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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 26, 2023

The House met at 2 p.m.

[English]

Prayer

• (1400)

[English]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem, led by the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

MARGUERITE BOURGEOIS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, I had the privilege and the honour of having a front-row seat when Marguerite Bourgeois, founder of L'Envol, a centre for children with developmental disorders in Victoriaville, received the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec's medal for exceptional merit from Michel Doyon. This prestigious honour recognizes the commitment, determination and selflessness of Quebeckers whose positive influence is making a tangible difference in their communities.

Ms. Bourgeois is a very special person in my region. She has always worked to make our community more inclusive, more open and better. Her hard work, determination, perseverance, generosity, leadership and involvement in our community set an example for everyone. Her love for others and commitment to them is truly remarkable and deserves recognition.

I would like to close by telling the House what the Lieutenant Governor himself said to her. He told Ms. Bourgeois that she deserves this honour, because she is a model of commitment and has helped sow the seeds of happiness.

Congratulations, Marguerite, and most of all, thank you for being the outstanding and inspiring person you are.

ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am honoured to speak about the importance of the Ontario Science Centre, a beacon of knowledge and innovation in my community. Established in 1969, the centre not only has fostered a love for science, but it has inspired generations of young people and young minds in the pursuit of careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. We are so proud in Don Valley East to have this positive institution impact many people in our community. We have been grateful to the science centre for providing employment opportunities to local residents, for its partnership with local schools, for hosting a science-themed high school and for programs designed for newcomers, youth and the community at large.

Despite the love we have locally for this important space, the provincial government has decided to move the centre to downtown Toronto. Residents in Don Valley East have been loud and clear that they are against moving the science centre, especially with no public consultation. The Ontario Science Centre is part of our community, and moving it will create an irreplaceable void in our neighbourhood.

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THOMAS STEPHENSON

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last month, Ottawa Valley's Tom "Big Red" Stephenson passed away at the age of 86 with his family at his side. Tom was a real-life trailblazer. He was a professor at Algonquin College and instrumental in creating an outdoor component to the forestry program. The ideal location was at Achray Station on Grand Lake in Algonquin Park. Students would spend a week at a time learning forestry in the forest.

Tom knew that High Falls was a remarkable feature of Algonquin Park, but it was remote. Together with his family, and with the permission of park officials, Tom cleared a trail over five kilometres long through thick bush. Over time, the popularity of the trail grew. Park officials began to maintain it and it began to be known as "Cheater's Trail". It is our hope that Algonquin Park will recognize Tom Stephenson's contribution and officially name the trail in his honour.

Statements by Members

● (1405)

NIAGARA PORTS TRADE CORRIDOR

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Niagara is on the cusp of an accomplishment. With vision that builds on our strengths, determination and partnerships, our vision can be realized. I am pleased to say that, today, it is becoming a reality. With the water of the Welland Canal carrying goods from lake to lake as its lifeblood, and with our strategic location, the Niagara ports trade corridor is becoming the catalyst for prosperity that we envisioned.

New industry and businesses are locating along the banks of the Welland Canal, prompting others to recognize what is possible in moving goods from and into Canada through Niagara, strengthening our collective, binational and international trade performance. The Welland Canal, short and mainline rail, air and a highway network through the heart of Niagara, which are catalysts, have all combined to position Niagara as one of the most internationally recognized trade corridors in the country, providing the bedrock of Niagara's future economy and Canada's internationally integrated supply chains.

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[Translation]

ALAIN GINGRAS

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a man who is bigger than life, Mr. Alain Gingras.

Alain has been involved with the cadet corps since 1990 and distinguished himself as a volunteer during the 1998 ice storm. In 2009, he joined Council 3206 of the Knights of Columbus, which would elect him Grand Knight in 2013. His work since then has been nothing short of extraordinary. He works hundreds of hours, from February to December each year, giving of his time and his money to prepare Christmas baskets. Fully 217 baskets were delivered this year, compared to 25 baskets in 2015.

Alain has also worked hard raising funds to provide winter clothing for children. He organizes many fundraising brunches to support various organizations. He has just relaunched efforts to organize a children's Christmas party for 250 children. As if that were not enough, he recently joined the board of directors of Mouvement SEM to raise awareness about a better childhood.

For all these reasons, Alain was invited last evening to sign the City of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu's "livre d'or".

We are incredibly lucky to have Alain, and I thank him for everything.

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[English]

HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like many of my colleagues, this week I met with representatives from Heart and Stroke Foundation. They are passionately reminding us to keep the health of children at the heart of our work. Dr. Sonia Anand was one of those here in Ottawa, a brilliant and

kind cardiologist, professor and researcher from McMaster in Hamilton.

Every five minutes in Canada someone dies from heart condition, stroke or vascular cognitive impairment. While some risk factors are genetic, 80% of premature heart disease and stroke can be prevented through lifestyle choices like being active, healthy eating and being smoke-free. Healthy habits begin at an early age, which is why Heart and Stroke is asking for continued support when it comes to making healthier food choices for kids and taking additional steps to prevent youth from vaping.

Heart and Stroke has been fighting heart disease and stroke for over 70 years, and I thank it for its efforts.

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PETERBOROUGH PETES

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nothing brings together a community more than a winning team, and the Peterborough Petes are winning. They are heading to the OHL eastern conference finals.

After sweeping the Sudbury Wolves in the first round and a decisive 4-2 series victory against the Ottawa 67's on Monday night before a sold-out Memorial Centre crowd of almost 4,000 people, the Peterborough Petes are heading to the eastern finals against the North Bay Battalion.

I would love to give a special shout-out to centre Connor Lockhart, who closed out Monday's game with a hat trick to secure the Petes' bid to the conference finals. What is so great about this is that he says his motivation was in memory of his grandmother, Janette Lockhart, who passed away Sunday night.

Everyone will no doubt hear the cheers from Peterborough when the boys in maroon and white take on your riding, Mr. Speaker, the North Bay Battalion this Friday in North Bay.

Go, Petes, go.

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● (1410)

[Translation]

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Ruelle d'Hochelaga is a social pediatric centre that is well-rooted in my riding. At the centre, a children's rights committee was created by young people who want to get involved and carry out social action projects.

Today in Ottawa, I am welcoming 9 young people between the ages of 10 and 16 who are members of that committee. They travelled to meet with their elected officials to present their project and their thoughts on an issue that, unfortunately, affects many countries: child soldiers. At this time, there are still over 250,000 children in armed groups around the world.

I had the opportunity to meet with these young people a year ago. I was impressed by their commitment to the cause of children's rights, their intelligence and their thirst to learn. I would like to thank them for their visit. I especially want to congratulate them on speaking loud and clear about children's rights. These are issues that go beyond their local community in Hochelaga but that speak to the harsh reality of children around the world. They can be proud of their work.

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[English]

NATIONAL TUBERCULOSIS ELIMINATION STRATEGY

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is World Immunization Week, and I want to discuss tuberculosis. While there is currently a vaccine against TB, it is over 100 years old and it is of limited efficiency. TB is an airborne bacterial infectious disease. It is strongly associated with social determinants of health, such as poverty, poor living conditions like overcrowded housing, and malnutrition. It disproportionately affects indigenous and newcomer populations.

In 2018, our Liberal government committed to eliminating TB across Inuit Nunangat by 2030, but we need a more national effort as unfortunately, because of COVID, there have been disruptions to programming and care for TB, and after meeting with Stop TB Canada, I understand that we are seeing an increase in TB for the first time since 2005.

I encourage Canada to build on its commitment to eliminate TB in Inuit and on-reserve areas by developing and implementing a truly national TB elimination strategy with provinces, territories and indigenous partners to make meaningful progress toward the elimination of tuberculosis.

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ROSARIA CAPUTO

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute my grandmother, who passed away one week ago at 99 years old. Rosaria Caputo was born in 1923 and came to Canada with her two sons, including my father, in 1961. She was a wife, a mother and a sister. She also took on the role of *zia* and *nonna* to anybody who knew her. My memories include eating gnocchi at her house well into her 80s and 90s; her pushing me out of the way in her 70s, so she could show me how to use a lawnmower; and her 60th anniversary, when she danced with joy with my grandfather.

She lived through communism, and being the child of immigrants, it is with profound joy and pride that I stand here in the House of Commons carrying on the legacy that she, as a brave immigrant to Canada, allowed me to continue.

Ciao, nonna, until we meet again.

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CELIAC DISEASE

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, May 1, I am proud to be sponsoring the first-ever gluten-

Statements by Members

free breakfast on Parliament Hill, alongside the member for Kitchener—Conestoga, with Celiac Canada.

Celiac disease is an autoimmune disorder that damages the small intestine and makes it difficult for the body to absorb nutrients. Unfortunately, about 90% of celiac cases remain undiagnosed. The only effective treatment is a strict gluten-free diet, which can be challenging as gluten is present in many common foods and cross-contamination can occur very easily. This can lead to serious health consequences for people with celiac disease.

As Canadians, we can all do our part to support those living with celiac disease. By spreading awareness and understanding, we can make life easier for those living with this chronic digestive, autoimmune disorder. I hope others will join me on Monday morning to celebrate Celiac Canada's 50th anniversary and support celiac disease awareness in Canada.

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● (1415)

PUBLIC SERVICE STRIKE

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 155,000 public servants are on strike, and we find ourselves in this situation only because of the Prime Minister's failure to strike a deal. It takes a special type of incompetence by the Liberal government to increase public service spending by 53%, or \$21 billion, and still end up with the biggest federal public service strike in history.

The government had two years to come to an agreement, but instead it has allowed access to basic and essential services to be compromised by this strike. Canadians cannot get their passports renewed, EI claims are not being assessed and Canadians who are mailing in their tax returns cannot get their refunds. This is only the start.

It is time for the Prime Minister to fix the public service he broke, so Canadians can get the services they deserve.

*Statements by Members***LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister claimed that a wall of separation exists between himself and the Trudeau Foundation, but Canadians are increasingly unable to believe him. They do not believe him when he accepts free luxury vacations to Jamaica from Trudeau Foundation donors. They do not believe him when money pours into the Trudeau Foundation, increasing donations fourfold as soon as the Prime Minister takes office. They do not believe him when his brother arranges for a six-figure donation from a Beijing-connected millionaire to the Trudeau Foundation, and they do not believe him when he appoints a member of the Trudeau Foundation to then investigate that donation. They do not believe him when he allows the Trudeau Foundation to book meetings directly inside the Prime Minister's office.

This so-called “wall” is an open door. Canadians are much smarter than that. They do not believe him after eight years of scandals and ethics breaches. He must come clean with Canadians and restore public confidence in the office he holds.

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[Translation]

IAN WATSON

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay a final tribute to the hon. Ian Watson, who left us on April 2 at the age of 88.

Mr. Watson sat in the House of Commons from 1963 to 1984 in the governments of Lester B. Pearson, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Joe Clark and John Turner. He was elected seven times, first in the riding of Châteauguay—Huntington—Laprairie, then Laprairie and, finally, Châteauguay.

During his political career, he was parliamentary secretary for a number of departments, including National Revenue and Urban Affairs.

A great optimist, Ian Watson believed in the power of politics to make lasting and positive changes in people's lives.

[English]

I offer my sincere condolences to the Watson family, to his many friends who sat in the House and to all of his constituents, whom Mr. Watson represented energetically throughout his political career.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I cannot name the many indigenous women who have reached out to me, trying to flee from violence. If I did, I would make their already difficult situation even worse. To those who are forced to live with their abusive partners, I say, “I hear you.”

The government needs to hear that these women are forced to live in abusive situations because of the lack of housing, because there are no shelters and because the justice system is not protecting them. The government needs to recognize how failures in in-

vesting in indigenous housing leave women living in fear and unable to find safety. I am calling on this government to make much-needed investments now.

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[Translation]

AUTONOMOUS DRILL DEVELOPED IN ABITIBI

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the first autonomous drill, known as “Versadrill”, has entered the market. The Versadrill was developed in Abitibi and operates 1,300 metres below the surface at Agnico Eagle's Goldex mine in Val-d'Or. The drill is manufactured in our community, at MBI Global, a company that has been doing business in Val-d'Or for 30 years.

The autonomous drill rig is easier to operate thanks to its computer system. It is also connected to the mine's high-speed LTE network, which enables it to transmit data to the surface in real time. The autonomous drill uses the data it collects to improve its performance. It can interpret changes, be it changes in the rock, faults or a lack of water. It also has a system of optical readers that make the environment safer for workers.

Kudos to the design and production teams of this revolutionary drill. I hope their nine years of effort will soon pay off on the international stage.

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● (1420)

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the housing crisis is holding Canadians hostage. Young people who dream of having their own home have been relegated to spare bedrooms and homes with roommates because of the sky-high cost of housing. In Canada's biggest cities, like Toronto and Vancouver, an apartment can go for upwards of \$1,300 a month. Even in smaller cities, like London, Halifax, Victoria and Winnipeg, a single room can cost upwards of \$1,000 a month.

The Liberals say they have the backs of young people, yet they are making the situation worse. There are many things the federal government could be doing, like tying federal infrastructure funding to cities' getting approvals done faster, requiring high-density residential around transit, getting rid of empty federal buildings in favour of housing, and incentivizing the private sector to build more rentals.

