my colleague just raised. I think this bill is two bills, with half of it being something out of date and obsolete already. The government could have a far better

approach. I hope the public servants in the lobby are listening to this and take this consideration to heart.

• (1550)

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, so much has changed throughout the last 23 years. In the year 2000, there were about 740 million cellphone subscriptions worldwide. More than two decades later, that number sits at over eight billion. There are more phones on this planet than there are people. It is a statistic that should give anyone pause.

In 2000, Apple was still more than a year away from releasing the first iPod. Today, thanks to complex algorithms, Spotify is able to analyze the music I listen to and curate playlists I enjoy based on my own taste in music. In 2000, artificial intelligence was still mostly relegated to the realm of theoretical discussion, that is, unless we count the Furby. Today, ChatGPT can generate sophisticated responses to whatever I type into it, no matter how niche or complicated.

As technology changes, so too do the laws that surround and govern it. Canada's existing digital privacy framework, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Document Act, has not been updated since its passage in the year 2000. For this reason, it is good to see the government craft Bill C-27, which is supposed to provide a much-needed overhaul to our digital privacy regime.

For years, the government has been dragging its heels on this important overhaul. For years, Canada's privacy framework has been lagging behind our international counterparts. The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation, passed in 2016, is widely considered to be the gold standard for privacy protection. In comparison to the GDPR, I am not impressed with what the government has put forward in this bill.

Indeed, the largest portion of Bill C-27 is roughly 90% identical to the legislation it purports to be replacing, and what the bill has added is quite concerning. Instead of being a massive overhaul of Canada's archaic PIPEDA framework, Bill C-27 would do the bare minimum, while leaving countless loopholes that corporations and the government can use to infringe upon Canadians' charter rights.

Bill C-27, while ostensibly one bill, is actually made up of three distinct components, each with their own distinct deficiencies. To summarize these three components and their deeply problematic natures, Bill C-27, if passed in its current form, would lead to the authorization of privacy rights infringements, the creation of unneeded bureaucratic middlemen in the form of a tribunal and the stifling of Canada's emerging AI sector.

Government Orders

When it comes to the first part of this bill, which would enact the consumer privacy protection act, the name really says it all. It indicates that Canadians are not individuals with inherent rights, but rather, business customers. The legislation states that it has two purposes. It apparently seeks to protect the information of Canadians “while taking into account the need of organizations to collect, use or disclose personal information in the course of commercial activities.” In other words, individual rights and the interests of corporations or the government are supposed to work in tandem.

In the post-charter landscape, that just does not cut it. Privacy rights must be placed above corporate interests, not alongside them. In the words of Justice La Forest 34 years ago, “privacy is at the heart of liberty in a modern state. Grounded in man’s physical and moral autonomy”.

It is true that this portion of the bill mandates de-identification of data when one’s personal information is shared, and it is also true that it requires the knowledge or consent of the individual, but each of these terms, which should ideally serve as the bulwarks of privacy protection, are defined as vaguely as possible, and the remainder of the bill then goes on to describe the various ways in which consent is actually not required.

Subclause 15(5) of the bill would allow organizations to utilize a person’s information if they receive “implied consent”, a slippery term that opens the door to all kinds of abuses. Subclause 18(2) then gives those organizations a carte blanche to use implied consent as often as they would like, or even exclusively. Sure, there could be organizations that, out of the goodness of their hearts, would always seek the express consent of the individuals they are collecting data from, but express consent is in no way mandatory. It is not even incentivized.

Then we come to the concept of “legitimate interest”. Subclause 18(3) gives the green light for organizations to utilize or share one’s information if the organization feels that it has a legitimate reason for doing so. It is not just that this clause is incredibly vague, it is that it makes individual privacy rights subservient to the interests of the organization.

• (1555)

Moreover, the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that section 8 of the charter provides individual Canadians with a reasonable expectation of privacy. Given all of the exceptions I have provided, it is not clear to me that this bill would survive a charter challenge.

Recent events should show us the problem with giving so much leeway to corporations and so little thought to individual rights. In 2020, through a third party service provider, the Tim Hortons app began collecting the geolocation data of its users even though they were not using the app. There was also Clearview AI, which sent countless images of people to various police departments without their consent. Maybe Clearview had their “implied consent”. It is all up for debate with a term like that.

This legislation does the bare minimum for privacy protection in Canada and, in many ways, will actually make things worse. When we consider the way in which data collection might develop over the next 10 or 20 years, it is clear that this law will be out of date

the moment it is passed and will leave Canadians vulnerable to predatory data practices.

Then there is part 2 of Bill C-27, which intends to set up a Liberal-appointed data protection tribunal. This is not necessary. We already have a Privacy Commissioner who has both the mandate and the experience to do everything that this new tribunal has been tasked with doing. More government bureaucracy for the sake of more bureaucracy is the Liberal way, a tale as old as time itself. Instead of watering down the power of our Privacy Commissioner via middlemen, the duties contained within this part of Bill C-27 should be handed over to the commissioner.

Part 3 of Bill C-27 seeks to regulate the creation of AI in Canada. This is a worthwhile endeavour. At the beginning of my speech, I alluded to ChatGPT, but this only scratches the surface of how sophisticated AI has become and will continue to become in the decades ahead. The problem is the way in which this regulation itself is set up. The bill places no restrictions on the government’s ability to regulate. Unlimited regulation and hefty penalties, up to 5% of worldwide income I believe, is all that is being offered to those who research AI in Canada. This will cause AI investors to flee in favour of other countries, because capital hates uncertainty. This would be a tremendous loss, because, in 2019 alone, Canadian AI firms received \$658 million in venture capital.

Conservatives believe that digital data privacy is a fundamental right that should be strengthened, not opened to infringement or potential abuse.

Therefore, Bill C-27 is deeply flawed. It defines consent while simultaneously providing all sorts of reasons why consent can be ignored. It weakens the authority of the Privacy Commissioner. It gives such power to the government that it will likely spell disaster for Canada’s burgeoning AI sector.

This bill is in need of serious amendment. Privacy should be established, within the bill, as a fundamental right. Several vague terms in the bill need to be properly defined, including but not limited to “legitimate interest”, “legitimate business needs”, “appropriate purposes” and “sensitive information”. Subclause 2(2) states that the personal information of minors is sensitive. That is very true, but this bill needs to acknowledge that all personal information is sensitive. Consent must be made mandatory. The words “unless this Act provides otherwise” need to be struck from this bill.

Government Orders

I find it hard to believe that such substantial amendments can realistically be implemented at committee. For this reason, the legislation should be voted down and sent back to the drawing board. Canadians deserve the gold standard in privacy protection, like that of the EU. As a matter of fact, they deserve even better.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I share many of the concerns and comments members are making with respect to how quickly things are changing. AI, and the impact it is having on society, is quite significant. Where I am inclined to disagree with the member is that the legislation itself at least brings Canada forward, though maybe not to the degree some would like to see. There is the opportunity, after passing it through second reading, to bring it to committee and look at ways in which we can improve the legislation.

Could the member provide his thoughts on whether the Conservative Party, even if it does not see this as perfect legislation, at least sees it as a step forward that would be good to go to committee, where potential amendments could be made to make it even stronger legislation if they feel that is necessary?

• (1600)

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, what I find interesting about the member's comments is that it just seems that the Liberals never met an industry they did not try to kill.

In Holland 100 years ago, the wooden shoes were called “sabots”. When people threw them into the windmill to gum up the gears, that is where the term “sabotage” comes from, which is what this government tries to do in every single industry it meets, including AI.

Canada has the expertise, the educated computer scientists and technology experts in this country, to be a world leader in the development of AI, but the bill would create a 5% penalty on worldwide income and give all the power of regulations to the minister. If I were going to invest in AI, I would be—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): There are other members to ask questions.

The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague referred to privacy as a fundamental right. The former privacy commissioner also raised the topic of privacy as a fundamental right before the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

I would like to know what he means when he uses these words. Does he consider privacy to be a fundamental right?

[English]

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, we have, for example, the ruling of Justice La Forest on it 34 years ago. We have section 8 of the charter, which has been interpreted by the courts as protecting privacy rights.

Privacy is what this bill should be all about. It is because of concerns over people's personal, private information that this attempt

to legislate the issue is in front of us. However, the fact of the matter is that there are so many exceptions to the rule that it really would not at all do what it is supposed to do. In fact, it would really make matters worse.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, there were a lot of good issues that my colleague raised in this context, but I am concerned about where the Conservatives are at this moment, and maybe he can outline the alternative.

Right now, if we do not send the bill to committee, we then trust it to go back to the government and basically assume that it might do more consultation, that it might look at other legislation, that it will even bring the bill back and that the House could actually stand around for that process. If we do nothing on it, we then exclude all the commentary and information we should be getting from hundreds of witnesses who want to actually participate in a public debate on this right now.

Perhaps the member can lay out his party's vision on how long it will take AI to actually be raised in a responsible manner outside of the controls of the government alone, if the bill does not go to committee and we shut everything down now.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, the problem with this legislation is that it is just so fundamentally flawed. We just could not deal with all the changes that need to be made in the context of a committee. As just one example, when it comes to protecting the privacy rights of children, there is only one mention in the entire bill. It does not define “minor”. It does not define “sensitive information”. If this were a serious attempt at legislation, we would have, at the very minimum, hard and fast protections for the privacy rights of children, but the bill just does not do it. That is only one thing out of dozens of things.