If only the Liberal government understood that the housing situation in Canada is, in fact, a crisis, maybe then the young people of this country would no longer be forced to pay the high price for Liberal failures.

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, official languages have been a priority for our government since 2015, as evidenced by the record investments we have made. Today, my colleague, the Minister of Official Languages, announced the new action plan for official languages 2023–2028, an unprecedented investment of \$4.1 billion to reverse the decline of French and support our official language minority communities through francophone immigration, the educational continuum and support for community organizations.

The voices of those communities were heard, and today we have delivered. I am proud of this plan, which will have a significant impact on the Franco-Ontarian community of Nickel Belt in Greater Sudbury. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the stakeholders across the country who work in community organizations and promote francophone culture, as well as the educational institutions in our communities across the country.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to our intelligence services, the Beijing dictatorship gave \$140,000 to the Trudeau Foundation. The purpose of this donation was to influence the Liberal leader, who is now the Prime Minister.

Alexandre Trudeau is the person who made arrangements for this donation from China. Any other person would have been called to appear here, in Parliament, to answer questions.

Will the Prime Minister support a motion to invite Alexandre Trudeau to appear before a parliamentary committee to answer questions about this donation, whose purpose was to influence the Prime Minister?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said several times in the House, it has been 10 years since I have had any direct or indirect involvement with the foundation that bears my father's name. With respect to the committee, the hon. member knows very well that committees decide who will or will not be called to testify.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is insulting Canadians' intelligence by trying to convince them he has no ties to the Trudeau Foundation, when its donors pay for his vacations and his brother facilitated a donation to the foundation from China that was intended to influence the Prime Minister.

If he truly has nothing to hide, will he support a motion to invite Alexandre Trudeau to appear before a parliamentary committee to answer questions, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have already answered that question, as everyone here knows.

Oral Questions

For 10 years, I have had no direct or indirect involvement with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation.

We might ask ourselves why the Conservatives want to keep spending their time attacking me and my family instead of talking about the budget and the challenges facing Canadians.

It is because we are here to deliver for Canadians with a grocery rebate, with help for dental care, with initiatives and programs that help Canadians immediately.

* * *

● (1425)

LABOUR

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what he delivered is a bureaucracy that costs \$20 billion more. That is \$1,300 per Canadian family in additional costs related to that spending, and they are getting fewer services. Public servants are on strike, so taxpayers cannot even get answers to their tax questions before the filing deadline on Monday.

Given that Canadian taxpayers are not getting the services they pay for, is it time for them to go on strike as well?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Conservative Party, we on this side of the House support workers and unions in the important work that they do.

We know that public servants provide important services to Canadians, and the government appreciates their work, particularly the work that they have done over the past few years, which have been difficult. That is why we are working tirelessly to come to an agreement that is fair for public servants and reasonable for taxpayers.

We will continue to ensure that everyone at the bargaining table takes the work seriously, and we will resolve this situation the right way.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all he has delivered is a bureaucracy that costs \$20 billion more per year. That is \$1,300 per Canadian family, a 50% increase, and for what? It is for immigration services not being delivered, for veterans who cannot get answers to their requests, and now for taxpayers who will not be able to get answers to their tax questions before the filing deadline on Monday.

Given that Canadian taxpayers are not getting the services they pay for, is it time for them to go on strike as well?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservative Party of Canada. Its approach on services to Canadians was to close Veterans Affairs offices; cut services to women; fight with the unions, including with legislation that was anti-union, like Bill C-525 and Bill C-377, which the member voted in favour of; or, furthermore, continue to make cuts across the board.

Oral Questions

We have stepped up to support Canadians. Our public servants stepped up to help Canadians through the pandemic, and now we are in negotiations to make sure we get the right deal for them and the right deal for Canadians.

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ETHICS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this guy is so out of touch. Here we have 150,000 people on strike and the biggest federal strike in Canadian history. Canadians cannot get their services. Their housing costs have doubled, and crime is ravaging our streets. What is he going to do today?

Well, “Start spreading the news, [he’s] leaving today. [He] wants to be a part of it, New York, New York—

The Speaker: I remind hon. members that singing is not allowed. Whether it is good or bad, it is not allowed.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, these are small-time blues. They are melting away. I will make a new start of it in old New York.

I cannot sing very well, but at least I pay for my hotel rooms.

Will he pay for his hotel costs when he goes to New York tonight?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past number of years, we have spent time across the world promoting Canada and Canadian workers. We have been talking about the leadership on environmental responsibility, the reconciliation with indigenous—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am going to have to interrupt the right hon. Prime Minister.

The Leader of the Opposition has everyone excited. I just want everybody to calm down, take a deep breath and listen to the answer.

The right hon. Prime Minister from the top, so we can all hear the answer.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, over the past number of years, as Canadians know, we have been talking about what we are doing here in Canada. We have been singing the praises, quite literally, of Canadian workers, of Canadian companies and of Canadian know-how. We do this as we lead the fight against climate change, step up on indigenous reconciliation and invest in the middle class, with such measures as dental care and cuts to middle-class taxes, which the Conservatives voted against.

That has led to Volkswagen, Michelin and other companies investing in Canada because they see what we are doing. We will continue to promote Canada and Canadian workers right across the country.

• (1430)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, please forbid members from singing.

Moving on, I have some big news: The Prime Minister has had no direct or indirect contact with the Trudeau Foundation for 10 years. Remind me not to go to his Christmas party, because I am guessing that it must be fairly tense.

We now know that five deputy ministers were recruited to go to the Prime Minister’s office to talk to the Trudeau Foundation. He must have been at least a little bit curious. Ignorance is not a virtue for a prime minister. What was decided at that meeting?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have said before in the House, neither I nor my staff were present at that meeting. It was a meeting that took place with public servants in a building where public servants work.

The member opposite may not understand that, after a decade of the Harper government, the lines were blurred between the government and the public service and the Prime Minister’s Office. However, we are keeping them separate, and we will continue to do the work that Canadians expect us to do.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have a Prime Minister who boasts about his ignorance. What are things coming to?

Let us say that we pretend to believe him because he is becoming more and more convincing in the role of an ignoramus. The fact that he wants to remain ignorant is another problem, as is the fact that he does not ask any questions. This just goes to show that he cannot participate in the decision on who will chair the much-needed commission of inquiry into Chinese interference in Canada.

Does the House not agree?

The Speaker: I would like to remind members that there is a fine line between insulting someone and commenting on the situation they are in. I would like members to pay attention to what they are saying.

I know that the members of the House are very competent and that they speak eloquently, so I just want to remind them not to insult people.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are all well aware of how the Bloc Québécois feels about Canadian institutions, but the reality is that these unfounded attacks on the integrity of a man like David Johnston, our former governor general, are not befitting of this place. He is a man who put his heart and soul into serving this country. He has always demonstrated a great deal of integrity. That is why he is the right person to be an independent expert to look into this important issue of foreign interference.

LABOUR

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with each day of this strike, the government's mask is slipping, and what it reveals is not pretty. What the workers want is simple. They want salaries that keep up with inflation. However, this government is not addressing the workers' needs. Will the prime minister wake up, give his minister a push, do his job and offer these workers a fair contract?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I must admit that I am a little perplexed to have to explain to a member of the NDP how union negotiations work. It has indeed been eight days. There are challenges at the bargaining table, but everyone is constructively and productively engaged in the process. In fact, the government's negotiators have just put an offer on the table that aligns with a third-party expert's recommendations. This offer provides a solid basis for moving forward. The talks are advancing. This is the way things work when unions are respected.

● (1435)

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister were serious about respecting these workers, he would not be jetting off to New York at a time when we have the biggest strike in our country's history. That does not show respect for workers.

Workers are not buying it. We are not buying it. If the Prime Minister were serious about this, he could show some leadership and certainly not allow the minister who put us in this mess to continue to do this work.

Will the Prime Minister accept that this is serious, that it requires the full attention of government and that he has to get serious about getting a contract for these workers now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do find it a little odd that I am having to explain to a member of the NDP how collective bargaining works. Sometimes it takes time, and the work is being done constructively at the negotiation table. This includes the fact that we put forward, just yesterday, an offer that aligns exactly with the recommendations of a third party expert on this issue. This is the basis for a good deal moving forward that will respect our public servants while being fair for taxpayers.

That is what we are going to continue to work on.

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CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister cannot believe he is having to explain something to the leader of the NDP. Talking down to a member of his own coalition government just demonstrates how arrogant and out of touch this Prime Minister has become.

Today, for example, he will hop on his private jet and fly off on vacation to hang out with the stars and give self-important and self-indulgent speeches at Canadian taxpayers' expense. He will do this while he is putting in place a 41¢-a-litre carbon tax that will cost the average family \$1,500 more.

Oral Questions

Why does he not axe the trip and axe the tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, \$976 is what an average family of four in that member's riding will be getting this year with the climate action incentive. That is because we are not only moving forward with a price on pollution that helps fight climate change but also giving money back to average families in jurisdictions where it applies. Across the country, this will leave eight out of 10 of them better off. This is how we fight climate change and support families while drawing in global investments like those from Michelin, Volkswagen and others that want to be part of Canadian workers' successes.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when he said \$900-and-something, I thought for a moment that this was the price of his New York hotel room. Then I thought, "No, that cannot be true. It will be in the thousands."

He is spreading disinformation again. He promised he was going to censor misinformation. Why does he not censor himself?

We can look at the information coming from the Parliamentary Budget Officer that he appointed. This demonstrates that the average Canadian will spend at least \$1,500 more in taxes than they get back in rebates. The Liberals call this report a prop. It is from the Parliamentary Budget Officer that they appointed. They are called facts.

Will he finally listen to them?

The Speaker: I feel that I am explaining a lot today. If you are reading from something, as I am right now, it is a resource. If I hold it up like this, it is a prop. Nobody wants to hold up a prop.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can tell you he was not reading from the PBO report. The PBO has actually decried the fact that the report is being deliberately misinterpreted by the Conservatives. The reality is that eight out of 10 families in jurisdictions where the price on pollution applies do better with this price on pollution. The report is very clear about this.

What the Leader of the Opposition does not want to talk about is the fact that having no plan, which he does not, to fight climate change is not going to create jobs for Canadians, create growth for the economy or leave Canadians better off in the coming years.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is now clear why he wants to censor the Internet. He does not want Canadians to go and find out which of us is telling the truth. It would be very easy for them.

Oral Questions

I encourage them to google “A Distributional Analysis of the Federal Fuel Charge under the 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan” and go to page 3. Anyone watching can google it now and see that the Prime Minister is deliberately misinforming the House of Commons. He is stating that Canadians will be better off, when clearly the average household will pay \$1,500 more in taxes than they get back.

Would the Prime Minister like me to have one of the pages send this document over so he can read it?

• (1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative opposition still chooses to—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I want to remind the hon. members to maybe take direction from their whips. They should look at them and listen to them.

The right hon. Prime Minister, from the top.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party of Canada continues to refuse to understand that we cannot have a plan for the future of the economy if we do not have a plan to fight climate change. They continue to mislead Canadians, to confuse the issue and to harm workers across this country.

Volkswagen is choosing to invest in Canada. Rio Tinto is making investments in Canada. ArcelorMittal is investing in Hamilton. If these things are happening, they are happening because of the leadership that Canadians, the Canadian government and Canadian workers are showing in tackling climate change and building a stronger future.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he does not have an environmental plan; he has a tax plan. Since he brought in the carbon tax, he has not succeeded in reaching a single emissions reduction target. That is because taxing people for something they have no choice but to use does not change the environment. Canadians have to drive and heat their homes. Instead of putting the burden on himself, the Prime Minister chooses to put it on the working class, 60% of whom will pay more in taxes than they get back in rebates.

Why does he not cancel his hypocritical, high-flying lifestyle and the tax at the same time?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has a significant task ahead of him in convincing Canadians over the next couple of years that it would be better for them if we did not fight climate change, if we did not show leadership on the environment and if we did not make investments in cleaner technologies. He will have a significant task convincing people in St. Thomas that it is a waste of money to be investing in the Volkswagen plant.

These are the kinds of things he is going to have to try to convince Canadians of. All the fancy rhetoric he tries to use will not fool Canadians. The reality is that Canadians know the environment and the economy go together.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the big task I have ahead is cleaning up the mess that he will leave me.

He wants me to hold a big parade for him because he has made another promise. This is the guy who said that he spent billions of dollars on the Infrastructure Bank but has not completed a single project. He said it would only cost \$7 billion to build the Trans Mountain pipeline. It is up to \$30 billion, and it is not even built. He said his \$89 billion of spending on housing affordability would make things affordable, but house prices have doubled.

Why is it that the more he spends, the worse things get?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know the Conservative instinct is to cut. That is what the Conservative Party has always done. That is what the Conservative government did in years past. It cut veterans services, initiatives that supported the fight against child poverty, housing programs, and pensions. It cut everything it could because that would somehow lead to growth. Well, it did not.

What has led to growth is investing in the middle class, and the people working hard to join it, and cutting taxes for the middle class while raising them for the wealthiest 1%, which the Conservatives voted against. Most recently, when we were delivering dental care for low-income Canadian kids, the Conservatives voted against it.