The bill needs to go back to the drawing board. It needs to be more like what they have done in the European Union and it needs to protect Canadians' privacy.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-27, the digital charter implementation act. This legislation is the first update of federal private sector privacy laws in more than two decades.

Contained within this bill are three distinct pieces of legislation, each of which is flawed in its own way. The first piece of legislation within this bill would establish the consumer privacy protection act, legislation that completely fails to protect personal and sensitive information of individual Canadians in the digital era. The second piece of legislation within this bill would establish a tribunal system with respect to complaints around potential privacy rights violations. I submit that this tribunal system is duplicative, cumbersome and political, and that it would slow down the process of adjudicating and determining privacy complaints, to the detriment of individual Canadians and often to the benefit of powerful corporations.

Government Orders

The third piece of legislation within this bill seeks to establish a legal framework with respect to artificial intelligence systems. Let me say that it is important that the regulatory void that presently exists, with respect to the AI sector, be filled, but the substance of the bill, as it pertains to AI, is fundamentally flawed. It contains vague language. More concerning, it puts a significant amount of legislative power in the hands of the Minister of Industry by way of regulation, absent parliamentary scrutiny.

The government is essentially asking, with respect to AI, for Parliament to adopt a bill without knowing the details and without understanding the impact of the bill on AI. It is saying, “Trust us. Trust the minister to fill in the blanks and come up with the rules after the fact.” I do not trust the government on anything, after it has gotten just about everything wrong over these past eight years. In any event, it is an overreach. It is a power grab of sorts. It is inherently undemocratic and it undermines investor confidence in the AI sector when we need investor confidence because of the uncertainty the bill creates in giving the minister the power to essentially come up with and change the rules on a whim.

When it comes to the AI component of the bill, the government needs to go back to the drawing board and engage in meaningful consultation, consultation that simply did not take place.

This is a complex bill. It is more than 100 pages long. It includes many complex and technical matters and so, in the very limited time that I have to contribute to this debate, I want to focus on how this bill fails to adequately protect the privacy rights of individual Canadians.

Privacy has long been recognized as a fundamental right of Canadians. That is because it goes to the core of who we are as individuals and is essential to the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms. As the Supreme Court declared in a 1988 decision, “Privacy is at the heart of liberty in a modern state” and privacy “is worthy of constitutional protection”.

• (1605)

Unfortunately, Bill C-27 fails to put the privacy rights of Canadians first. Instead, it puts the interests of big corporations, big tech and data brokers ahead of the rights of individual Canadians, and that, without war, is unacceptable.

It is true that the preamble of the bill refers to privacy interests, and I emphasize the word “interests”, as being integral to individual autonomy, dignity and the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms. It is of significance that missing in the bill is any mention of rights, but instead privacy is referred to as an “interest” and not the right that it is.

The absence of rights-based language in the bill tips the scale against individual Canadians in favour of commercial interests. As a consequence, the tribunal, as well as the Privacy Commissioner, would face significant challenges in weighing the privacy rights of Canadians against commercial interests, more likely than not, unfortunately, to the detriment of individual Canadians.

Members do not have to take my word for it. They can take the word of the former privacy commissioner of Canada, Daniel Therrien, who, in a November 13, 2022, op-ed in the *Toronto Star* said

that the absence of rights-based language in this legislation “will likely reduce the weight of privacy in assessing the legality of intrusive commercial practices.” That was from the former privacy commissioner of Canada.

While the absence of rights-based language is a significant shortcoming in the bill, it is far from the only shortcoming in the bill when it comes to protecting the privacy rights of Canadians.

The bill contains many exceptions and loopholes with respect to obtaining the consent of Canadians for the collection, use and retention of data and private or personal information. So wide are the exceptions, so wide are the loopholes that the purported protections provided for in the bill are all but meaningless. The bill provides no clarity with respect to sensitive information. There are no broad categories around sensitive information, information worthy of additional protections, unlike legislation in other jurisdictions.

The bill is completely silent with respect to the selling of data. It provides no limitations or rules around data brokers. It provides nothing in the way of protections for Canadians around other areas. It does not provide a remedy, for example, for moral damages in the case of data breaches.

In so many respects, this bill falls short, and that is why it has been widely criticized by leading privacy experts. Canadians deserve better. That is why Conservatives will be voting against this bill. The Liberal government needs to go back to the drawing board.

• (1610)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member started off by talking about the sense of urgency that is there, because of the timing. It has been many years since we have seen the modernization of legislation to deal, in a substantial way, with the issue of privacy on the Internet. There are all forms of data banks and other things that are out there. People want to have the assurance that the national government is in fact acting on the issue.

My concern is that the Conservative Party seems to be determined not to see privacy legislation. Even if it disagrees with it, the principles of the legislation are very positive. Why would the Conservative Party not want to see this legislation at least get to the committee stage, where it could be further discussed?

Government Orders

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, to answer the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, the bill is fundamentally flawed. It is unsupportable on that basis. If it were a matter of a few amendments, it would make sense to send the bill to committee on the basis that the bill was supportable on principle, but that is not the case with the bill. Indeed, with respect to the consent provisions of the bill, the bill arguably would take a step back from the completely inadequate measures that were provided in PIPEDA.

• (1615)

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, the section of the legislation on artificial intelligence, or AI, suggests self-regulation. I would like to know whether my colleague supports self-regulation or if, on the contrary, the state should further regulate the use of AI.

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, what we need with respect to the AI component of the bill is clarity, and we need certainty. What we do not need is the power grab the government has afforded itself, whereby the minister would be afforded enormous powers by way of regulations that would create significant uncertainty.

There was a complete lack of consultation. I believe the consultation only began in June, and that underscores why the bill needs to be scrapped and needs to be defeated. The government needs to go back, do its homework, engage in consultation and get this right.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, we have been talking a lot today about, as I have certainly heard clearly from the Conservatives, how the bill is without redemption and cannot be fixed as it is just too flawed. One of the previous speakers for the Conservatives mentioned that maybe it could be split into two because it is so large, and certainly I agree. There are so many things that are the matter with the bill, and this is not the first time we have seen Liberal legislation that is highly flawed and that we must try to spend a great deal of time fixing. However, the parliamentary secretary and my own colleague noted the timing, and going back and taking our time knowing the industry is moving so quickly and the technology is moving so quickly.

Are there any recommendations the member could make for when it goes to committee? Maybe splitting the bill into two would be potentially helpful so we can take our time. The bill is out there, so what can we do to make it better?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, if the bill is passed, given the trend with respect to data practices, the bill will be, for all intents and purposes, already out of date, and that is a problem. However, I would submit that if it is studied at committee, which I expect it will be, it would require significant amendments around protecting the individual privacy rights of Canadians. There are major gaps missing from the legislation that I outlined, including with respect to sensitive information. There is a lack of broad categories, and the fact that this is not defined needs to be worked on. There are a whole lot of other provisions. There are many, in fact, which is why we cannot support the bill.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise on behalf of my privacy-loving constituents in Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Bill C-27 is another piece of legislation that had to be resurrected after the Prime Minister called his superspreader pandemic election. Originally, this was supposed to be a long overdue update to the Privacy Act, and it has since morphed into Bill C-27, the data-grab act.

Everything about Bill C-27 should leave the Liberals feeling embarrassed. A Canadian's right to privacy is fundamental. Sadly, Canadians' privacy rights are not a priority for the government.

This bill has languished for years. It was first introduced immediately after the original online streaming censorship act was introduced. However, when the Prime Minister called his pandemic election and reset all legislation, what did the Liberals make a priority? Was it the privacy rights of Canadians? No. Was it securing Canadians' ownership over their data? No. Instead, what the Liberals prioritized was a bailout for big telecom and a bailout for the legacy media.

Not only does the government care more about padding the bottom line of Postmedia, but it also adopted Rupert Murdoch's false narrative about tech profiting off the content produced by the news media. Social media companies and search engines do not profit off the news media. They profit off us. These companies profit off our data, and the Liberals know the truth. Unfortunately, this legislation seeks to make it easier for companies to profit off our privacy.

If Bill C-27 is not significantly improved at committee, then together with Bill C-11 and Bill C-18, the government will have entrenched the surveillance economy in Canadians' lives. By combining the updates to the Privacy Act with the creation of a new artificial intelligence act, the Liberals have actually illustrated the brave new world we live in.

The Privacy Act and the way we talk about privacy even today are holdovers from the industrial era. We do not live in that world anymore. In the industrial economy, privacy rights were concerned with the ability to control what information could be shared. The goal was to prevent harm that could come from our personal information being used against us.

In effect, information was personal and an economic liability. We spent money on shredders to destroy personal information. The careless use of our personal information could only have a negative value, but then the world changed. Our personal information stopped being a liability and became an asset.

Government Orders

It started out slowly. Early examples were Amazon recommending a new book based on previous purchases and Netflix recommending what DVD rental we should next receive by mail. Google then began displaying ads next to search results. That was the eureka moment: Targeted ads were very profitable.

However, the targeting was pretty basic. If someone searched for shoe stores near them, Google returned search results alongside ads for shoes. Then it became ads for shoes on sale nearby. Then came Facebook and millions of people signed up. In exchange for an easy way to connect with friends and family, all someone had to do was share all their personal information, like who their friends were, how many friends they had and their geographical proximity to friends.