We will continue to be there for Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister continues to be in the way of Canadians. He wants to bring in a 41¢-a-litre tax on Nova Scotians, which he claims will help the environment. Meanwhile, a project that would have actually helped the environment, the sustainable marine project, would have used tidal energy, the waves of the ocean, to generate electricity. That project has been cancelled because the Prime Minister's federal bureaucracy was too slow and incompetent to approve it. Now the company is getting up and leaving.

How does this sound? Why does the Prime Minister not get out of the way of Nova Scotians, let them generate clean electricity, and cancel the carbon tax that is on their backs?

• (1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have worked with provinces, initiatives and proponents across the country on historic investments in clean energy to transition toward decarbonizing our traditional energy sources. This is what we will continue to do to ensure that Canada is ready for the opportunities and investments that are coming in to create great jobs for workers right across the country.

That is what our budget is focused on, creating those great jobs for the middle class in critical minerals, in manufacturing, in CCUS, in energy, in a range of things that are going to position Canada as that supplier of energy and resources the net-zero world needs.

* * *

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I personally have nothing against Mr. Johnston. If I remember correctly, he was the debates commissioner when one of his moderators called Quebecers racist, and he refused to apologize. We all remember that fondly.

He still has ties to the Trudeau Foundation. The Trudeau Foundation took a cut from a donation made to the University of Montreal. The Prime Minister's brother signed a contract on behalf of the Trudeau Foundation that was irregular, to say the least. Thirty people at the Trudeau Foundation have resigned.

I do not believe that the Prime Minister knew nothing. Maybe he is a good actor, but does he realize that he does not have the independence to call an inquiry—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know everyone in the House must be surprised and shocked. Apparently the Bloc Québécois does not like David Johnston.

David Johnston has demonstrated his integrity, his dedication to Canada over not just a few years, but decades of service to Canadians, to our institutions. He is exactly the right person to take an independent look at all the infrastructure and all the programs that we have in place to combat foreign interference, and to reassure Canadians that everything is being done.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate, but he has close ties to the Trudeau Foundation.

The Trudeau Foundation is an incubator for Liberal circles, often unbeknownst to those who once supported it but now regret it, including some scholarship recipients.

The government and the Prime Minister are tolerating interference in our institutions and the intimidation of some Canadian citizens of Chinese origin.

Does the Prime Minister not realize that when people talk about the Prime Minister in China, they are laughing at him and at us?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we see how excited the Bloc Québécois is about attacking Pierre Elliott Trudeau's legacy, my father's intellectual legacy.

The reality is that we will always encourage intelligent and engaged debate in this country. That is one of the things that this foundation is doing.

I cannot say more because, as the hon. member knows very well, it has been 10 years since I have had any direct or indirect involvement with the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation.

Oral Questions

FIREARMS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is continuing his crusade against hunters, indigenous peoples and farmers in Canada by trying to ban hunting rifles.

He seriously thinks that a hunter from Saguenay is responsible for shootings in downtown Montreal. That is ridiculous.

Why not target the real criminals instead of targeting our indigenous peoples and our hunters in the regions?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, we are seeing the NRA spokesperson making things up. It will be three years next month since we got rid of assault-style weapons in Canada. It is now illegal to use them, buy them or sell them. The Conservative Party of Canada wants to bring these assault rifles back, but we will not allow that to happen. That is why I am calling on everyone in the House to support Bill C-21 when it comes back to the House.

● (1450)

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, members just witnessed, once again, the demagoguery of a Prime Minister who divides to distract. He calls indigenous Canadians in Nunavut, who hunt for sustenance, Americans. He calls our patriotic farmers, who use rifles for pest control, Americans. He calls decent, hard-working, law-abiding citizens, who have never broken a law in their lives, Americans because they disagree with his plan to ban hunting rifles.

Will he stop dividing to distract and start going after the real criminals?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the length to which the Leader of the Opposition will go to try to pretend that he is not in the pocket of the NRA is quite humorous. The reality is that the talking points they are putting out there are completely disconnected from any reality.

Three years ago, we made the decision to render assault-style weapons, weapons designed to kill the largest number of people as quickly as possible, illegal in our communities in this country. We banned them from being bought, sold or used. This is what we are continuing with. This is what he stands against.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he put all the resources into going after licensed law-abiding, trained and tested firearms' owners, who are statistically the least likely people to commit a crime. Meanwhile, he has turned loose onto our streets repeat violent offenders who have committed literally dozens of violent offences. In Vancouver, under his bail regime, the same 40 people had to be arrested 6,000 times. That is what he has brought to our streets: crime, chaos, drugs and disorder.

Why will he not start going after the real criminals with common sense in our justice system?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Conservative Party members were serious about going after crime, they would support our freeze on handguns. They would support the fact that we have banned assault-style weapons, which is something they continue to avoid, dodge, and spread misinformation and disinformation on.

The reality is that we have continued to invest in police when the Conservative government before me cut services and funding to police. They cut services to CBSA. They cut initiatives that actually kept Canadians safe, and now they are just in the pockets of the NRA.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he banned BB guns, paint guns and the hunting rifles of indigenous and rural Canadians, but enough about that. Let us just have the facts. Under the Conservative government, violent crime went down 22%. Under the Prime Minister, it has gone up 32%. There has been a 92% increase in violent gang crime under the Prime Minister. Those are the facts.

Will he listen to the facts and the common sense and go after the real violent criminals, instead of targeting law-abiding rifle owners and hunters?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite wants to look at numbers, he should perhaps look at the number of assault-style weapons purchased by Canadians under the 10 years of Stephen Harper's government. He would see the challenges we are facing right now.

The fact is—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am sorry. I am going to have to interrupt the right hon. Prime Minister again. I am having a hard time hearing his answer. I know there are some people who get excited when we talk about certain items. I would like for them to take a deep breath.

Now that everybody has taken that breath, the right hon. Prime Minister can begin from the top, please.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, members cannot be serious about keeping our communities safe if they stand against gun control. That is consistently what the Conservatives have done, by spreading misinformation and disinformation when we are going after assault-style weapons, putting a freeze on handguns, and not going after law-abiding hunters and fishers.

They are using that to try to scare people, when the reality is that keeping Canadians safe requires a multi-faceted approach. It means investing more in CBSA, which has doubled the number of interdicted guns coming across the border.

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LABOUR

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, public service workers have been waiting for over two years for a fair contract. Liberals like to talk a lot about workers' rights, but when they offer workers in the public sector what is effectively a pay cut when they are asking for salaries that keep up with inflation, they are no better than Conservatives.

Will the Prime Minister get serious about these workers, cancel his trip and get these workers a fair contract?

• (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we take seriously the responsibility of engaging constructively with labour unions. That is why we are, right now, at the negotiating table. That is why our negotiators have put forward an offer that is aligned perfectly with the recommendation of third-party experts as a pathway to solution, and it is certainly something that we are going to be able to build on together and see built on at the negotiating table.

We have full confidence, not just in our negotiators and our minister, but in the union negotiators, who are fighting for better opportunities for their folks, and we know that is how we get to the right deal at the table.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is starting to get ridiculous. In our country, Galen Weston earns over 430 times what the median income of an employee at his company—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I would ask everybody to keep it down.

If the member for Burnaby South could start from the top, please, I would appreciate it.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, this situation and the Conservatives are getting ridiculous. We have a situation where Galen Weston is earning over 430 times the median income of an employee at his company, and the Prime Minister wants to do nothing about that, but a janitor working in the public service cannot even have a salary that keeps up with inflation. What is going on with that picture?

I know that the janitor cannot offer the Prime Minister a fancy vacation, but the Prime Minister should agree that the janitor deserves respect. Will he cancel his trip and negotiate a fair contract for these workers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the very first things, no, the very first thing we did when we came to office was lower taxes for the middle class and raise them on the wealthiest 1%. Unfortunately, not just the Conservatives voted against that. The NDP voted against that back when we first got elected.

Oral Questions

The reality is that we will continue to step up for the middle class. We will continue to invest in things such as child care, dental care, public health care, and supports for seniors and students. We know that one builds a strong economy from the bottom up and the centre out. That is exactly what we are doing.

The Speaker: Everybody is excited today. I have found something that has worked in the past. I have a list here that has been worked on by both sides. This is the only tool I have. I can work with this list and follow it, or I can bounce around wherever. The folks in the back, who are at the end of the list, might want to prepare because they may be called on for a question.

The hon. member for Guelph.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, workers and families in southwestern Ontario still remember the Ford plant in St. Thomas, Ontario, being shuttered in 2011. It put thousands out of work, and it left the region's once thriving auto sector on life support. These types of closures were just all too common under the Harper Conservatives, which is one reason why this week's historic announcement with Volkswagen has come to them as such welcome news. Of course, not everyone in this chamber welcomed this historic investment.

While Conservatives may choose to attack the deal, could the Prime Minister update the House on what it means for our communities, our economy and our environment?

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

Volkswagen's decision to build its first North American battery facility in Canada is a generational investment in jobs and clean growth. The plant will create thousands of direct and tens of thousands indirect jobs in St. Thomas and across Canada's battery and EV ecosystems.

While the Leader of the Opposition continues to bet against Canada and our workers, and prefers to call it a waste, on this side, we will continue to push for a strong economy, good-paying jobs and cleaner air.

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HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the average Canadian household would have to spend 63% of its pre-tax income to make monthly payments on the average home, something that is mathematically impossible. Some are now having to pay \$2,400 to rent a room in a townhouse, not the whole townhouse, but a room, and the privilege of having five or six other roommates with them, after house prices and housing costs have doubled under the Prime Minister.

How did he spend so much to achieve such bad results?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of a Conservative government's underinvesting in housing if investing at all, we brought forward in 2017 a national housing strategy that has created new opportunities for millions of Canadians to get into homes. We have continued to invest in things like the housing accelerator that works with municipalities to create hundreds of thousands of new homes over the coming years. We are doubling housing creation over the next 10 years with investments like the rapid housing accelerator, with direct supports for homebuyers and with tax-free savings accounts. There is no one silver bullet on this, but we are delivering them all.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he has an accelerator. I have news for him: People cannot live in an accelerator; they have to live in a house or apartment.

Under the Prime Minister's leadership, the cost of an average two-bedroom apartment has doubled from \$1,172 to \$2,205. The cost of an average mortgage payment has doubled to over \$3,000 and now the share of their monthly income that people have to spend to own the average home is two-thirds, which is by far a record-smashing number. Again, how did the Prime Minister spend so much to achieve such horrible results for homebuyers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past eight years, we have consistently invested in programs and supports for Canadians that have delivered many more opportunities for people, but we know there is more to do. Canadians are free to contrast our multi-layered broad approach on investing in housing with that of the Conservative MPs who got elected in the last election. They promised to give a tax break to landlords who sold their buildings. That was the entirety of the housing plan in the last election from the Conservative Party of Canada. We will continue to have real approaches that work for Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's main criticism against the former Conservative government is that our housing programs were not expensive enough. If only it had been more expensive to taxpayers, then it would have been a better program. Yes, it is true: This Prime Minister is the heavyweight champion of government spending. The problem is he keeps delivering the worst possible results.

House costs have doubled under this Prime Minister and then they are more expensive for the taxpayers who have to fund his incompetent programs at the same time. Why does he not, instead, stop wasting the money and start delivering more houses?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservative politicians still think they can cut their way to growth because that is what they tried for 10 years under Stephen Harper and failed. That is what they are continuing to propose now, cuts and austerity: they can cut their way to new jobs for Canadians; they can cut their way to fighting climate change; and they can cut their way to indigenous reconciliation. Well, they cannot.

The Conservative Party continues to cling to a trickle-down austerity approach that does not work for the middle class and people working hard to join it. That is where we will stay focused, and we will take no lessons from them.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us look at the results. Under the previous Conservative government, the average mortgage payment on the average home, newly purchased, was \$1,400. Now, eight years later, it is \$3,200. The Prime Minister has delivered a 100% increase in mortgage costs, all while bringing in an \$89-billion taxpayer-funded boondoggle in the housing program. Once again, why will he not end the government waste and get out of the way so we can build affordable housing in this country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to see the Leader of the Opposition get up again and explain to Canadians how great the 2008 recession was for people in Canada and for people around the world because that is exactly what he is saying. The fact of the matter is that the cuts, the austerity and the trickle-down approach the Conservatives always put forward failed Canadians.

That is why we have invested in the middle class and people working hard to join it: to create economic growth, to create jobs, to lift people out of poverty, to create a plan to fight climate change and to build a future. That is what we are going to continue to do.

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● (1505)

[Translation]

LABOUR

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today marks one week since public service employees went on strike. It is high time the Prime Minister took charge of this matter. The writing was on the wall with this one: More than 150,000 public servants have not had a collective agreement since 2021.

At this point, the Prime Minister needs to intervene to encourage a quick, negotiated solution that benefits everyone. When will he come to the table?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, government negotiators and union representatives are working in good faith at the bargaining table. That is where this is happening. I should point out that the government has put forward a proposal that aligns with recommendations from an independent expert who said this was the right way to proceed. We have put forward this proposal, and it is definitely a starting point we can build on in the hopes of reaching an agreement in the days to come. That said, we will continue to work with the workers and with the unions in a spirit of respect and co-operation, because that is what we are doing.

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is most certainly not what they are doing. The Prime Minister is hiding. He is letting the crisis drag on, just like Roxham Road, the passport crisis, the border closures during the pandemic, and the 2020 rail blockades. Every time he lets a crisis drag on, other people pay the price. It can be workers, Quebeckers or everyone, but not him.

Will he be proactive for once, answer the union's call and sit down at the bargaining table?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is exactly what we are doing. Our negotiators are making responsible proposals. We are working with the unions in good faith, and we hope to see this union challenge settled shortly because, yes, Canadians expect the same level of service that government employees provided in the difficult years recently behind us. We have to reach an agreement that is good for taxpayers and for public servants. This is exactly the work we are doing together now.

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[English]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, government deficits are driving up interest and mortgage rates on homebuyers, and government gatekeepers are preventing home construction.

We rank second last for housing permit times in all of the OECD, and we have the fewest houses per capita in the G7 even though we have the most land to build on. That is the Prime Minister's record. His solution is to give tens of billions of dollars more to the same municipal gatekeepers in order to block construction again. Why does he not link the infrastructure dollars that the feds give to the cities to the number of houses that actually get built?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing we know the Leader of the Opposition is good at is picking fights, because that is exactly what he is proposing to do with municipalities. We choose instead to work collaboratively with them, to recognize the important role that municipalities across this country play in delivering housing and in accelerating the processes. That is the way to get things done.

Through the pandemic, it was orders of government working together that supported Canadians. It is respect from municipalities that keeps us moving forward, and that is what we are going to do.

Oral Questions

We remember well when that member was in government. The fact is, there were constant fights with municipalities. We are delivering—

The Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when Canadians are forced to live in tents, or spend \$2,500 to rent a single room in a townhouse or are stuck in their parents' basement until they are 35 years old, he better believe I am going to fight for more housing. It would be nice if he fought for someone other than himself and his gatekeeper friends.

The Prime Minister's solution is to build up these municipal gate-keeping bureaucracies with federal, deficit-financed tax dollars, which means it will be even slower to get anything built. Why does he not link the number of dollars that cities get for infrastructure to the number of houses they allow to get built?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we remember well that member's approach on fighting municipalities, fighting with experts, fighting with Elections Canada, fighting with anyone he could, and did that deliver for Canadians? Absolutely not. Right now, he is fighting against local news for Canadians. What does he have against local Canadians, against local municipalities?

The reality is, we will continue to be there to work collaboratively to build a stronger future and to invest in the kinds of things that we are delivering for Canadians while he continues to propose cuts and fights that lead nowhere.

• (1510)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, actually, I delivered housing costs that were half of what they are right now. Those are the results. Sometimes we have to fight for the people, the common people, and rely on the common sense of the common people to get things done.

Right now, we have the biggest housing bubble in the G7 even though we have the most land per capita to build on. The solution is to incentivize municipalities to speed up permits so that we can build more homes.

Why does the Prime Minister not link the number of dollars cities get for infrastructure to the number of houses they allow to get built, require every federally funded transit station to have housing around it and sell off federal buildings to build homes that people can afford?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, he wants to pretend he fights for ordinary Canadians, but he is not fighting for St. Thomas right now. He is not fighting for communities that need investment, that need opportunities to build those communities, to be there to support schools and after-school programs and hospitals and businesses in the kind of ecosystem it gets when one has a big investment like Volkswagen landing once again, after the Ford plant left under his leadership.

We are moving forward on delivering for Canadians. One of the great ways to make sure Canadians can better afford their homes is to have good-paying jobs, which again, with their attacks on unions and the middle class, they are not going to deliver.

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our official language minority communities are facing multiple challenges. As a proud former provincial minister of Acadian affairs and francophonie, I am well aware of what community organizations need in order to address labour shortages, educational requirements, and so much more.

I was pleased to attend this morning's announcement regarding the new action plan for official languages, a road map for the next five years.

Could the Prime Minister tell the House about some of the measures included in the new action plan for official languages?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Halifax West for her question and for her hard work.

This morning we unveiled our new action plan for official languages. It includes historic investments to protect and promote our official languages. With this plan, we are investing over \$4 billion in targeted areas such as francophone immigration, the educational continuum and the shortage of bilingual workers.

Unlike the Conservative Party, which wants to cut access to local and French-language news, our government is once again standing up for linguistic minorities across the country.

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ETHICS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at a time when a family has to pay \$2,500 just for one room in a house, when 1.5 million Canadians are accessing food banks and others are asking for medical assistance in dying because they are too poor to go on living after eight years of this Prime Minister, the Prime Minister is going to New York again, after billing taxpayers \$6,000 for a hotel room in London.

Will the Prime Minister show some respect for the people who pay his bills and announce today that he will repay the \$6,000 for the hotel room in London?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the leader of the Conservative Party continues to attack me, I will continue to attack the challenges Canadians are facing.

Oral Questions

That is why, in the 2023 budget, we are announcing a grocery rebate to help 11 million Canadians with the cost of groceries. We are providing dental care to low- and modest-income Canadians who do not have insurance, because we know that it improves their quality of life and reduces the pressure on household budgets. We will continue to be there while the Conservatives vote against these measures.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after sending 1.5 million people to the food bank, forcing families to spend 2,500 bucks to rent a single room in a townhouse and causing the highest food price inflation in a generation, he is off to New York to celebrate again. This is the same Prime Minister who spent \$6,000 on a single hotel room for a single night at taxpayers' expense.

Will he show a little decency and announce today he will pay that \$6,000 back to Canadian taxpayers?

• (1515)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the member opposite continues to make misleading, unfounded personal attacks on me, I will continue to focus on delivering for Canadians, things he does not want to talk about like the dental care benefits they voted against that are delivering dental services to 250,000 kids so far and they keep going. They do not want to talk about the \$10-a-day child care that is being delivered in six out of 13 provinces and territories right now, with child care fees cut in half, saving thousands of dollars for average families across the country. These are the things we are going to continue to invest in.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he has already admitted it was him who stayed in that \$6,000-a-night room. He tried to cover it up for months, but he got caught, and now Canadians know that while they are eating at food banks, while they are skipping meals and while they are crammed into one bedroom in a townhouse he is spending \$6,000 of their tax dollars per night on a single room.

I will make him a deal. I will never raise this issue again if he stands today and announces he will pay the money back. Will he do that for Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to see the lengths to which the Conservative leader will go to not talk about our budget and to not talk about child care, which he stands against and which has saved hundreds of dollars a month for Canadians across this country. He will not talk about it because he is ideologically opposed to child care, or at least part of his team is. He will not talk about dental care being delivered for low-income Canadian kids. These are things he voted against as well. They are things that are helping Canadians. They are things he will continue to stand against, and he will look for anything he can do to talk about anything other than things that would help Canadians.

PENSIONS

Mr. Charles Sousa (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Months after an election where pensions were never mentioned, Stephen Harper, in 2012, shocked the world when he announced at the World Economic Forum—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I just want to point out that just because there are no questions left today for certain people, that does not mean there is no carry-over to the next one. Scrambling them a bit might be the next process we have to go to.

The hon. member for Mississauga—Lakeshore from the top, please.

Mr. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, that is right. Stephen Harper shocked the world at the World Economic Forum, saying that major transformations were coming to seniors pensions. This meant raising the age of retirement from 65 to 67 and forcing vulnerable Canadians to work longer before having access to their hard-earned pensions.

Can the Prime Minister please update the House on what our government has done to fix that reckless mistake?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Mississauga—Lakeshore for his tireless advocacy and his hard work.

Indeed, one of the very first things we did when we took office was cancel the Harper Conservatives' plan for seniors and bring the age of retirement back down to 65. Instead of cutting OAS and GIS payments as they did, we raised them, and that led to us having the lowest poverty rates among seniors in the world. Now, we are trying to get the new grocery rebate legislation through the Senate to make life more affordable for seniors. We hope the partisanship of today's Conservative Party in the Senate will not be an obstacle to helping Canadians retire with financial security.

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[*Translation*]

LABOUR

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is getting ridiculous.

As the cost of groceries increases, the price of housing spikes and we are in a period of unprecedented inflation, the Prime Minister swears he understands how difficult this is.

The facts show that he does not understand anything. It is just bad theatre.

Will this Prime Minister finally take the situation seriously, cancel his trip and do whatever it takes to offer a fair contract to the workers?

• (1520)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, we have put an offer on the table via our negotiators that presents a level of compensation that is equal to what a third-party expert had recommended as a good solution. It is a good starting point for the negotiations in the coming days. The work will continue.

In the meantime, I should point out that the first thing we did was lower taxes for the middle class and increase them for the wealthiest 1%. The NDP sided with the Conservatives in voting against that measure.

* * *

YOUTH

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows how valuable and important the Canada summer jobs program for students is in supporting our municipalities, community organizations, day camps, small businesses and farms.

It is especially vital for our young people as it helps them prepare for the labour market by giving them opportunities in their field. That is particularly true given the current labour shortage and inflationary crisis.

The Prime Minister and the Liberal government boast about wanting to support young people. I would ask them to explain why the budgets and subsidies for student jobs were cut by one-third this year.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the pandemic, we increased the funding for the Canada summer program to help young people.

Now that the worst of the pandemic is behind us, we are bringing the funding back to pre-pandemic levels, with a bit of an increase. We invested even more in different programs to help young people.

Young people no longer have to pay interest on their federal student loans. We made bigger investments in programs and bursaries for them. We will continue to be there for young people.

I thank my colleague for his very good question.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

APPLICABILITY OF STANDING ORDER 18 TO STATEMENT BY MEMBER— SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the point of order raised on April 25 by the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan concerning the statement made the same day about the monarchy.

[Translation]

Standing Order 18 states the following, and I quote:

No member shall speak disrespectfully of the Sovereign, nor of any of the royal family, nor of the Governor General or the person administering the Government of Canada.

Private Members' Business

As stated at page 431 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, during Statements by Members, provided that guidelines are respected, I quote, "Members who are not Ministers can address the House for up to one minute on virtually any matter of international, national, provincial or local concern."

[English]

Statements must therefore respect these guidelines. They may touch on the institution of the monarchy itself or its institutional role in our system of government. As has always been the case, they cannot, however, contain disrespectful remarks directed at the sovereign.

After having considered the matter, the Chair finds that the statement respected the guidelines for Statements by Members and Standing Order 18.

I thank the members for their attention.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table with the House page 3 of the Parliamentary Budget Officer's latest carbon tax report, which shows the carbon tax will cost Canadians more than they get back in rebates. Because we know this is factual, we know we will have unanimous support.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1525)

[Translation]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT

The House resumed from April 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-288, An Act to amend the Telecommunications Act (transparent and accurate broadband services information), be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: It being 3:25 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-288.

[English]

Call in the members.

• (1535)

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

(Division No. 304)

YEAS

Members

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

Private Members' Business

Arya	Ashton	Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Atwin	Bachrach	Kurek	Kusie
Badawey	Bains	Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Baker	Baldinelli	Lake	Lalonde
Barlow	Barrett	Lambropoulos	Lametti
Barron	Barsalou-Duval	Lamoureux	Lantsman
Battiste	Beaulieu	Lapointe	Larouche
Beech	Bendayan	Lattanzio	Lauzon
Bennett	Berthold	Lawrence	LeBlanc
Bérubé	Bezan	Lebouthillier	Lehoux
Bittle	Blaikie	Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Blair	Blanchet	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney	Lightbound	Lloyd
Block	Blois	Lobb	Long
Boissonnault	Boulerice	Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
Bradford	Bragdon	MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
Brassard	Brière	MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe	Maguire	Martel
Calkins	Cannings	Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Caputo	Carrie	Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
Casey	Chabot	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
Chagger	Chahal	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McDonald (Avalon)
Chambers	Champagne	McGuinty	McKay
Champoux	Chatel	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean
Chen	Chiang	McLeod	McPherson
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Melillo	Mendès
Collins (Victoria)	Cooper	Miao	Michaud
Cormier	Coteau	Miller	Moore
Dabrusin	Dalton	Morantz	Morrice
Damoff	Dancho	Morrison	Motz
Davidson	DeBellefeuille	Murray	Muys
Deltell	d'Entremont	Naqvi	Nater
Desbiens	Desilets	Ng	Noormohamed
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal	Normandin	O'Connell
Dhillon	Diab	Oliphant	O'Regan
Doherty	Dong	O'Toole	Patzer
Dowdall	Dreeshen	Paul-Hus	Perkins
Drouin	Dubourg	Petitpas Taylor	Poilievre
Duclos	Duguid	Powlowski	Rayes
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Dzerowicz	Redekopp	Reid
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Rempel Garner	Richards
Ellis	Epp	Roberts	Robillard
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Rodriguez	Rogers
Falk (Provencher)	Fast	Romanado	Rood
Fergus	Ferreri	Ruff	Sahota
Fillmore	Findlay	Sajjan	Saks
Fisher	Fonseca	Samson	Sarai
Fortier	Fortin	Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Scheer	Schiefke
Freeland	Fry	Schmale	Seeback
Gaheer	Gallant	Serré	Sgro
Garon	Garrison	Shanahan	Sheehan
Gaudreau	Gazan	Shields	Shipley
Généreux	Genuis	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Gerretsen	Gill	Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Gladu	Godin	Singh	Small
Goodridge	Gould	Soroka	Sousa
Gourde	Gray	Steinley	Ste-Marie
Green	Guilbeault	Stewart	St-Onge
Hajdu	Hallan	Strahl	Stubbs
Hanley	Hardie	Sudds	Tassi
Hepfner	Hoback	Taylor Roy	Thériault
Holland	Housefather	Therrien	Thomas
Hughes	Hussen	Thompson	Tochor
Hutchings	Iacomo	Tolmie	Trudeau
Idlout	Ien	Trudel	Turnbull
Jaczek	Jeneroux	Uppal	Valdez
Johns	Joly	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Jowhari	Julian	Van Popta	Vandal
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Vandenbeld	Vecchio
Kelly	Khalid	Vidal	Viersen
Khera	Kitchen	Vignola	Villemure
Kmiec	Koutrakis	Virani	Vis

Private Members' Business

Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Wilkinson
Williamson
Zahid
Zuberi— 317

Wagantall
Waugh
Weiler
Williams
Yip
Zarrillo

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Bergeron
Maloney
Perron
Sorbara

Bibeau
Pauzé
Qualtrough
Zimmer— 8

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

CANADA NATIONAL PARKS ACT

The House resumed from April 21 consideration of the motion that Bill C-248, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act (Ojibway National Urban Park of Canada), be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-248 under Private Members' Business.