With the addition of the “like” button, the data harvesting exploded. If someone liked a news story about camping, they would start seeing ads for tents and sleeping bags. Every action Canadians took online, every single bit of their data, was commodified. Our privacy was turned into property and we lost both.

Not only does this bill not secure privacy rights, but it effectively enshrines the loss of our property rights with just two words: legitimate interest. Proposed subsection 18(3), entitled “Legitimate interest”, has this to say:

(3) An organization may collect or use an individual's personal information without their knowledge or consent if the collection or use is made for the purpose of an activity in which the organization has a legitimate interest that outweighs any potential adverse effect on the individual resulting from that collection or use

Is “legitimate interest” defined anywhere in the legislation? No. It is just another example of the vagueness found throughout the legislation.

● (1620)

Even if we accept the plain-language definition and that private business really somehow does have a genuine, legitimate reason to collect private information without consent, it is weighed against the adverse effect. However, this is industrial-era thinking. It views personal information only as a potential liability. Businesses have a legitimate interest in making money. With the Internet and mobile phones, much of our private information can be collected without any adverse effect. This legislation turns the private information of Canadians into the property of corporations and calls it legitimate.

I mentioned earlier that combining the privacy legislation with the AI legislation actually puts a spotlight on the issue of private data as property. However, as important as it is to highlight the connection, it is more important that these bills be separated. The artificial intelligence and data act has been slapped onto previously introduced privacy legislation.

With the privacy portion of the legislation, the devil is in the details. Overall, however, the bill reflects a general consensus developed over countless committee studies. That is not to mention the contributions to the privacy debate from the federal and provincial privacy commissioners. The issue has been well studied, and the minister has indicated that the government is open to responsible amendments. I am sure that the committee is well equipped to improve the privacy sections of this bill.

The same cannot be said about the artificial intelligence section of the bill. It seems rushed, because it is. It is intentionally vague. The Liberals claim the vagueness is required to provide them with regulatory flexibility and agility. The truth is, they do not know enough to be more precise. I have been trying to get a study on artificial intelligence in the defence committee for years, but there was always a more pressing issue. AI was treated like nuclear fusion technology, something that was always just over the horizon.

Since this bill was introduced 10 months ago, we have gone from ChatGPT to open-source GPT models, which any teenager can apparently run on their personal computer now. AI programs went from producing surrealist art to creating photorealistic images of the Pope in a puffy jacket. We have gone from short clips of deepfake videos impersonating real people to generating fictional people speaking in a real-time video. When we all started to learn Zoom in 2020, how many people thought the other person on the screen they were talking to could just be a fake? Now it is a real possibility.

The speed at which AI is developing is not an argument for delaying AI regulation; it shows that it is imperative to get the regulation right. Would this bill do that? The only honest answer is that we do not know. They do not know. Nobody truly knows. However, we can learn.

We should split this bill and let the stand-alone AI bill be the first legislation considered by one of the permanent standing committees, adding artificial intelligence to its official responsibilities. Artificial intelligence is not going away, and while much of the media attention has focused on chatbots, artistic bots and deepfakes, AI is unlocking the secrets to protein folding. This has the potential to unlock cures to countless different cancers and rare genetic diseases.

A paper was just published describing how an AI trained on data about the mass of the planets and their orbits was able to rediscover Kepler's laws of motion and Einstein's theory of time dilation. If we get this wrong, Canada could be left behind by the next revolution in science and discovery.

Given the government's track record on digital technology, Canadians should be worried about the Liberals rushing vague legislation through to regulate an emerging technology. Rather than modernizing the Broadcasting Act, they are trying to drag the Internet back to the 1980s. With Bill C-18, they claim that linking is a form of stealing.

The Liberals and their costly coalition allies do not even understand how broadcasting technology or the Internet works. They see people's personal data as the legitimate property of corporations, and now they are seeking the power to regulate a revolutionary technology. They did nothing while the world shifted below them, and now they are trying to rush regulations through without understanding the scope and scale of the challenge. Protecting Canadians' privacy and establishing property rights over their personal data should have been prioritized over bailing out Bell and Rogers.

• (1625)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the legislation the member makes reference to is there, in essence, to modernize the broadcasting industry. This has been pointed out. It is there to ensure a more level playing field. It is there to ensure that some of these big worldwide tech firms are contributing to Canadian content.

This legislation is there to protect the privacy of Canadians. A lot of this legislation, and there is a substantial amount, is there because there is a need for it. It is needed as the Internet and technology continue to grow, whether it is AI or the many other types of data fields people are worried about. Would the member not agree that we need to change with the times and bring in this type of legislation in order to protect the interests and the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I need to give the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke time to answer.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, the member opposite should realize that the Internet is not a form of broadcasting. The Broadcasting Act was brought in to regulate the different bandwidths and the allocations to different stations. We do not need that with the Internet. Instead of regulating technology in the public's interest, they are now regulating speech in the interest of the legacy media. Let us get the privacy bill to committee so that it can be improved and passed.

• (1630)

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke at length about regulating AI. I wonder if she is aware of the European Union bill called the AI Act that was introduced in November 2021 and is currently being studied for adoption by the European Union.

Does she believe we should wait and take guidance from this standard, which is set to become the golden rule internationally anyway?

[English]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, I am not certain that what is good for Europe is necessarily good for Canada. In fact, a lot of things that are decided for Europe are definitely not in the best interest of Canada. That being said, I do not believe we should be rushing into artificial intelligence legislation. We could certainly look at what is generated from the European study without committing to its adoption in Canada. We need to make sure we get it right; gathering as much information as we can about how to get it right is what is important.

Government Orders

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, the NDP has been fighting for privacy rights and released a digital bill of rights several years ago. It has been trying to talk about consent provisions for years. Does the member agree that there needs to be strengthened wording regarding valid consent by restoring understanding in the PIPEDA under section 6.1 of the act?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, a person's data is personal, private property. It is the individual's right to decide who should and should not have it. It should not be some automatic, microscopic text that people need to click on in order to get something they need in a hurry without really understanding the full ramifications of what they are consenting to. Instead of putting consent all through it, what we should do is enshrine what our property rights are when it comes to information that pertains to us individually.

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, with all her concerns about Facebook, is the member aware she is broadcasting this speech today live on her Facebook feed?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, I am using Facebook Live right now because it is another way to allow Canadians to know what happens in this chamber. Some of them are on a bus or at school, and they do not have access to a television. However, it is not broadcasting like a TV station. This is something they can access on their own without the need to collect a specific—

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): 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 South Okanagan—West Kootenay, Forestry Industry; the hon. member for Spadina—Fort York, The Budget.

[English]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Madam Speaker, before I start, I have to say that I have learned a lot listening to the interventions in this debate. I've just learned that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs is subscribing to the feed of the hon. member who just spoke. I know he is a brilliant and knowledgeable man, so he must have other sources of information. That I can guarantee.

[Translation]

It is my pleasure to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-27, the digital charter implementation act, 2022, which, as my colleagues know, contains three parts.

Government Orders

Part 1 enacts the consumer privacy protection act and replaces Part 1 of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, or PIPEDA. Part 2 establishes a personal information and data protection tribunal, which is a key component in the enforcement of the consumer privacy protection act. Finally, part 3, which has been the subject of more discussion this afternoon, enacts the artificial intelligence and data act, which lays the foundation for Canada's first regulations governing the development, deployment and design of artificial intelligence systems. I will come back to that a little later.

First of all, I implore the members of this House to support Bill C-27 and send it to committee for further study. In my view, Bill C-27, as it is currently drafted, is a big step in the right direction in terms of both privacy protection and artificial intelligence. Obviously, there are areas where the bill could be improved. I have great confidence in the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, which I have the honour of chairing. I know that it will study this bill carefully and come back to the House with amendments that will be useful and improve the two important areas protected by Bill C-27, namely privacy and the regulation of artificial intelligence. This will help foster innovation while ensuring that any risks associated with this new technology are well managed in Canada.

It is important for us to move forward and vote in favour of Bill C-27, because the privacy legislation it replaces was enacted over 20 years ago. I am referring to PIPEDA, the law that caused me so many headaches when I was a young lawyer. Now, 20 years later, we all know that its approach to regulating privacy protection is a little outdated. With organizations growing ever more powerful and collecting ever more data using increasingly intrusive technologies, the time has come to modernize the protection of personal information in Canada. Our privacy is under attack.

In my opinion, privacy is one of the cornerstones of our democracy, just as philosopher Vladimir Jankélévitch saw courage as the cardinal virtue without which all other virtues grow dim or practically disappear. Courage is the impetus.

To me, privacy is kind of the same thing, because it leaves room for the inner life a person needs to feel free to express themselves, free to think and therefore be truly free. Jeremy Bentham understood that, as his panopticon concept shows. A panopticon is simple; it is a prison that, instead of being in the shape of a large rectangle with several cells lined up next to one another, where a guard comes by from time to time to check on the inmates, it is circular and has a central tower where a guard may observe the inmates. Knowing that they might be watched, the inmates will modify their behaviour and will be better behaved. The idea is that when we know that we might be monitored, we censor ourselves, which is what makes privacy so important. To me, that is what makes privacy one of the foundations of our democracy.

Bill C-27 does not affect the public sector, the relationship between the government and citizens, or the Privacy Act. It targets the private sector, which in my opinion is just as important, given the rising power of some companies that are collecting more and more information about citizens all the time, as I mentioned. As we saw from what has come to light in the United States, in some cases, these companies have a suspiciously close relationship with the government. Take, for example, Edward Snowden's revelations and

the "Twitter Files". Given the amount of data they collect, they know their users so intimately, maybe even more intimately than the users know themselves, that studies show they even have the ability to change users' behaviour. For example, think about social media and the suggestions that are made. That can influence a person's ideology. It can also influence consumer choices.

For me, there is no doubt that we need to improve and increase the protection of personal information and privacy. There are some good things in Bill C-27. I will start by talking about those things, and then I will move on to what could be improved.

● (1635)

First of all, I am very much in favour of the power given to Canadians under this legislation that allows them to delete their data. I think that is a must. I also welcome the power that Canadians will have to share their personal information among organizations, which could encourage competition.

In my view, it is commendable that the bill gives greater powers to the Privacy Commissioner, including the power to order organizations to stop collecting or using data. I think that reflects what we have heard from the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, for example. I also welcome the fact that that office will have more flexibility to focus on its priorities or the priorities reported to it by Canadians.

I would also point out that the tougher penalties in the bill are good news. Finally, a key aspect worth mentioning is the protection of minors, as the bill makes their personal information de facto sensitive, which enhances their protection. I think that is very positive.

As for what could be improved and what should be noted and studied in committee, I believe that privacy protection should be set out as a fundamental human right, both in the preamble of the bill and in clause 5. I think that would send a clear message and have legal consequences. It would send a clear message to the courts having to address this issue and result in significant legal effects. I know that the government has raised jurisdictional issues regarding this issue, and so I would be interested in hearing more in committee.

I also think it would be worthwhile clarifying the provisions around consent. The proposed subsection 15(4) of the new act talks about plain language that an individual to whom the organization's activities are directed would reasonably be expected to understand. That is a change from the current version of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, which refers to the user's understanding. I do not understand this change. I am not certain that it adds clarity to the consent to be obtained. I would like to hear more about that.

I am not convinced of the probity of implied consent, which is set out in subsection 15(5). In my opinion, it would be preferable to only have express consent, without which a company could invoke legitimate interest, as long as that legitimate interest is clearly defined in the legislation as being secondary to the interests and fundamental rights of individuals, a bit like we find in the European general data protection regulation.

Finally, I believe that the sensitive information referred to in the bill would benefit from being clarified and defined, in the absence of a very specific definition as seen in Quebec's Bill 25, which gives companies a lot of latitude to determine what they consider sensitive information. I think that Bill C-27 would be improved by clarifying and defining the notion of sensitive information.

I would be curious to learn more in committee about the security safeguards, control over one's own personal data, the role and benefit of the tribunal being created, and how it would protect privacy. To be completely honest, I have not formed an opinion yet, but I am eager to find out more.

This leaves me far too little time to talk about artificial intelligence. However, that is what I wanted to talk about the most. Time flies when having fun. I will say a few words, if only to point out the staggering increase in AI over the past two years.

For the benefit of any lay people in the House, GPT-3 was created in 2020. I am also a layperson, but I have benefited from the knowledge of experts like Jérémie Harris. I want to give a shout-out to him, because he organized a conference on Parliament Hill with me a few months ago to try to raise awareness about artificial intelligence. He explained to me that there was a revolution in the AI world two years ago. Instead of trying to connect artificial neurons, researchers realized that all they had to do was increase the number of artificial neurons to create ever more powerful neural networks. The speed of the increase has been staggering: GPT-2 had 1.5 billion parameters, GPT-3 had 175 billion parameters, and GPT-4 has 100 trillion parameters. They are likely getting close to achieving human-level intelligence.

Everyone is talking about ChatGPT, but it is not the only AI out there. There is also Google's LaMDA, which is not public and which we know very little about. Blake Lemoine, one of the engineers who worked on it, was fired this summer because he said that he thought Google's LaMDA was sentient. That is one example, but there are also PaLM and Gato, which were developed by Google's DeepMind Lab. That is not to mention all the initiatives that we are not even aware of.

I think AI opens up a lot of opportunities, but it also comes with a lot of risk. When human intelligence can be so accurately mimicked and probably even surpassed one day in certain areas, that comes with national security and public safety risks.

• (1640)

That being said, I echo the call of many researchers, including Yoshua Bengio and others in the field, who are saying that we need to support the principle of Bill C-27, that the bill needs to be examined in committee and that Canada needs AI regulations.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, that was a very interesting speech from my colleague, who is the chair of the industry committee and does great work on that committee. I enjoyed my few short months on the committee serving with him.

I have a specific question about the issue of balancing an individual's privacy rights with the expectation that corporations and services actually use the individual's data to give the individual a better experience: In order to have a better legal standing to protect an individual's privacy rights, could the member tell us why the government did not put fundamental privacy as an individual right in clause 5, the purpose of the bill?

• (1645)

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Madam Speaker, from my understanding, the reason invoked by the government is some jurisdictional issues, but I am unclear, and that is one of the questions I will be more than happy to ask in committee. If he does not, I will, to understand why it has not been enshrined. In my mind, it would be worthwhile having privacy as a fundamental right, enshrined not only in the preamble of the bill but also in clause 5, because it would give more weight to privacy when courts are asked to interpret this bill, which to me, as I have mentioned in my speech, is a fundamental right and a fundamental aspect of our democratic life.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Louis-Hébert for his speech. I thought it was open, balanced and reasonable, which is unsurprising coming from someone who refers to Jankélévitch and courage.

I would like to know what he thinks about Europe's ongoing efforts to draft the AI act, which could become a global standard, as the General Data Protection Regulation did for privacy protection.

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Madam Speaker, I am following the debate.

If we look at Europe, it seems quite complicated to create a framework to govern artificial intelligence. However, I think we should draw inspiration from Europe's efforts. The Standing Committee on Industry and Technology is certainly going to want more information about how the Europeans are going about it.

One thing is certain. I think what makes this so difficult is that the technology is evolving so fast. The part of Bill C-27 that deals with AI, as currently proposed, gives the government the freedom to do a lot through regulation, which is not necessarily ideal as far as I am concerned. However, when it comes to AI, I doubt that there is any other option. Today we are talking about ChatGPT, but I can almost guarantee that by next year, if not this summer, we will have moved on to something completely different.

Private Members' Business

The situation is changing so fast that I think we need to be very nimble in dealing with AI. I have heard the Conservative member for Calgary Nose Hill, whom I see eye to eye with on these issues, use the word nimble.

What I like about Bill C-27 is that it creates the position of a commissioner who reports to the minister and who will look into these issues. I have long believed that we should have someone to oversee AI, someone to study all the new capabilities and the risks of accidents that this poses—because there are serious risks—and to be able to translate this into terms that the general public, legislators and the House can understand.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I guess there are a few things that I would like to learn from my hon. colleague. We know that since the Liberals came into power, foreign tech giants have more than tripled their lobbying efforts in Ottawa, especially with the Liberal government, and Amazon, Google and Facebook have been a large part of that. I would love to hear his concerns or thoughts around that.

Bill C-27 does not explicitly apply to political parties. As we have seen in the past, and we just saw the Green Party have a breach, which was unfortunate, the possibility of privacy breaches and misuse exists in the political arena. Does my colleague agree that the bill should be amended to specifically include political parties?

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Madam Speaker, it is a question that has come up many times, even when we look at PIPEDA historically. Why were political parties excluded? They seem to have fallen into a no man's land, in many respects, when it comes to privacy and data protection. I would be interested to know why and, if not, how we can work to better protect the data of Canadians when it comes to political parties. Definitely, it is a very worthwhile question that the member has raised.

• (1650)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

[English]

Pursuant to Standing Order 69.1, the first question is on parts 1 and 2, including the schedule to clause 2 of the bill.

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that parts 1 and 2, including the schedule to clause 2 of the bill be carried or carried on division or wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, we request a recorded vote.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The recorded division on parts 1 and 2, including the schedule to clause 2 of the bill stands deferred.

[Translation]

The next question is on part 3 of the bill.

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that part 3 of the bill be carried or carried on division or wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

[English]

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The recorded division on part 3 of the bill stands deferred.

Normally at this time, the House would proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at the second reading stage of the bill. However, pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, April 24, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent at this time to see the clock at 5:30 p.m. so that we could begin the Private Members' Business hour.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-288, An Act to amend the Telecommunications Act (transparent and accurate broadband services information), as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

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

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): moved that the bill be concurred in.

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

[English]

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, I would ask that this carry on division.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Dan Mazier moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is a good day for Canadians because they are one step closer to knowing what Internet service they are actually paying for.

We all know the story, especially for those who live in rural Canada. Canadians across this country buy expensive Internet services only to realize that they do not receive the speeds that were advertised to them. This is because the government allows Internet companies to sell speeds that Canadians may never get.

The speeds that customers see when they go to purchase Internet are not guaranteed, and they are rarely minimum or average speeds. Instead, the government allows Internet companies to advertise maximum theoretical speeds. Such words as “up to” are used in these advertisements, leading consumers to believe that an Internet service is better than it is.

For example, when a Canadian goes to buy an Internet package, they may purchase download speeds of up to 50 megabits per second and upload speeds of 10 megabits per second. However, they may never get those speeds. A customer does not even know what speeds they are most likely to receive. Some may say that this is illegal; it is false advertising. However, it is not; the government allows it to happen. Bill C-288 addresses this by providing customers with accurate and transparent information. Simply put, it clarifies what an Internet service a customer is buying.