● (1550)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 305*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Alghabra
Allison
Anandasangaree
Arnold
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barlow
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bérubé
Bittle
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Block
Boissonnault
Bradford

Aitchison
Aldag
Ali
Anand
Angus
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Baldinelli
Barrett
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Berthold
Bezan
Blaikie
Blanchet
Blaney
Blois
Boulerice
Bragdon

Brassard
Brock
Calkins
Caputo
Casey
Chagger
Chambers
Champoux
Chen
Chong
Collins (Victoria)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Damoff
Davidson
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab
Dong
Dreeschen
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Ferrerri
Findlay
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Gallant
Garrison
Gazan
Genuis
Gill
Godin
Gould
Gray
Guilbeault
Hallan
Hardie
Hoback
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Jeneroux
Joly
Julian
Kelloway
Khalid
Kitchen
Koutrakis
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Kwan
Lalonde
Lametti
Lantsman
Larouche
Lauzon
LeBlanc
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lloyd
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)

Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings
Carrie
Chabot
Chahal
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cooper
Coteau
Dalton
Dancho
Davies
Deltell
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Doherty
Dowdall
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ehsassi
Ellis
Erskine-Smith
Falk (Provencher)
Fergus
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Garon
Gaudreau
Généreux
Gerretsen
Gladu
Goodridge
Gourde
Green
Hajdu
Hanley
Hepfner
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Johns
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Kelly
Khera
Kmiec
Kram
Kurek
Kusmierczyk
Lake
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lapointe
Lattanzio
Lawrence
Lebouthillier
Lemire
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lightbound
Lobb
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)

Routine Proceedings

MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Martel	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean	McLeod
McPherson	Melillo
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Michaud
Miller	Moore
Morantz	Morrice
Morrison	Motz
Murray	Muys
Naqvi	Nater
Ng	Noormohamed
Normandin	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perkins
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Poilievre	Powlowski
Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rood	Ruff
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schiefke	Schmale
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Shields	Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Small
Soroka	Sousa
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stewart	St-Onge
Strahl	Stubbs
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Thompson	Tochor
Tolmie	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Uppal	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Van Popta	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Wagh	Webber
Wilkinson	Williams
Williamson	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zuberi— 319	

NAYS

Members

Weiler— 1

PAIRED

Members

Bergeron	Bibeau
Maloney	Pauzé
Perron	Qualtrough
Sorbara	Zimmer— 8

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The House resumed from April 24 consideration of the motion.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations between the parties and I think if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to pass the motion on division.**The Speaker:** All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay. Hearing none, it is agreed.

The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay. Hearing none, it is carried.

(Motion agreed to)

I would like to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 26 minutes.

* * *

FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSIONS

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 23(2) of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, certified copies of the reports of the federal electoral boundaries commissions for the provinces of Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 32(5), these reports are deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

* * *

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on International Trade, in relation to Bill C-282, an act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act, on supply management.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendment.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following two reports of the Standing Committee on Health.

The committee's 12th report concerns the main estimates 2023-24.

• (1555)

[English]

In addition, I present the 13th report, in relation to Bill C-252, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act, on the prohibition of food and beverage marketing directed at children.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

* * *

PETITIONS

HAZARAS

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, I am presenting a petition on behalf of Canadians of Hazara heritage. This is a minority group originally from Afghanistan.

The petitioners are asking the government to recognize the ongoing genocide and persecution of the Hazaras by the Taliban. As well, they are calling upon the Government of Canada to prioritize Hazara refugees as part of the 40,000 Afghans being brought in by the end of this year.

JUSTICE

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the Seabird Island First Nation.

On June 23, 2022, Bill C-28 received royal assent. It allowed for extreme intoxication to be used as a defence for violent crimes, such as sexual assault, where a “reasonable person” would not have foreseen the risk of a violent loss of control. Residents are concerned about the impacts this will have on first nations communities like theirs, which are often in rural areas that are underserved by law enforcement.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to repeal the amendments made to the Criminal Code in Bill C-28. They call on it to uphold its commitment to protect the safety of first nations and a right-to-justice system that honours victims by holding offenders responsible for violent crimes.

CANADA-OWNED EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

Hon. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I rise today to table a petition on behalf of St. Joseph's Parish here in Ottawa. The petition is regarding the overseas practices of Canada-owned extractive industries. It was circulated across Canada by Development and Peace Caritas Canada, an organization that continues with the important mission of promoting social justice.

I am honoured to present this petition on behalf of these concerned Canadians. I would like to thank my constituent, Mr. Joe Gunn, for his continued hard work and dedication. I look forward to the government's response.

JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by Canadians. Some of Canada's most heinous killers have seen their sentences significantly reduced after the Liberals failed to respond to a Supreme Court of Canada decision that struck down a Harper Conservative law that gave judges the discretion to apply consecutive parole ineligibility periods to mass murderers and to take into account each life lost.

The petitioners are calling on the Liberal government to finally stand up for victims, invoke the notwithstanding clause and override the Bissonnette decision.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition on behalf of Hornby Islanders and Denman Islanders.

They are calling on the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to ensure that she uses all the restorative aims and tools in the sustainable fisheries framework to ensure that any shellfish aquaculture facilities in Baynes Sound/Lambert Channel are ecosystem-based. The petitioners also want to ensure that all of the applications that are developed with first nations, like a co-management plan for Baynes Sound/Lambert Channel, are area-based and ecosystem-based, respect and recognize the unceded traditional territories of this location's unique area, and consider all other stakeholders.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first was initiated by my constituent, Dr. Chris Keefer, and it relates to Canada's nuclear know-how and a particular CANDU technology, what this represents in terms of Canadian expertise and what it represents in terms of getting us off polluting types of energy forms.

The petitioners are talking about the fact that CANDU nuclear power was responsible for 90% of the power that helped the province of Ontario get off coal burning in the last 15 years. The petition asks for the Government of Canada to include CANDU nuclear refurbishments and CANDU newbuild projects within the clean technology investment tax credit. This is an important issue, and I thank Dr. Chris Keefer for raising it.

Routine Proceedings

● (1600)

TUBERCULOSIS

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I have the honour of presenting in this House today is by my constituent Leigh Raithby. She draws attention to the plight of tuberculosis, the fact that tuberculosis disproportionately affects indigenous communities in Canada and the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated a TB crisis. In this petition she calls on a national working group to work on a national TB elimination strategy that will help eradicate TB, particularly its disproportionate impacts on indigenous people in this country.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am very strict with my ability to speak to petitions without saying if I am for them or against them, but forgive me for saying this is heartbreaking.

E-petition 4356 has 4,239 signatories begging the government not to do something it has now done. The petitioners ask that the government consider that terminal 2 of the Roberts Bank establishment in the Fraser estuary will destroy critical habitat for an estuary that has already lost more than 70% of its flood plain habitat. The Fraser estuary supports 102 species considered at risk of extinction, including our southern resident killer whales, very highly endangered, and the Fraser chinook salmon, which are already listed under schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act. This is a transboundary species with international implications on the Pacific Salmon Treaty. The federal Impact Assessment Agency identified irreversible impacts that terminal 2 would have on these whales, on these salmon and on other wildlife, such as the particularly endangered western sandpiper.

The petitioners ask the government and particularly the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to utilize the collective evidence that had been presented, peer-reviewed scientific research and local conservation organizations to please reject the proposed Roberts Bank terminal 2. This brings new meaning to the word “terminal”.

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition initiated by residents of Don Valley West. I want to thank Gilles Fecteau for his leadership on this issue.

This petition calls on the Minister of Natural Resources to direct the Canada Energy Regulator to limit Canadian oil exports by requiring that they do not exceed Canada's current percentage of total world exports and by banning the transfer of licences for domestic consumption to export when Canada's domestic consumption declines.

Protecting the environment is top of mind for many Don Valley West residents and this petition reminds us of the importance of building a clean economy that works for everyone.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition on behalf of petitioners who make a very clear case. They state, first of all, that our economic and financial systems depend on a stable climate and that the Bank of

Canada recognizes that climate change poses a significant risk to the financial system and the economy.

They go on to note that continued financial support for emissions-intensive activities increases future climate-related risks to the stability of financial systems. They note that there has been no significant legislative action on this matter in Canada and that Bill S-243, an act to enact the climate-aligned finance act, was already drafted based on consultation with national and international experts.

They then call on the Government of Canada to support the principal concepts of the climate-aligned finance act, of which I will just share two of seven, first, to establish a duty for directors and officers of federal financial institutions to align with climate commitments and to also ensure that climate expertise on certain boards of directors avoid conflicts of interest.

TRAVEL SCREENINGS

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present petition 12361388. It is a petition of constituents of mine and Canadians across the country of Iranian descent who are being wrongfully profiled based on their background and birthplace while travelling to the United States with Canadian passports.

These are folks who are being denied entry to the U.S. without explanation, despite previous incident-free entries. They are undergoing biometric screening, device searches and questioning about their background and compulsory conscription in Iran, leading to personal and professional distress for them and endangering their careers. Their partners and children, even those born in Canada, are also being unjustly flagged as travel risks and being denied entry into the U.S. without explanation.

The Transportation Security Administration has added these Canadians' names to travel risk lists, which are also being shared with U.S. allies, leading to unreasonable secondary screenings for Canadians travelling to and from Canada, and to deportation from other countries.

They are calling upon the Government of Canada to ask the United States to provide reasons for unjust profiling of Canadians of Iranian descent and long administrative processing of aforementioned Canadians, to engage and negotiate with the U.S. Department of State, to provide a mandate for impacted Canadian citizens of Iranian descent similar to the exercise of authority under Federal Registration Vol. 87, No. 120 and to take action on the unjust security measures that Canadians face on leaving and returning to their homes in Canada, by removing the unjustified security flights.

• (1605)

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am tabling a petition that has been signed by many residents of Winnipeg North, asking for the Government of Canada to work with other stakeholders to expand international flights. With the growth of the Indo-Canadian community, the demand to see additional international flights going directly to India or some other country in Europe is exceptionally high.

We hope to see competition and other airlines, whether it is Air Canada, Westjet or international airlines, increase this very important service. They would like to be able to see something going out of the Winnipeg International Airport, particularly into Europe or directly to India.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

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

The first petition deals with special immigration measures for people from Hong Kong. The petitioners note that recent Hong Kong graduates can apply for open work permits under a temporary public policy for Hong Kong residents. There are two pathways, stream A and stream B, that have been announced. Stream B requires graduates to have one year of work experience in Canada and to have graduated within the last five years from a Canadian or foreign equivalent post-secondary school. Canada has announced an extension of two years on stream A but has not addressed concerns around the time constraints for stream B.

The 2016-17 graduates who met the five-year graduation requirement at the time of applying for their open work permit are falling out of eligibility to apply for permanent residency under stream B of the scheme by the time their work permits are received and they have fulfilled the hours of work requirement. Those who signed this petition call upon the Minister of Immigration to remove the five-year restriction to include all persons who fulfill the educational credential requirement of stream B.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am tabling is in support of my private member's bill, Bill C-257. This bill recognizes the challenges of people facing political discrimination here in Canada for their political beliefs.

The petitioners note that it is in the best interests of Canadian democracy to protect public debate and the exchange of differing ideas, and that this bill would protect people from the possibility of reprisals, workplace-based or otherwise, for expressing points of view on important political issues of the day.

The petitioners are calling on the House to support Bill C-257 and defend the right of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I will table today raises con-

Routine Proceedings

cerns from a number of my constituents about proposals for the legalization of euthanasia for children. We saw a committee report coming from the other three parties in the House calling for the expansion of euthanasia to include children.

The petitioners in this case particularly note a proposal for the legalization of euthanasia for babies, which is children from zero to a year old. The petitioners contend that infanticide is always wrong and are calling on the Government of Canada to block any attempts to allow the killing of children in Canada within our medical system.

• (1610)

HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the final petition I will table today deals with the situation of religious and ethnic minorities in Afghanistan. I will note that signatures were gathered prior to the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban, and even prior to that point there were significant challenges facing Afghanistan's Sikh and Hindu communities, as well as other minorities. The petitioners at the time were calling on the government to take action on these issues, and sadly, the challenges have gotten even worse for ethnic and religious minorities. The petitioners want the Government of Canada to remain seized with those challenges and to stand up for religious minority communities and all people of Afghanistan.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS****AN ACT FOR THE SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY OF CANADA'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

[*English*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: There are 15 motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-13.

[*Translation*]

Motions Nos. 11 to 14 will not be selected by the Chair as they could have been presented in committee.

[*English*]

All remaining motions have been examined, and the Chair is satisfied that they meet the guidelines expressed in the note to Standing Order 76.1(5) regarding the selection of motions in amendment at report stage.

Motions Nos. 1 to 10 and 15 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

[*Translation*]

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 to 10 and 15 to the House.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (for the Minister of Official Languages) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-13, in Clause 2, be amended by

- (a) replacing, in the English version, line 39 on page 2 with the following:
 - ties, including by restoring and increasing their demo-
- (b) replacing, in the English version, line 44 on page 2 with the following:
 - ties, including by restoring and increasing their demo-

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-13, in Clause 3, be amended by replacing lines 3 to 8 on page 4 with the following:

taking into account the fact that French is in a minority situation in Canada and North America due to the predominant use of English and that there is a diversity of provincial and territorial language regimes that contribute to that advancement, including Quebec's Charter of the French Language, which provides that French is the official language of Quebec;

- (b.2) advance the existence of a majority-French soci-

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-13, in Clause 4, be amended by

- (a) replacing line 14 on page 4 with the following:
 - 2.1 (1) The President of the Treasury Board is responsible for exercising
- (b) replacing lines 17 and 18 on page 4 with the following:
 - (2) The President of the Treasury Board shall, in consultation with the other ministers of the Crown, coordinate the implementa-

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-13, in Clause 6, be amended by deleting lines 23 to 28 on page 5.

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-13, in Clause 7, be amended by replacing, in the French version, line 14 on page 6 with the following:

- d) ces droits doivent être interprétés en tenant compte du fait

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-13, in Clause 14, be amended by

- (a) adding after line 2 on page 11 the following:
 - 33.1 In this Part, "employee" includes an employee who represents the employer, a person who performs for an employer activities whose primary purpose is to enable the person to acquire knowledge or experience and a person who has been placed by a temporary help agency.
- (b) replacing lines 7 to 13 on page 11 with the following:
 - (2) A person appointed by the Governor in Council to the position of deputy minister or associate deputy minister or a position of an equivalent rank in a department named in Schedule I to the Financial Administration Act shall, on their appointment, take the language training that is necessary to be able to speak and understand clearly both official languages.

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-13, in Clause 16, be amended by

- (a) replacing lines 3 to 11 on page 12 with the following:
 - use of both official languages, managers and supervisors are able to communicate in both official languages with employees of the institution in carrying out their managerial or supervisory responsibilities; and
- (b) adding after line 15 on page 12 the following:
 - (3.1) Paragraph 36(1)(c) of the Act is replaced by the following:
 - (c) ensure that, if it is appropriate in order to create a work environment that is conducive to the effective use of both official languages,
 - (i) managers and supervisors are able to communicate in both official languages with employees of the institution in carrying out their managerial or supervisory responsibilities, and
 - (ii) employees are supervised by their managers and supervisors in the official language of their choice,
 - regardless of the linguistic identification of their position; and
- (c) adding after line 27 on page 12 the following:
 - (5) Section 36 of the Act is amended by adding the following after subsection (2):
 - (3) Nothing in subparagraph (1)(c)(ii) abrogates or derogates from the right of a person to hold a position or carry out managerial or supervisory responsibilities in a federal institution if they held that position or carried out those responsibilities in the institution immediately before the coming into force of that subparagraph.

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-13, in Clause 21, be amended by

- (a) replacing line 19 on page 14 with the following:
 - (4) The Government of Canada shall estimate periodically,
- (b) replacing line 31 on page 16 with the following:
 - these mechanisms shall take into account the obligations set

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-13, in Clause 22, be amended by replacing line 38 on page 18 to line 2 on page 19 with the following:

- 43 (1) The Minister of Canadian Heritage shall advance the equality of status and use of English and French in Canadian society, and to that end may take measures to

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-13, in Clause 50, be amended by replacing, in the French version, line 9 on page 44 with the following:

- (2) Le ministre du Patrimoine canadien fait déposer un rapport de l'examen devant chaque

Motion No. 15

Government Orders

That Bill C-13, in Clause 71, be amended by adding after line 39 on page 75 the following:

(1.1) Subsections 16(3.1) and (5) come into force on the second anniversary of the day on which this Act receives royal assent.

● (1620)

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we are gathered is the traditional territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin people.

I would also like to say hello to each of my fellow members of the Standing Committee on Official Languages and thank them for their meticulous work and dedication since last June. The clause-by-clause study of Bill C-13, an act for the substantive equality of Canada's official languages, was a colossal undertaking.

[*English*]

Many members of the committee know what it means to personally protect and promote our linguistic rights and our official language minority communities across the country.

[*Translation*]

We must never take our rights for granted, as many members here know. My community in northern Ontario is a minority community. One of the main reasons that I was able to live, work and pursue a post-secondary education in French is the Official Languages Act.

I am proud to have played a part in making this bill a reality, like my father, Gaetan Serré, did before me in 1969. I know that I would not be a member of the House today if it were not for the 1969 Official Languages Act. I know how important it is to complete the last steps in the modernization of the act. The last major updates to the act occurred 30 years ago. It no longer reflects Canadian society today and is no longer in sync with our communities, our institutions or our needs.

Since we introduced our first bill in June 2021, our government's commitment has never wavered. Today, more than ever, we want a modern, ambitious law with teeth, a law that will protect and promote French across Canada and the language rights of official language minority communities. That includes Acadians, Franco-Ontarians, Franco-Manitobans, all francophones elsewhere in the country and all members of the English-speaking community in Quebec.

That is what Bill C-13 seeks to do, and that is what our government helped to strengthen during the Standing Committee on Official Languages' study.

[*English*]

Concretely, our committee stage amendments aimed to promote substantive equality between French and English, the respect of official languages obligations, and the creation of new linguistic rights, thanks to the enactment of the new use of French in federally regulated private businesses act.

[*Translation*]

We are on the right track. I sincerely hope that members will quickly pass Bill C-13 at third reading so that the Senate can pass it

before the end of June. If we work together, the bill that many Canadians have been anxiously awaiting could receive royal assent.

[*English*]

There did really appear to be a spirit of collaboration during the committee's study. This has helped parliamentarians, and the numerous stakeholders involved, to clarify and improve Bill C-13. This was certainly not easy work, as many members know, but all parties showed good will in the end. In my opinion, this is an excellent illustration of the important work of parliamentary committees to help progress the priorities of all Canadians. The bill, now being considered by the House, is a net improvement, and I am convinced that it will receive significant support.

● (1625)

[*Translation*]

I would like to talk about this in more detail.

At the beginning of our study of the bill, committee members submitted more than 200 amendments. Amendments suggested by every party were adopted, allowing us to make adjustments. Let me give a few examples. One amendment clarified the meaning of adult learning and literacy in the minority language. This is an important nuance when it comes time to deliver on our commitments.

Two amendments acknowledged the importance of French in trade and the contribution of francophone immigration to the Canadian economy. Two others helped us clearly state that francophone and anglophone minorities have different needs. They also made it clear that French is a minority language in Quebec, Canada and North America.

Yet another key amendment will help federal institutions implement their commitments. It set out a new obligation to take the necessary measures to promote the inclusion of language provisions in our agreements with the provinces and territories. That is a major step forward.

The study by the committee also made it possible to examine the use of French in federally regulated private businesses act. This new act enacted by Bill C-13 will serve as a lever for the private sector to play its role in promoting French as a language of work and service. It clearly sets forth the right, both in Quebec and in regions with a strong francophone presence, to work in French in these businesses and to obtain services in French. This applies to federally regulated private businesses like banks, postal services and transportation or telecommunications companies.

This collaboration with the Government of Quebec should, in my opinion, lead to strong support for the bill because, through collaboration, we found a way to serve everyone's interests. This bill will protect and promote French across the country, but also ensure the vitality of official language minority communities.

Government Orders

The study in committee gave us the opportunity to propose amendments to other parts of the bill. Briefly, I will mention that we also asked to clarify that francophone immigration is helping to restore the demographic weight of francophone minorities. The former wording suggested that immigration was the only factor that ensured demographic weight, and our suggestion recognizes that there are also other factors.

[*English*]

We have proposed strengthening our consultation mechanisms by defining the steps that federal institutions must follow. As had been requested by some school boards in official language minority communities, we have now included the obligation to consider the needs of English- and French-speaking minority communities in the sale of federal properties.

[*Translation*]

In closing, with Bill C-13, we are preparing to appropriately support the French language, to better equip the Commissioner of Official Languages and to require that our institutions and businesses assume their responsibilities.

We are making the federal government and the provinces and territories allies. We are working together and we are encouraging collaboration to support French and anglophone and francophone minority communities. We are giving them a modern act that will have a positive impact on the very concrete reality of our communities.

I would ask that all members of the House and senators who will study the bill in the coming weeks work diligently. I thank the senators for having conducted a pre-study to expedite things. Like them, I look forward to the bill being completed. It is a massive job.

On March 28, in budget 2023, our government announced the largest investments ever allocated to official languages. If we take into account renewed investments, over \$4 billion will go to promote official languages over 5 years.

With the adoption of Bill C-13 and royal assent, we will have the means as a government to defend and, above all, advance the language rights of all Canadians.

• (1630)

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the work of my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages, with whom we worked on Bill C-13 at the Standing Committee on Official Languages. I would like to inform my colleague that, today, we are not debating the bill at third reading. We are studying the bill at report stage. My colleague should have spoken a little about the amendment motions he moved that delayed the study and passage of Bill C-13.

I would like to know why my colleague did not move these motions to amend in committee when we were working on Bill C-13.

Mr. Marc Serré: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank my colleague for his hard work on the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

Some 200 amendments were moved. We heard from 50 witnesses, and 6,500 people across the country shared their views last summer. We tried to improve the bill together. In committee, we agreed to the amendments moved by the Conservatives, the Bloc Québécois and the NDP. We worked together to make improvements to the bill. Now we have an improved Bill C-13 that is eagerly awaited by the community. The community wants the House and the Senate to pass the bill as soon as possible.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois moved Motion No. 13. I would like to ask for the unanimous consent of the House to debate it. I am told that I could have moved it during the committee study, but I believe that—

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: We do not have unanimous consent to study this motion. However, the hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île has time remaining for questions and comments.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague.

The action plan for official languages was announced today. At the beginning of the announcement, it talks about promoting French in Quebec and ensuring its protection. However, there are no measures for Quebec. There are basically only measures to strengthen English in Quebec. We saw that 20% of the new funding will go toward supporting English in Quebec, when it is French that is endangered.

Can my colleague explain how this squares with the statement that the government is going to protect French in Quebec?

Mr. Marc Serré: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question and his work in committee.

Essentially, there are really two things here. We are talking about Bill C-13. Bill C-13 is a major improvement to official languages legislation. There are new provisions concerning the central agency and immigration, and the commissioner of official languages will be able to impose monetary penalties.

My colleague mentioned the action plan. Since taking office in 2015, we have doubled the funding for the action plan. We recently added \$1 billion to support official language minority communities across the country. These investments are extremely important for the organizations that will have access to them.

We also improved Bill C-13 in terms of immigration, in collaboration with the Province of Quebec. I do not know why my colleague cannot acknowledge the fact that the federal government is working closely with the Province of Quebec to ensure the advancement of French across Canada, including in Quebec.

● (1635)

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge my colleague's hard work and the historic result we are talking about today.

My question is, what is the next step?

Today, in its action plan for official languages, the government expressed its intention to grant core funding to francophone organizations and communities. These essential services and organizations, such as the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, youth programs, newcomer services, support for francophone artists, and French-language legal services, are the backbone of the francophone presence in Canada.

We commend this initiative, but how can we guarantee that the funding will find its way to the organizations and communities that need it to enhance French-language proficiency across Canada?

Does the hon. member believe that it is essential to provide these communities and organizations with stable core funding?

Mr. Marc Serré: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the hon. member for her work on the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

We heard what 6,500 people had to say about the action plan. We went to every province and every territory. We heard their concerns about funding. We responded accordingly. In 2018, we invested an additional \$500 million. Today we announced another \$1 billion. Organizations will have access to these funds, which will allow them to strengthen official language minority communities across the country.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I just want to say that I would have liked to debate the motion moved by my Bloc Québécois colleague. I think that we Conservatives would have agreed to it, because it is consistent with what we presented in committee, in that it is about shortening the review period. Instead of 10 years, as written, we wanted to shorten the period to five years, but the Liberals refused. My colleague in the Bloc Québécois had an even better idea, which was to reduce the review period to three years. When something is urgent, we need time to react. The faster we react, the easier it is to close the gap in order to halt the decline of the French language.