First, this legislation would mandate Internet companies to provide Canadians with typical download and upload speeds and not maximum theoretical speeds. No longer would Canadians be given best-case scenarios. Instead, they would have realistic expectations. This would allow them to make informed decisions about which service best fits their needs and budget.

Second, Bill C-288 would provide Canadians with quality metrics during peak usage times. It is no secret that service quality is better when no one is using the Internet, but we should face it: Most of us are online at the same time as everyone else. Knowing the Internet speed at 7 p.m. is more relevant than knowing the speed at 3 a.m.

The legislation would also initiate a process to allow industry, advocacy groups and the public to work together to develop a model that is in the public's best interest. The Telecommunications Act lacks a public interest component. Therefore, it is very important that any amendment to the Telecommunications Act stresses the importance of putting consumers first. Canadians need to trust the information given to them, and this collaborative approach will help build that trust.

Finally, thanks to a Conservative amendment at the Standing Committee on Industry, Bill C-288 was strengthened by ensuring that it would be properly enforced if passed into law. When Bill C-288 was at committee, no one opposed it. I want to share some of the testimony given by the experts who appeared at committee.

Dr. Reza Rajabian, a competition policy and telecom strategy expert said: “[Bill C-288] has the potential to achieve its stated objectives of better informing consumers and promoting competition.”

Private Members' Business

Ms. Erin Knight, a senior campaigner for OpenMedia, was very direct in urging Parliament to pass this bill quickly. She stated:

When you sign up for an Internet plan, you deserve to know what you're paying for before you pay. This legislation will make it so. At the end of the day, it's about truth and transparency. If an Internet provider is advertising certain speeds, consumers have the right to know, before they buy, whether those speeds accurately reflect average performance.

Even the commissioner and CEO of the Commission for Complaints for Telecom-Television Services agreed that a problem exists with misleading speed claims. He said:

In our work, we regularly see complaints that arise when customers think they're buying something but wind up getting something different. Disclosure of service metrics might very well help to avoid this situation.

The commissioner, who rarely comments on public policy, went on to say:

...given the number of Internet service quality complaints that we see, it seems reasonable to conclude that making service metrics available to customers when they subscribe to an Internet service would be a step forward...

I know that some Internet companies have pushed back by claiming that Canadians are getting what they pay for. However, one visit to rural Canada would quickly tell a different story.

● (1655)

My message to the Internet service providers is this: If their service quality is, in fact, as good as they say it is, then they have nothing to worry about. I cannot imagine that Internet companies would be happy if the government allowed Canadians to pay up to the amount on their monthly bills.

Conservatives believe that more competition is needed in our telecom sector, and to improve competition, we must allow Canadians to compare accurate information because, if we make Internet companies disclose what they are selling, Canadians could make more informed decisions on what they want, and if Canadians can clearly see that one Internet service is better than another, they would take their money where they chose to. That would mean that Internet providers that sell poor quality services would be pressured to either upgrade their service or lower their prices.

In closing, I want to go back to the testimony from OpenMedia at the industry committee. Ms. Knight stated, “If we can't do this simple, uncontroversial, pro-consumer move that other countries have already done, I'll be deeply concerned about our ability as a country to make the changes we so desperately need.” I agree. If we cannot pass this simple, uncontroversial, pro-consumer bill, nothing will ever change under the government.

Private Members' Business

Let us face it. We have a long way to go, and there is a lot that still needs to change, when it comes to connectivity. It was just last month when Canada's Auditor General confirmed that over a million Canadian households and over 50% of first nations communities still do not have access to high-speed Internet. I will let that sink in. Over one million households and 50% of first nations communities are still not connected. This is despite a government that gallivants across this country announcing billions of dollars with little to show for.

The Liberals say they are improving cellphone service, but if they travelled to rural Canada, they would quickly figure out how bad cellphone service really is. I wonder why, after eight years, Canadians still do not have cellphone coverage, despite the government claiming they do. Maybe it is because the Auditor General also revealed that the government has no targets or timelines for improving cellular services across Canada.

Can anyone believe that there are at least eight bureaucratic programs under the government for connectivity? There are eight bureaucratic programs chasing the same goal, but unable to achieve that one goal. Talk about government gatekeepers getting in the way.

Even when this bill passes, there is plenty more work needed to increase telecom competition, lower prices for consumers and improve connectivity for rural Canadians. This would be only one step in the right direction, but it would be a step that could give Canadians hope, and I am hopeful too, for a Conservative government that would find more solutions for Internet and cellphone users in Canada. Until then, let us do what we can and pass Bill C-288.

• (1700)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would have to ask the member what his thoughts are the legislation and how it ultimately got through the committee. The member made reference to the type of support it received from all sides of the House, which I see as a strong positive. I am anticipating that members in the House will even want to see it get through the third reading.

For me, it is all about consumer awareness and protection, and that is the reason I am supporting it. I am wondering if he could provide his thoughts, specifically on why it is so important that, as a House, we recognize this as a consumer protection type of legislation.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, this is a great question. This is why this bill actually started. We realized that Canadian consumers were actually being sold, by Internet service providers, a false bill of goods, and it was legal. That had to change. How would we even know what we are buying?

Like I said in my speech, I cannot imagine someone saying they can pay for up to these theoretical speeds, if they want to buy them. This legislation really brought that to the attention of the whole House, which has obviously caught on to this. I think it would be a really good solution and a small step forward for Canadians buying Internet service.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for bringing this great bill forward. I was very proud to jointly second it.

He made a comment at the end of his speech that I would like to give him an opportunity to expand upon. It was about how important broadband Internet is and how little we have across Canada right now, especially in rural Canada. I know many parts of my riding do not have it. With the current federal government, the only way to get in contact with federal services is digitally, yet many of my constituents do not even have three megabits per second down and one up.

Could the member expand on why this is so important and why we need high-speed Internet as an essential service for all Canadians?

• (1705)

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, the Internet is a reality of modern-day life, but as I said in my speech, can anyone imagine that 50% of first nations are still not covered? They still have no access to Internet. Despite all the billions of dollars that have been spent and all the toil that has gone on across government departments, they are still not connected, never mind the millions of rural homes that are not covered.

It is tremendously important that we address this bill and get it passed to take a small step forward in trying to connect all of Canada.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate my colleague for bringing this bill forward. I used to work in the telecom industry, and simply having clarifying language like the member is bringing forward would be super helpful, from my background and experience. Also, I know making sure that customers have the proper expectations for what they are going to receive would have made my job a lot simpler.

In an effort to bring forward greater transparency, I am just wondering if the member has anything further he would like to say about providing greater transparency for consumers.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, one thing this bill talks about is creating a process where industry and consumers can actually sit down and talk about what their needs are and how they can help each other get connected. That is the part of this bill that I am the most proud of. It is so important, as is setting reasonable expectations for the kind of service people are buying. This bill would help that conversation move forward, and I think it would better our lifestyle, especially in rural Canada, moving forward.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my question for the member, I look at the legislation as a very positive piece of legislation and there to enhance and protect consumers. I can honestly say that we need to do what we can as a House and as a legislative body to look at ways to enhance protection for consumers. That is the reason we have seen the type of support that the bill has received in second reading, going into committee and now here getting it out of report stage into third reading with the expectation that the legislation will be passing.

The Internet is in many ways an essential service. With respect to the opportunities, they are more than just a social place on the Internet or a place where one can just communicate with friends. Today there is so much activity on the Internet and a lot of that is economic. It is a job creator. It has allowed more life in many of our rural communities and all regions of our country. It does not take too much to establish a website, for example, and establish a small business where people could be selling a product or a service. We are seeing more and more, literally thousands, of these types of entrepreneurs over the Internet.

That is one of the reasons that as a government, over the past six or seven years, we have seen a great desire to enhance rural connectivity. We recognize that, as the Internet continues to be that essential service, we have to ensure that rural communities are receiving the types of connections that are so critically important for those communities to be able to continue to grow and to prosper. That is what happened in many ways because of the Internet, or at least it contributes to it.

Understanding the importance and the essential needs of having an Internet service is a good starting point. If we follow that up with the speed levels and accessibility, then it starts to get right down to the nuts and bolts of what we could and should be doing, which is not only ensuring that communities have Internet but that they also have fast Internet because that does matter. We know it matters.

All we have to do is take a look at the advertising. The member made reference to the type of advertising that Internet service providers will publish. Service providers advertise that for \$130 a month, this is the type of speed one could get with their service package. Is it false advertising if in fact people can at three o'clock in the morning click into their Internet and get that particular speed that they talked about for \$130 a month? Technically, maybe it is not, but it is definitely somewhat misleading because at the end of the day we all know, understand and appreciate, as the member has pointed out, that if there is a much greater number of people participating on the Internet between six o'clock and 10 o'clock in the evening or on a Sunday morning, they will find that they are not able to achieve that rapid speed, whether uploading or downloading. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that there is more accountability.

I appreciate it, because it is not too often that we get Conservatives recognizing the value of the CRTC. There is a role for the CRTC in this and that is one of the reasons that back in May of last year we had the minister provide a policy directive to the CRTC,

Private Members' Business

which talks about the importance of ensuring competition, enhancing the rights of consumers and promoting lower prices.

• (1710)

We are as concerned with price points for Internet services as we are with those of cellphones, but maybe that is a debate for another day. These are essential services that Canadians are dependent upon and we can appreciate the need for those consumers to be fully informed, or at least for those service providers to be obligated to be more consumer friendly with the type of advertising they are putting out and what they are telling Canadians.