As a fervent defender of French, I am always happy to rise in the House of Commons to defend the language. My goal is obviously to halt the decline of the French language and to protect and promote both official languages.

Before I get into the nuts and bolts of the issue, that is, the government's proposed amendments to Bill C-13, an act for the substantive equality of Canada's official languages, at report stage, it is important to understand how we got here.

Earlier, my colleague mentioned that funding was doubled, but we lost eight years that could have been spent providing the tools needed to protect French here in Canada. This government has been in power for eight years and, for eight years, it has dragged its feet when it comes to official languages. It gives organizations the illusion that it is doing enough to protect bilingualism in Canada.

Government Orders

Way back in 2018, the Prime Minister pledged to modernize the Official Languages Act, a promise that was repeated in the 2019 and 2021 Liberal platforms. It will probably be repeated again in the next election campaign, the outcome of which remains to be seen.

In 2021, the government tabled a white paper on the reform of the Official Languages Act, titled "English and French: Towards a substantive equality of official languages in Canada". Bill C-32 was tabled by the then minister of official languages, who is now the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but it later died on the Order Paper when the government decided to call an election.

When she was appointed after the 2021 election, the new Minister of Official Languages promised that she would present a new version of the Official Languages Act in her first 100 days. She almost kept her promise. Bill C-13 was tabled in March 2022 to halt the decline of the French language in Canada and promote our two official languages, English and French.

Why am I focusing on the words "English and French" when talking about bilingualism? It is because the government appointed a Governor General who is bilingual, but who does not speak French. The Governor General is our representative, and has some lovely qualities, but unfortunately, she does not speak French. That is a good representation of how much this government cares about defending the French fact.

If it were as important to the Liberals as they say it is, rather than just an election promise, we would not be here today debating Bill C-13, since a reform would have been adopted long ago.

In rising in the House today, on April 26, at report stage of Bill C-13, an act for the substantive equality of Canada's official languages, I recall the many times the language minister rose in this chamber.

She stated:

I hope once again that members of the House will work with us because stakeholders across the country want this bill to be passed as quickly as possible and we have a lot of work to do.

She was right. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages tried several times in committee to shut down debate on this bill by limiting the number of witnesses who would appear before the committee and the amount of time that would be spent debating the amendments. The Conservative Party of Canada takes English-French bilingualism very seriously.

● (1640)

We had an incredible opportunity to modernize the Official Languages Act, something that has not been done since 1988. As parliamentarians, this was our chance to take meaningful action to reverse the decline of French, a very real problem in both Canada and Quebec.

Government Orders

We were good sports and reached out to find compromises to move this file forward. We took the time to listen to stakeholder organizations that are feeling the impact of the decline of French every day, and we took the necessary action to give Bill C-13 more teeth, as the minister has said. However, we were unsuccessful because of a lack of will on the part of the government.

At committee stage, the Liberals moved over 50 amendments, many of which were identical but were submitted by different Liberal members. Some Liberal members also monopolized the time for debate and kept the Standing Committee on Official Languages from moving forward. That shows three things: The Liberals are not working as a team, they are inconsistent and they are disorganized.

Now here we are today, April 26, 2023, at report stage, with about 10 government motions on the table, and that is after some were withdrawn. These motions do not amend the substance of the bill. They could easily have been put forward in committee, but the Liberals chose instead to draw out the process for passing the bill.

I heard my colleague talking earlier about moving forward as quickly as possible so that the bill can be passed as soon as possible, as all organizations are calling for. Unfortunately, this was not taken into consideration, which is why, today, we are talking about details that are wasting time and dragging out the debate.

In accordance with the normal legislative process, we will have to vote at report stage. That will be followed by another stage in the House of Commons. We do not know when this will happen, since the government has not revealed its strategy. However, we will have to return to the House, debate and vote. Then the bill will have to be studied by the other place, the Senate. This shows that the Liberal government is talking out of both sides of its mouth. It says it wants to move fast, but it is disorganized. Amendments were moved today. Amendments were moved in committee. I just want to point out that the Liberals moved 50 amendments.

They drafted a white paper, Bill C-32 and Bill C-13. They submitted Bill C-13 to committee and are submitting it again today. What does that show? It shows that the government does not necessarily want to fast-track Bill C-13. I think that is unfortunate.

I also think it is unfortunate that the Bloc Québécois was unable to move its motion because the Liberals objected. I respect and accept your decision, but the decision was made based on the fact that it could have been debated in committee, yet that also applies to what the government just proposed.

Unfortunately, the act will not have a shorter review period that would allow us to make adjustments when we find out, on the day it takes effect after the bill receives royal assent, that it cannot ensure that concrete action will be taken to halt the decline of the French language in Canada.

I think that this is important, that we should be proud of this bill, proud of our French language and proud of our English language. Bilingualism is something for Canada to be proud of, something that makes us attractive and unique. We owe it to ourselves to respect the organizations that work hard every day to protect our official language minority communities.

With all due respect for my colleague, we in the Conservative Party of Canada will once again reach out and not obstruct the progress of Bill C-13.

• (1645)

However, I hope the Liberal government does not have any more surprises in store for us that will slow the process down. We should pass the bill as soon as possible so we can move on to something else and give our organizations the tools they need to do what they do every day to protect the French language, halt its decline, and protect and promote English and French. We do not want to pit our two official languages against each other. We are proud of both.

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and his interventions in committee.

My colleague mentioned the following words several times: no delay, all the rest, amendments. This bill is in fact constitutional and contained 200 amendments. A lot of work was done in collaboration.

Every party leader has made a statement about Bill C-13. However, we have heard nothing from the Conservative leader.

My questions for my colleague are the following: Is the Conservative leader going to take a position on Bill C-13, and is the Conservative Party going to support Bill C-13, like communities across the country are asking it to do?

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's question is very relevant.

I would like to point out that he may have been reading from the wrong page in his speech because his was a third reading speech. We are in the House to debate motions that were moved by the Liberal government.

I can assure the House and all Canadians that our leader will take a position and will vote on Bill C-13 in due time.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Official Languages Act has been around for a while. The government wanted to modernize it and, when they did, it was because it had failed. The act did not ensure the survival of French throughout Canada, from coast to coast to coast, or ensure that francophone minorities are treated in the same way as the anglophone community in Quebec.

Can my colleague tell me how he reconciles the government's desire to table Bill C-13 to try to slow the decline of French with its introduction of an action plan that will provide \$280 million in funding to the anglophone community in Quebec to ensure its survival, as though English were threatened in Quebec, in Canada and across North America?

• (1650)

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague and I have the same objective.

Government Orders

I had the pleasure of working harmoniously with the Bloc Québécois to advance Bill C-13 and above all to stop the decline of French and protect it. In the Conservative Party, we have a more Canadian vision, that of protecting English and French in minority communities.

Now, what my colleague mentioned is not in Bill C-13, but in the action plan for official languages, which was announced today. As if by chance, we are debating Bill C-13 in the House today and the government decides to introduce its action plan. There is a marketing strategy there.

What I want to say is that we were not available for the reading of the action plan. There will be a briefing session tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock, and I will be attending.

The information I received is that 20% of the funding will be allocated to anglophone minorities in Quebec. The question we must ask is, on what criteria was that percentage based?

As my colleague mentioned concerning official languages, the situation of French outside Quebec is different from that of English in Quebec. I have fundamental questions about the percentage. We must not neglect our anglophone friends but there is no denying that additional efforts are needed for francophones outside Quebec.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the important work of my colleague with respect to this bill. I know the issue of immigration is especially important to him. We know that there is a huge need to welcome francophone immigrants from around the world and that that is a big part of Bill C-13.

Would the member be in favour of increasing funding for consular services and recruitment efforts to attract and process more francophone files from abroad?

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, with whom I had the privilege of working on Bill C-13.

With regard to francophone immigration, it is unfortunate that there is only one small paragraph in Bill C-13 about identifying targets and indicators, but no obligation to achieve results.

We did a more pragmatic study in committee. We adapted our motion to be more in line with the NDP's, to ensure that we have accurate data to promote francophone immigration, and I hope the results will be very encouraging for the future of francophone immigration in Canada.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. 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 Saanich—Gulf Islands, Taxation; the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Seniors; the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan, The Economy.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the atmosphere in Quebec is electric these days. There is a movement, a collective awareness as the decline of French is picking up pace. There is every indication that is the case. Whether it is a question of which language is spoken at home, a person's mother tongue, the first official language spoken or the language of work, there is a rapid decline of French, especially in Montreal. This cannot contin-

ue. Language projection studies—even those from Statistics Canada, which is certainly not a loyal ally of French in Quebec—indicate that there is going to be a very rapid decline.

Bill 101 has been shored up and the mobilization continues. Quebec's French language minister has called for a national awakening. I think we need to continue to mobilize. The federal language law has long been the blind spot in Quebec's language debate, but I think that with the debates we have had on the federal language law, people are beginning to better understand what it is. It is pretty incredible. For 53 years now, since 1969, Pierre Elliott Trudeau's Official Languages Act has been essentially, if not solely, about strengthening English in Quebec.

The Official Languages Act came into being on the heels of the Laurendeau-Dunton commission. The commission was the brainchild of André Laurendeau, an editorialist with the newspaper *Le Devoir*. He championed a model somewhat similar to the one used in Switzerland or Belgium, a territorial model based on collective rights. He also believed that the Quebec issue had to be a priority. Lester B. Pearson was in power at the time. In the meantime, André Laurendeau died.

When Pierre Elliott Trudeau came to power, he changed course completely. He introduced an institutional bilingualism model that gave individuals the freedom to choose their official language, English or French, but only where numbers warranted. Essentially, this model is the opposite of Quebec's approach, which is centred on protecting the future of French and making French the common language across Quebec's territory. The same approach is used around the world. This type of language planning model makes it possible to ensure the future of a language and genuinely protect Quebec's minority languages.

The other major principle of the Official Languages Act is really an aberration. I am talking about the principle of symmetry or equivalence between Quebec's anglophones and the francophone and Acadian communities. It was really an aberration from the start. The Laurendeau-Dunton commission conducted a very thorough investigation and found that, out of 14 language groups in Quebec, francophones ranked 12th in terms of average income. We were therefore at a great disadvantage.

Government Orders

Quebec anglophones were part of the Canadian anglophone elite, and they enjoyed over-funded institutions, like schools and hospitals. There was really institutional extreme overfunding in favour of the English. What Mr. Trudeau and the Liberal government of the day decided to do to help was to fund institutions, English-language educational institutions. This has frequently been denounced. The Bloc Québécois has always denounced it. In a case on signage brought by Alliance Quebec, even the UN ruled that anglophones in Quebec cannot claim minority rights because they are part of the Canadian majority. It is there in black and white. If Quebec were independent, we could then say that francophones form the majority, but until Quebec is independent, we are subordinate to the federal government, which passed official languages legislation that aimed to strengthen English in Quebec, the only francophone state in North America. It continues to do so.

• (1655)

If the federal language law was overlooked, it was mostly because the Liberal government, rather than directly confronting Quebec and intervening to challenge Bill 101 before the courts or using its power of disallowance, used a very effective strategy, which consisted of fostering the emergence of special interest groups in civil society, groups that it funded directly and that led court challenges and mobilized the population to defeat Bill 101. The government even established a court challenges program to defeat Bill 101.

These 60 or so groups are funded by the federal government. For a very long time, whenever French was being defended in Quebec, we were called racists, xenophobic or inward looking, when the complete opposite is true. Having a common language makes it possible for a nation to include newcomers. That is not at all what happened. This continued for a very long time. Bill 101 was undermined in almost every sector to which it applied.

Today we are seeing a more rapid decline of French. In this federal language law, part VII requires federal institutions to support the anglophone community in Quebec. The government is funding the anglophone community in Quebec.

We thought there would be a change when the government recognized that French is in decline and that it had a responsibility to protect and defend French everywhere, including in Quebec. The Prime Minister kept saying that when he was presenting his action plan, but almost all the new investments in Quebec, roughly \$280 million out of \$1.4 billion, will be used for protecting and promoting English alone. It is incredible. That is \$56 million more a year that will be added to the \$90 million that is being paid to bolster all these groups that have budgets. Anyone involved in groups advocating for French outside Quebec — I, myself, was involved in such a group in Quebec — knows that money is key, and in the case of this funding, it will contribute significantly to anglicizing Quebec.

I think we really need to take action. We saw the action plan. There was a last-minute agreement with the Government of Quebec regarding the French language in federally regulated businesses. That is an improvement, a step in the right direction. I said it before and I will say it again, because we want to promote the widespread

use of French in every business sector. This is supposed to encourage the knowledge of French among business executives.

The Bloc Québécois supports any possible advancement of French in Quebec. That is why we are going to support this bill. However, there are still some asymmetrical elements in the rest of the bill. The principle of equivalence between anglophones and francophone and Acadian communities is still there, so this bill will continue to anglicize Quebec.