I have had first-hand experience trying to access the Internet in both rural and urban Manitoba, and there is a substantial difference. That is the reason why, I put the question to my colleague across the way that recognized that, first and foremost, the legislation we are talking about today is really about consumer protection.

Often, when we see the contracts that come from these providers, we look at them and say we are interested. We look at the speed we will get for \$135 and think it is pretty good. It gives us a sense of how fast that download can occur and how great those computer games are going to be or how quickly we are going to be able to place an order on the computer and get something delivered to our home.

It is in the details, but even on a computer screen, those details are in a microfont. I always find it interesting that, when we get those contracts, there are literally thousands of words to read in a size 6 font, and that is not only in this industry but also in many different industries.

I was at a computer store just about a week or so ago, and I got one of those forms. If I were to have taken my time to read it, I would have been there for another hour. I did not think that would be fair to the consumer behind me, so I just listened to what I was being told and felt comfortable and trusting enough to put my name to it. I do not know exactly what kind of warranty there is and all that kind of stuff, and I hope I never have to find out about the warranty point.

Having a more consumer-friendly market is something we should all strive for because we know that the constituents we represent, just like me in my example, are not necessarily reading all of the details, so when they see the speed they can get for a certain amount of money, the assumption is that 24-7, that will be the speed that will be available to them.

When we talk about 100-plus dollars a month, we are talking roughly \$1,500 a year. It is a lot of money. It is a huge commitment, and it is not all that easy to get out of some of those commitments if we find we are disappointed. For example, if we are creating a business, and the window for our business sales and so forth is during that prime time, we may find that we do not have the speed that is necessary. That would be a bit of a disappointment.

That is the reason why, when I think of how government can move forward on this issue, I am glad we see a government that has recognized the importance of making sure people have access to the Internet, that the minister has sent out the directives and that the legislation is before us today.

Private Members' Business

• (1715)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thank you for presiding again today. They should give you an honorary badge, half a robe or something because you are doing a good job, as usual.

I appreciate the opportunity to intervene on Bill C-288. I want to start with a bit about process before I get into the content. I think it is important for those who are watching today to understand more about how this place works.

I also want to congratulate the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa. We have limited chances in this place to make a real difference. The way it works for Private Members' Business is that our names are all put into a drum, so to speak. We can think of it like a ping pong ball being drawn. We each get a number assigned to us; this allows each of us to have the possibility of a private member's bill or motion presented here in the chamber. In a minority Parliament, it is very rare to get through a lot of these slots. It is difficult even with a majority government.

When we get the chance or opportunity, in many respects, it is like winning the lottery. What do members do after that? They decide what they want to do with their legislative agenda. They can bring a motion. The motion could pass, and it may be a really good motion on any number of subjects, but it may not change law. It changes the law only if the government decides to use it, because it is not binding in the House of Commons.

We can also bring through legislation. In the history of this place, it is very difficult to get private members' legislation passed. It does happen. I hope that this Parliament will actually set a record.

I think the member needs to be congratulated because he has brought forth a reasonable approach to an issue that is really important for all Canadians, as well as for consumers. I think it is important for the House to show that at the end of the day, we can actually use Private Members' Business for good.

It can be any government; I do not care whether it is red or blue over there. Eventually we want it to be orange, but that is for another day. Nobody over there just owns all the best ideas. This place needs more of them.

I congratulate the member because he has a specific thing here to fix broadband services and bring greater accountability to their advertising and what they are promoting, which is critical in a couple of contexts. One is obviously truth in advertising. This bill would give more expectations and oversight to ensure that when services are advertising certain speeds, consumers actually get that. That is important for making purchasing decisions.

However, this is not just about how fast someone can download entertainment, whether it is a Disney movie, a cat video, a squirrel waterskiing on YouTube or whatever. The reality is that when people make these decisions, whether they are businesses or individuals, speed can matter. We have seen that come to fruition. I think that is something that gets lost in this bill.

The government once had immigration numbers, where someone's spot in line would be determined by getting online. I do not like that. If someone had a better speed at that time, their case was

advanced over other people's cases. If we think about other businesses that require the proper speeds and services they pay for, it adds a consequence that is more than just the entertainment value that I talked about earlier.

I think that part really needs to be mentioned a couple of times. If someone owns a business or wants to spend extra money on this type of service, they should get it. If they do not get it, there are real consequences.

I am a PlayStation gamer, and I play Apex Legends with my friends. If my speed is interrupted, that has very few consequences. However, if it is a tool and die manufacturer or some other business that requires more real-time analysis and quicker responses, and their competitors have an edge over them, that has a consequence for their overall income.

I mentioned the immigration case where it actually had consequences for people's casework in becoming Canadian citizens in reality. They are not doing that anymore.

My point is that, on the surface, this bill might seem like a consumer-friendly approach to doing things that should be done anyways. However, at the end of the day, the consequences can be quite real.

I also want to commend the member for using previous work from the House of Commons. I was on the industry committee. I am going to read the title of something we studied in 2021. It was called "Affordability and Accessibility of Telecommunications Services in Canada: Encouraging Competition to (Finally) Bridge the Digital Divide". We had a recommendation for truth in advertising related to speeds and services.

• (1720)

I think the member using that bipartisan work that was done in committee and taking a recommendation is a clever way, a smart way and also a good way, because we never saw any action on it. We did not see the government act and complete it. I am not saying that that the government is derelict or negligent on that, but unfortunately many committee studies do not see actual results because of the volume of work; because the issue is not "sexy" enough, in terms of grabbing attention; or because the government does not totally agree with it.

The member went back, and on that committee we had the Bloc, the NDP, the Conservatives and the Liberals, and then the report was tabled here in the House where the Green Party could also look at it and also other independents. They do not participate in the committee structure formally, but informally they can, so it has gotten the eyes of all of this place here. Using that recommendation and pulling from it is actually, again, another reason to say “thanks”, because resources were spent in this place to do that study, resources like money and time, all the staffing support and the researchers who did the work in previous Parliaments. They do not want it buried and put on a shelf with other studies in this place.

It is actually getting life again, and the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa deserves credit for that, because that is all work that took place. We passed it the first time and it went to committee. I was at committee. The member showed up and gave testimony. We had other submissions, and it basically survived the test of mettle of another review, and that is why we are back here today.

From what I understand, we are supporting it as New Democrats. I hope the bill is going to get unanimous support in this chamber and then move to the Senate. For people who are watching this time, it is a private member's bill, and it could actually have a real impact, if it goes before the summer to the Senate.

Perhaps we could see the bill come out of the Senate and passed before we actually have the end of the session. That would be awesome, because it would then provide, again, some more accountability out there, and it would show that parliamentary work can get done. Despite question period, which is a time that is not the best environment to see things, there are times when we actually work quite well together and use Canadian resources to the best of our abilities.

I am going to finally wrap up by saying New Democrats are really pleased to see the bill go forward. I am hoping the member has it passed. I worked with the member for Saskatoon—Grasswood on his private member's bill on single-event sports betting that was passed and made law. I took my legislation off the table and gave the spot to him. He used his spot in a non-partisan way. We actually worked together on that issue, and I am hoping the member gets similar results here and that we can see the bill come into law before the end of the session.

I am going to wrap and say thanks again.

• (1725)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa has five minutes for his right of reply.

[English]

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to thank everyone who has supported Bill C-288.

I want to thank Canadians who demanded this bill, particularly the rural Canadians, who understand the frustration of paying for Internet that fails to live up to advertised speeds, but Bill C-288

would not only impact rural Canadians; it would impact all Canadians who buy Internet service.

I thank my Conservative colleagues, who continue to fight for more competition and lower prices in the telecom industry. I thank the experts, including those from OpenMedia, Dr. Reza Rajabian, those from the Canadian Internet Registration Authority and Tamir Israel, who generously provided advice and feedback on this bill.

I thank the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue and the member for Windsor West for their continued support on this pro-consumer legislation. I thank the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology for studying this legislation quickly and effectively. I thank all the members of this House who have supported Bill C-288 and who will hopefully continue to do so.

As a wise man once famously said, “Only when the tide goes out do you learn who has been swimming naked.” I will tell members, when the tide goes out on the Internet companies that have been selling Canadians misleading speeds, we will see. For years, the government has allowed Internet companies to legally sell Internet speeds that simply do not exist. While countries around the world have implemented laws to protect their consumers, the Canadian government has sat idly by. Canadians deserve to know what Internet speeds they are paying for, and Canadians should accept nothing less.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The question is on the motion.

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

[English]

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, April 26, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

*Adjournment Proceedings**[English]*

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this adjournment debate arises from a question I asked a few weeks ago before President Biden's visit. I mentioned that just days after the Prime Minister met with President Biden in 2021, the U.S. announced it was doubling the duties on softwood lumber and that workers in communities that rely on the Canadian forest industry were hoping for better this time.

My first question is whether the Prime Minister brought up softwood lumber with the President, and I ask that because I have heard conflicting news on this front. It seems that if the word softwood was mentioned in those meetings, it was just a passing thought and certainly not a priority at all. It should be one of the government's highest priorities when it comes to international trade.

I was in Prince George last week at the annual conference of the Council of Forest Industries, and the mood was rather sombre. The forest industry in British Columbia and across the country is facing very difficult times. Wildfires, beetle epidemics and years of old-growth harvest have reduced the amount of economically available timber. Low lumber prices have closed mills across Canada, including the Vaagen mill in the town of Midway in my riding. On top of that, we have illegal tariffs that have taken billions of dollars from the Canadian forest industry. It does not look like it will get better anytime soon.

While in Prince George, I talked to the Canadian negotiators from Global Affairs. I talked to industry representatives. They pointed out that the unfair anti-dumping fines levied by the Americans have the insidious property of becoming larger when lumber prices are low and smaller when prices are high. Canadian lumber exporters were surviving during the times of high prices last year and the year before, but now that prices are low, they are facing the double hit of prices that often do not even support the cost of production as well as high export tariffs being levied in the near future.

I will add that there is a way to ameliorate this situation while the illegal tariffs are in place. It is to provide supports to grow the mass timber sector so we can develop domestic markets as well as export wood products to the United States without having to pay softwood lumber tariffs.

That is just what my private member's bill, Bill S-222, would do. It would encourage the federal government to use mass timber and other building materials with low environmental impact while building federal infrastructure. Two operations in my riding, Strukturlam in the South Okanagan and Kalesnikoff in West Kootenay, are leaders in the mass timber sector in North America, and we should support them and other value-added plants across the country so that when we are harvesting trees from a shrinking available cut, we are getting more money and more jobs from each and every tree.

Yes, there are ways we can support the Canadian forest industry, but the biggest win would be the elimination of the unfair and illegal tariffs the Americans have put on our exports to the U.S.A. We must keep up the pressure on the American government to get rid of these measures. We must continually make the case to the Amer-

ican people that these unfair tariffs benefit only a few wealthy American timber barons and hit the American public with significantly higher building costs.

Is the Canadian government putting sustained pressure on the Americans to fix this?

• (1730)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the very end of the member's question, he asked if the government was putting sustained pressure on the issue.

We could go back to 2015, when the government was first elected, we had tariffs being put on. At the time, discussions were taking place, with the current government, in terms of how vitally important the softwood industry is to the Canadian economy and how these tariffs were causing a wide spectrum of problems.

Virtually from day one, we have been dealing with this issue, whether it is today's Deputy Prime Minister, who had taken that issue head-on, to the current ministries. The Prime Minister has talked about the issue over the years. We continue to recognize it.

This is not a new problem. It has been taking place under different administrations. Unfortunately, I would suggest, in my humble opinion, it is the American barons, the gigantic, wealthy individuals in the United States, who are really the cause of the problem. Unfortunately, there have been small businesses and companies, and ultimately the workers, here in Canada that have paid the price.

That is the reason why, as a government, it is important we are there to continue to advocate for and support the industry. The member made reference to different ways we could support the industry, whether it is looking at buildings, and it is truly amazing to see the number of tall buildings, skyscrapers, being built with timber, or looking for those alternative ways we could build into the future. That is one of the ways we could do it.

However, there is no doubt that the best interests of all concerned is in fact in dealing with the tariffs, because they are unfair. We have demonstrated that through trade agreements and trade referees. At the end of the day, we know we are on the right side of the issue, that these tariffs are not appropriate. Ultimately, time has shown that we do prevail. Unfortunately, it has been at a substantial cost.

We have to look at ways in which we could minimize those costs to the industry here in Canada. I would suggest, as the member referenced himself, that the American consumers are paying a much higher price because of these tariffs, because of the unfair advantage that the few in the United States are asking for and ultimately being successful at getting those tariffs put in place.

I see my time has expired, but there will be another minute to continue to expand on this.

• (1735)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I will say this.

[*English*]

The Canadian forest industry is in difficult times. It is a period of change. Companies and workers are adapting to a rapidly changing forestry landscape. These changes need the support of governments at all levels.

I have travelled to Washington, DC before to advocate for the Canadian forest industry and to get rid of these tariffs. I will be going back there again next month with the international trade committee. I do not know what is on the official agenda of that upcoming trip, but I know that I will be bringing up the softwood lumber issue whenever I can.

I hope that the government, including the Prime Minister and other appropriate ministers, would be doing this as well, in all their interactions with their American counterparts. Forest workers across Canada are expecting continuing action, and are growing impatient for positive news.

When will the billions in excess duties collected finally be returned to the Canadian forest industry? When will free trade in lumber finally return to North America?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is not soon enough. We recognize these tariffs and the hundreds of millions of dollars, going into billions of dollars, being accumulated is costing us at the other end.

Ideally, it would be wonderful to see this issue resolved permanently and not every few years, with a win here or there, and then seeing tariffs coming back a few years later. We need a long-term solution to this issue, and that is one of the reasons it is so important that, as a government, we continue to put emphasis on trade, because we are a trading nation, and we do need to take whatever mechanism and action necessary, including seeing the member visit the United States to lobby on behalf of his constituents. We all need to play an important role in protecting this vital industry and the workers.

THE BUDGET

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, we are here this evening because the Liberal Party made an election promise to Torontonians in 2021 to help our city with its COVID-19 shortfall. However, after relying on the voters of Toronto to cling to power, the Liberals have thrown our city under the bus.

Where are those Toronto Liberal MPs? They must have been kidnapped. The silence from them is deafening. Not one has stood up in the House for the very people who put them in office. While they remain silent, 270,000 people, which is the equivalent of five and a half SkyDomes, or Rogers Centres, visited a food bank last month. That figure represents the most ever recorded in the history of the Daily Bread Food Bank.

Adjournment Proceedings

Before my hon. colleague reaches for their “lower poverty rate” talking points, I would like to point out that local food banks expect visits to increase by 60% from 2022 to 2023. This is a clear indication of the state of Toronto. The city is in a climate of high food prices, inflation, crushing interest rates and rising energy costs. It is a municipality that cannot pay or provide for desperate services, including services such as public transportation, social services, police, fire, ambulance, mental health care, day care and a list of other needs that a large metropolitan area requires, and especially one trying to improve itself.

Let there be no mistake: Toronto and the GTA cannot be the engine of the Canadian economy when there is no oil for that engine. Toronto cannot foster and herald in an economic recovery if it is bankrupt. A vibrant economic renewal out of the ashes of COVID cannot come about just by wishful thinking. It requires the delivery of promised help.

While Toronto's Liberal MPs remain in continuous hibernation, their constituents are dealing with transit service cuts that will have them waiting longer at the bus stop and the subway station. Also, as recent incidents have sadly indicated, these transit riders are placing their lives at risk. It is no surprise that violent crime is rising. That is a direct outcome of the decline in social services when meeting significant needs. The result is desperation, poverty and homelessness.

Scarborough Liberals were quick to wake up when distribution would cost one of them their jobs, but they were fast to scramble back to missing in action when TTC service cuts reduced, or suspended altogether, service for line 2, which ran into Scarborough, for their constituents.

When I first asked the question, the parliamentary secretary responding referenced their municipal councillor experience, but I was very surprised that there was no understanding of the difference between capital expenditures and operating expenses. Capital expenditures, which the member spoke about in response to my initial QP question, are for the acquisition of capital assets, such as the bus that the Liberal government has thrown Toronto under. Operating expenses, as the name suggests, are the monies required to operate that bus. Yes, they are two very distinct things indeed. However, there may be some similarity to the Liberals' election promises in their failure to honour them.

Will the government honour its promise to Toronto and help our city address its budget shortfall, yes or no?

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1740)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member, in many ways, is completely out of touch with the reality of what has been happening. I would challenge the member, because he does get a one-minute response, to tell me a government in the last 40 to 50 generational years that has invested more in public transit in the city of Toronto than ours has. We are not talking about hundreds of millions of dollars; we are talking about billions of dollars.

Those Toronto MPs he is talking about are a very vocal group. Those Toronto MPs he is talking about are bringing to the House of Commons concerns that have been raised at the doors in the communities of Toronto and in the greater Toronto community as a whole.

What we have been hearing about are issues like transit. That is why there is an investment of billions of dollars. The member cannot cite another federal government that has invested more money in public transit than ours has because we have such a strong, active group of members of Parliament from Toronto and outside of Toronto. We have recognized, from the Prime Minister down to individual members of Parliament, the valuable role that public transit plays in all of our communities. Toronto has been a major beneficiary, especially when compared to any other government.

The member talked about programs and issues regarding inflation. Once again, it is Toronto MPs in the Liberal caucus stepping up to say they want to get relief. It is why we have the grocery rebate. Imagine that 11 million Canadians are going to benefit by that. Imagine the expansion of the dental program. Believe it or not, that is also going to help, not to mention the \$198-billion commitment toward health care. Does the member not believe that people, not only those in Toronto but all Canadians, will benefit by having a commitment of that nature, which is going to support them in so many ways? Four minutes does not allow me to expand on the ways this government is there for the people of Toronto and, in fact, all Canadians.

No government in the history of Canada has invested more money, more real dollars, in Canada's infrastructure than ours has. Often there is money on the table that is not being used because other jurisdictions are not prepared to bring it in and help develop it.

To accuse the federal government of not being there is beyond the realm of reality, because it is the absolute opposite. This is a government that understands not only the needs of the people of Toronto and the surrounding area, but the needs of Canadians. That is why we have seen budgetary and legislative actions that have had such a positive impact in general as we continue to work with Canadians.

Yes, there is a high expectation that Torontonians will continue to lead the country in many different ways. It is one of the reasons we have that advocacy within our caucus. I believe it is contributing to and making a difference in the lives of all Canadians. Whether we are using taxation policy to ensure that tradespeople are in a better position to afford the tools they require or are ensuring that we see the expansion of subway systems in Toronto, this government has been there and will continue to be there for all Canadians.

• (1745)

Mr. Kevin Vuong: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the billions in investments that my colleague is speaking about, there is a difference. Those are investments in capital assets. What is the point of new stations if we do not have money to keep the lights on? To reiterate, capital assets are about investing in the Liberal bus that the City of Toronto has been thrown under, and operating expenses are about not having the money for the Liberals to turn on the bus, ride over us and then reverse and run over our city again.

I would ask the parliamentary secretary to please recognize the serious extent of the situation, or ask his Toronto Liberal colleagues to please identify which homeless shelters should be closed, which other bus routes should be cut and which police cars, fire trucks and ambulances need to be mothballed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, during the break week I had the opportunity to meet with a Winnipeg transit union representative and I can tell the House that the federal government's role, in terms of investing in capital infrastructure, is second to no other government. If we look at the previous Harper government or previous federal governments and talk about the ongoing operating costs of transit, we will find it is the municipalities that pay, and often the provinces will chip in. The federal government provides other forms of revenue to the cities to support transit workers and transit routes indirectly.

I would ask the member to understand that, yes, there is a difference between capital and operating costs. We have a federal government that is investing in the capital infrastructure and transit groups very much appreciate that. Municipalities and provinces need to pony up more to support the ongoing operational costs and where we can contribute, I think we have demonstrated a willingness to do so.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 5:48 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Thursday, April 20, 2023

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Environment and Sustainable Development

The Speaker 13171

Government Response to Petitions

Mr. Lamoureux 13171

Canada Labour Code

Mr. Boulerice 13171

Bill C-330. Introduction and first reading 13171

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) 13171

Lebanese Heritage Month Act

Ms. Diab 13171

Bill S-246. Introduction and first reading 13171

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time) 13172

Committees of the House

Industry and Technology

Mr. Lemire 13172

Motion to concur 13172

Mr. Lamoureux 13173

Mrs. Vignola 13174

Mr. Champagne 13174

Mr. Savard-Tremblay 13174

Mr. Lamoureux 13176

Mr. Boulerice 13176

Ms. Bérubé 13176

Mr. Boulerice 13177

Mr. Lamoureux 13179

Mr. Lemire 13179

Mrs. Valdez 13180

Mr. Trudel 13180

Mr. Généreux 13180

Mr. Lamoureux 13182

Mr. Lemire 13182

Mr. Vis 13183

Mrs. Valdez 13184

Mr. Lemire 13184

Ms. Zarrillo 13185

Mr. Lamoureux 13185

Ms. Yip 13187

Mr. McCauley 13187

Mr. Savard-Tremblay 13188

Mr. Lemire 13188

Ms. Gazan 13188

Ms. Diab 13188

Mr. Trudel 13190

Mr. Baldinelli 13190

Mr. Desjarlais 13190

Mr. Scarpaleggia 13190

Mr. McCauley 13191

Mr. Lemire 13192

Mr. Desjarlais 13192

Mr. Williams 13192

Mr. Lamoureux 13194

Ms. Ashton 13194

Mrs. Vignola 13194

Mr. Perkins 13195

Mr. Lamoureux 13196

Mr. Lemire 13196

Mr. Desjarlais 13196

Mr. McCauley 13197

(Motion agreed to) 13197

Petitions

Hazaras

Mr. Kmiec 13198

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lamoureux 13198

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Ways and Means

Budget Implementation Act, 2023, No. 1

Mr. Boissonnault (for the Minister of Finance) 13198

Motion for concurrence 13198

Motion agreed to 13199

Bill C-47. First reading 13199

(Motion deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) 13199

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Environment

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) 13199

Eid al-Fitr

Mr. Chiang 13199

Ken Graham

Mr. Dreesen 13200

Earth Day

Ms. Taylor Roy 13200

Yves Michaud

Mr. Savard-Tremblay 13200

Julie Sigouin and Mohammed Barhane

Mr. Dubourg 13200

Infrastructure in Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock

Mr. Schmale 13201

Taiwan

Mr. McKay 13201

Earth Day	
Ms. Damoff	13201
Derek Meyers	
Mr. Steinley	13201
York Region	
Mr. Van Bynen	13202
John Oostrom	
Ms. Lantsman	13202
Natural Resources	
Mrs. Stubbs	13202
National Volunteer Week	
Mrs. Shanahan	13202
Ladysmith Secondary School	
Ms. Barron	13202
Protection of Pension Plans	
Mrs. Gill	13203
Government Policies	
Mr. Melillo	13203
Rwanda	
Ms. Kayabaga	13203

ORAL QUESTIONS

Labour	
Mr. Paul-Hus	13203
Mrs. Fortier	13203
Mr. Paul-Hus	13203
Mr. Holland	13204
Mr. Hallan	13204
Mrs. Fortier	13204
Carbon Pricing	
Mr. Hallan	13204
Mr. Holland	13204
Mr. Hallan	13204
Mr. Holland	13204
Democratic Institutions	
Mr. Therrien	13205
Mr. Holland	13205
Mr. Therrien	13205
Mr. Holland	13205
Labour	
Mr. Boulерice	13205
Ms. Jaczek	13205
Mr. Johns	13205
Ms. Jaczek	13205
Mrs. Kusie	13205
Ms. Gould	13205
Mrs. Kusie	13205
Ms. Gould	13206
Ms. Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	13206
Ms. Gould	13206

Ms. Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	13206
Mr. Holland	13206
Mr. Barlow	13206
Mrs. St-Onge	13206
Mr. Barlow	13206
Mr. Fraser	13207
Democratic Institutions	
Mr. Villemure	13207
Mr. Holland	13207
Mr. Villemure	13207
Mr. Holland	13207
Ms. Gaudreau	13207
Ms. Damoff	13207
Government Priorities	
Mrs. Gray	13207
Mr. Boissonnault	13207
Mrs. Gray	13208
Mr. Champagne	13208
Ethics	
Mrs. Vien	13208
Mr. Rodriguez	13208
Veterans Affairs	
Ms. Blaney	13208
Mr. MacAulay	13208
Ethics	
Mr. Green	13208
Mr. Holland	13208
Telecommunications	
Mr. Powlowski	13209
Ms. Hutchings	13209
Government Appointments	
Mr. Barrett	13209
Mr. Holland	13209
Mr. Barrett	13209
Mr. Holland	13209
Ethics	
Mr. Berthold	13209
Mr. Champagne	13210
Mr. Berthold	13210
Mr. Duclos	13210
Aviation Industry	
Mr. Savard-Tremblay	13210
Mr. Champagne	13210
Mr. Savard-Tremblay	13210
Mr. Champagne	13210
The Economy	
Mr. Albas	13210
Mr. Hussen	13211
Housing	
Mr. Albas	13211
Mr. Hussen	13211
Mr. Généreux	13211

Mr. Hussen	13211
Finance	
Mr. El-Khoury	13211
Mr. Boissonnault	13211
National Defence	
Mr. Bezan	13211
Mr. May (Cambridge)	13212
Mr. Chong	13212
Mr. May (Cambridge)	13212
Mr. Chong	13212
Mr. May (Cambridge)	13212
The Environment	
Mrs. Chatel	13212
Mr. Guilbeault	13212
Indigenous Affairs	
Ms. Gazan	13212
Ms. Damoff	13212
Correctional Service of Canada	
Mr. Morrice	13213
Ms. Damoff	13213
Presence in Gallery	
The Speaker	13213
House of Commons Administration	
The Speaker	13213
Privilege	
Alleged Defamation Resulting in Obstruction of a Member's Freedom of Speech—Speaker's Ruling	
The Speaker	13213
Business of the House	
Mr. Berthold	13214
Mr. Holland	13214
Motion	13214
(Motion agreed to)	13214

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Digital Charter Implementation Act, 2022	
Bill C-27. Second reading	13214
Mrs. Kusie	13214
Mr. Lamoureux	13216
Mr. Villemure	13216
Ms. Idlout	13216
Mr. Perkins	13216
Ms. Rempel Garner	13216

Mr. Oliphant	13218
Mr. Villemure	13218
Mr. Davies	13219
Mr. Morantz	13219
Mr. Lamoureux	13221
Mr. Villemure	13221
Mr. Masse	13221
Mr. Cooper	13221
Mr. Lamoureux	13222
Mr. Villemure	13223
Ms. Mathysen	13223
Mrs. Gallant	13223
Mr. Lamoureux	13225
Mr. Villemure	13225
Ms. Idlout	13225
Mr. Oliphant	13225
Mr. Lightbound	13225
Mr. Perkins	13227
Mr. Villemure	13227
Mr. Johns	13228
Divisions on motion deferred	13228

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Telecommunications Act	
Bill C-288. Report stage	13228
Mr. Mazier	13228
Motion for concurrence	13228
(Motion agreed to)	13228
Bill C-288. Third reading	13229
Mr. Lamoureux	13230
Mr. Ruff	13230
Mr. Patzer	13230
Mr. Lamoureux	13231
Mr. Masse	13232
Mr. Mazier	13233
Division on motion deferred	13233

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Forestry Industry	
Mr. Cannings	13234
Mr. Lamoureux	13234
The Budget	
Mr. Vuong	13235
Mr. Lamoureux	13236

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