Fortunately, Quebecers are beginning to organize. We will keep informing people. I plan to do a tour of Quebec, because not many Quebecers really know how the Official Languages Act works or know that all the funding goes to anglicizing Quebec. I think that if we take a few years to rally public opinion and to get this legislation changed, and if the federal government stays as closed off as it has been throughout the debates, there is one question that Quebecers will start asking themselves or that will become more and more clear in their minds: assimilation or independence?

• (1700)

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, his passion for the French language and the work he does in committee.

Earlier he made reference to the positive collaboration with the Government of Quebec. I also heard the leader of the Bloc Québécois say he was going to vote in favour of Bill C-13. I wonder if my colleague will join us in calling on the Conservatives to vote in favour of Bill C-13 and to see what we can do about this.

I would also like to know why the leader of the Bloc Québécois is voting in favour of Bill C-13. What are the positive aspects of this bill?

• (1705)

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, as I just said, we will vote in favour of Bill C-13 because it does make some progress, particularly with regard to federally regulated businesses. It does not meet the demands of Quebec or our demands because, like the Government of Quebec, we are calling for Bill 101 to apply to federally regulated businesses. Such will not be the case. The businesses will get to choose.

However, since several elements of Bill 101 have been incorporated in the Official Languages Act, the minister is hoping that businesses will decide to continue to comply with Bill 101 over the Official Languages Act. We will see what happens when the Official Languages Act is implemented.

Minister Roberge also criticized the fact that all of the money is being spent on the anglophone side to support English and services in English in areas under provincial jurisdiction. I think that an agreement was reached on one thing, but the rest of the Official Languages Act is unacceptable for Quebec. It will merely speed up the English takeover of Quebec. We are going to rally the public so that we are able to amend this legislation for Quebec.

Government Orders

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his efforts in committee. As a member representing a riding in British Columbia, I would point out that interest in learning French is very strong. Hundreds of thousands of students attend or have attended immersion schools.

The Liberal government likes to pat itself on the back for its efforts on behalf of francophone communities. However, francophone communities and francophone immigration lost ground during the pandemic. The federal government provided no support.

Here is my question. Is my colleague concerned that the bill will not make a difference?

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, I think there are some good things in there for francophones outside Quebec. Will this reverse the decline of French? Unfortunately, I doubt it.

It was announced that most of the investments and improvements would be for immersion schools, while schools by and for francophones outside of Quebec lack funding. Even at the outset, a study by the federation of francophone parents outside Quebec lamented how the bulk of the funding was being distributed. I think that between 78% to 88% of the federal funding for schools goes to anglophones in Quebec and to teaching English in francophone schools in Quebec. There is very little funding for francophone schools outside of Quebec even though francophones are becoming increasingly assimilated.

Francophones are forced to fight for every inch. I am in awe of the francophones outside Quebec who fight for French every day. We will continue to support them. We will vote for the bill because every step forward for them is important. Personally, I think it will weaken Quebec. If we weaken French in Quebec, it will weaken French everywhere else in Canada, too.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to represent a riding in northern Ontario that has a strong and vibrant francophone culture. The NDP fought for more post-secondary education and access to French health care and cultural programs.

The federal government must support francophone immigration in northern Ontario. Will my colleague support the NDP in its fight to increase francophone immigration services in northern Ontario?

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, we certainly support having an increase in francophone immigration. We have seen, for example, that more than 80% of student visa applications from francophone Africa are being rejected. I believe that is a real problem. We have spoken out about this many times, and our efforts seem to have paid off. We are told that the acceptance rate for francophone African students has increased.

I also hope that my NDP colleagues, who are supposed to support Quebec's self-determination and who regularly vote against measures in favour of Quebec's right to self-determination, will support these efforts. Charles Castonguay has studied this issue. The data indicates that francophone immigrants who settle outside Quebec are very quickly assimilated into the English culture.

Measures are needed to ensure that French becomes the common language in areas outside Quebec with a high francophone concen-

tration; that would make it possible to integrate these newcomers. Otherwise, it is like putting water into a leaky bucket.

• (1710)

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today on behalf of the NDP to speak to Bill C-13, an act for the substantive equality of Canada's official languages. Today is an historic day. It has been 30 years since the Official Languages Act was last amended. Finally, here we are; we have succeeded. It was hard work at times, but it was important.

This work is not only important, but it is essential for the francophonie, for Quebec, for Acadia, for the Franco-Manitoban community, as well as for all our communities. It is important for me, for my children, for all of our children and for our collective future.

I am a proud francophile. I was born in Thompson, in northern Manitoba. I am the daughter of two immigrants. My first language is neither English nor French, but Greek. I understand how lucky I am. My parents understood the importance of speaking both of Canada's official languages, and it is because of the struggle of francophones across the country, educators and their allies that I have had options to study French.

Manitoba is home to many francophones, and they have fought for their rights and for public investment in education, for example. In the 1980s, a Manitoba NDP government, including my father, fought against discrimination and defended the language rights of francophones in terms of public services and legislation. This taught me, from an early age, that nothing can be taken for granted. I also know that generations of young Canadians can communicate in our two official languages because of the dedication and especially the passion for French shared by our teachers.

I applaud the work of Mrs. Vachon, Miss Duceppe, Mr. Vermette, Mr. Labelle, Mr. Lamothe, Mr. Picard and many others. Many of us will never forget Mr. Macdonald, who put his heart and soul into his work to help us learn his language, our language. Mr. Macdonald was a proud Acadian, and his joy for his people and the Acadian culture was infectious. It is because of teachers like Mr. Macdonald and all those I have named, as well as hundreds of other francophones across the country, that many generations like mine speak French and that we have a unique and enriched understanding of our country and our world.

I want the same thing for my two children, Stefanos and Leonidas, who are now five and a half. They go to kindergarten at La Voie du Nord, a French school in the Franco-Manitoban school division. They are part of the next generation. The world has become smaller for that generation. However, in a Canada where French is in decline, we need to reverse that decline and fight for the next generation.

Government Orders

Today, I want to say that I am proud of the work that we did on the Standing Committee on Official Languages. On several occasions, I shared my experience and the challenges that families like mine experience in being unable to access French day care services. That is why I am proud of the work that we did in committee and that the NDP did in committee to guarantee that language provisions will be mandatory in federal-provincial agreements. The money that will be distributed and the funding that will finally be granted will help to ensure that francophone and anglophone minority communities get their fair share in this and other areas.

I also want to highlight the leadership demonstrated by such organizations as the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne, or FCFA. I want to recognize the efforts of its president, Liane Roy. The FCFA is the national voice of 2.8 million French-speaking Canadians. They represent the voice of francophones across Canada and played a key role that has led us to this day. Thanks to them, the President of the Treasury Board will be responsible for enforcing Bill C-13, francophone immigration will be supported, and there will be language provisions and stronger powers for the Commissioner of Official Languages. I want to salute defenders of the French language across the country.

• (1715)

The last major official languages reform took place in 1998. Clearly, the Official Languages Act had holes in it, such as the struggle to create an unbroken educational pathway for our children from early childhood to the post-secondary level, the lack of francophone staff, and problems related to accessing the justice system in French, communicating in French in an emergency, and obtaining health or public safety information.

The number of francophones in Canada has also experienced a sharp decline. We all know the statistics. In 1961, francophones accounted for 25.1% of the population. Today, they make up less than 23%. Obviously, if we do nothing to protect our services and institutions, the decline will continue.

I do not understand why the leader of the Conservative Party keeps attacking the CBC and Radio-Canada. Bill C-13 clearly states that the federal government recognizes that the CBC contributes through its activities to enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities, as well as to protecting and promoting both official languages. The leader of the Conservative party even asked to cut \$1 billion from CBC/Radio-Canada's funding. In 2021-22, CBC/Radio-Canada received \$1.2 billion from the federal government, so that kind of cut would be disastrous. If the Conservative Party understands that French is in decline across Canada, then why does it want to cut so much money from an institution that is so critical to protecting and promoting our two official languages?

The work of the Standing Committee on Official Languages was hard, but the spirit of collaboration was there. I want to thank all the members of the committee, whether they were Liberal, Conservative or from the Bloc, who made important amendments at the committee. I know that we did not always agree, but we all had the same goal: to protect French in Canada and stand up for the rights of linguistic communities in Canada. The amendments that were

supported in committee are essential, and I sincerely hope that the Senate will respect them.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of the Minister of Official Languages. We found a way to work together with the common goal of amending the Official Languages Act in order to give communities the resources to protect their own language, our language.

Respect is fundamental to the work that we did in committee. I want to highlight the fact that, unfortunately, some members of the House of Commons based their comments in committee on outdated concerns and claimed that the systemic decline of French does not exist, even in Quebec. The NDP has a clear message for those who subscribe to the idea that if francophone rights and resources are protected, other communities will suffer or vice versa: There are no losers when we protect official languages. Living in a country where French and English are respected makes life richer.

The reality is that Bill C-13 would change the federal government's approach by recognizing that French is a minority language throughout Canada and North America and that the measures the government takes must reflect that. This is an important change that will help slow the decline of French.

Today, we are moving forward on a national project, a project rooted in the recognition of first peoples and indigenous languages, a project that sends a clear message that we are proud of our two official languages. We are proud of a multilingual, multicultural, diverse Canada. We are proud to be able to move forward and fully support the protection of French, to ensure the rights of official language minority communities.

That is why I strongly encourage all my colleagues in the House to vote for Bill C-13, an historic bill.

• (1720)

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and her party for their hard work on the official languages file. She is a proud Franco-Manitoban. We are doing this here for our children as well, like her own twins. This is extremely important for the future of the francophonie in Canada.

What specific immigration measures or language provisions does she believe are important in the bill?

She also referred earlier to the Conservative Leader of the Opposition, who wants to dismantle the CBC. Does she think the Leader of the Opposition should vote for Bill C-13?

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I believe it would send a clear message if all parties, including the party leaders and the leader of the Conservative Party, vote in favour of Bill C-13.

We must recognize that French is in decline. Bill C-13 proposes measures that will stop this decline. We all worked on this.

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We all have a chance to support this bill and especially to support the important work that must be done to protect the French language.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and thank my colleague for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski. We worked very actively on Bill C-13, although we did not always see eye to eye.

I heard her say in her speech that she was satisfied with Bill C-13 and that the central agency, the Treasury Board, would do the work associated with the act as a whole. She talked about language provisions.

I would like her to reassure me. Were these supposed to be the provisions with teeth that would halt the decline of French and protect and promote the two official languages? I have serious doubts about the effectiveness of Bill C-13.

I would like her to tell us more about the role of the central agency, the Treasury Board.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and especially for his work.

With respect to the Treasury Board, we could certainly go much further in that area. I have to say that we have taken steps in the right direction with Bill C-13.

We know that the government's approach to date has not worked very well. The Treasury Board must play a key role by working with the Minister of Official Languages to implement this bill and protect and defend French properly.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was rather surprised because, throughout the clause-by-clause study, my colleague voted against the proposal to consult Quebec on the matter of positive measures. She voted against the proposal to let Quebec be in charge of its language planning. She voted against allowing the Charter of the French Language to take precedence in cases where there is a conflict between it and the Official Languages Act. I could name a whole host of amendments.

I would also like to hear her opinion on something. In the official languages action plan, all of the grants are once again going to strengthen English in Quebec. How does she think that is going to help reverse the decline of French?

It is French that is threatened, not English. It seems as though the federal government is going to continue funding and subsidizing only groups that encourage the anglicization of Quebec.

• (1725)

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his hard work in defending the interests of Quebec, but also for his support of francophone communities outside Quebec.

We New Democrats are proud of the work we did with the Quebec government to finalize a bill that reflects the interests of Quebecers. We supported the agreement that the Quebec government has with the federal government. It is clear that there is a lot of work to be done to support French, even in Quebec.

The federal government has a key role to play and must fulfill its obligation.

[English]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it pains me that I cannot ask this question in French. The hon. member reflected on her children, the next generation.

What is left for us to be able to promote bilingualism across the country in a way that will ensure that it is embedded, for our children and our children's children, to truly honour the French language from coast to coast to coast?

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague is a proud parent. This is about the next generation, and Bill C-13 would give us the tools to put a stop to the decline of French, give all of our children a chance to learn both of Canada's official languages, support francophone communities in majority anglophone areas and really live up to the vision of Canada that we all have.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just as the member for Hamilton Centre indicated, it pains me as well to not be able to deliver my comments in French. French is such a beautiful language, and with a last name like "Lamoureux", one would expect that I could speak French. I think that might even be kind of a good starting point, just to emphasize what we are debating here today.

We need to take a look at the importance of Canada's diversity, and when we talk about that diversity, we need to recognize that Canada is a bilingual country, English and French. We need to recognize how important it is for all Canadians to recognize that fact. In many different ways, that has enhanced us as a nation, and for us to achieve our potential, we need to recognize the importance of French and English, and the fact that we are a bilingual nation.

I do not say that lightly. I look at my own heritage and where my family originated from a number of generations ago. On my father's side, it was the province of Quebec, just outside of the community of Montreal. My mother's side also originated in the province of Quebec, but her family went into Saskatchewan and, as I understand it, the United States. On my father's side, they came to the province of Manitoba.

I say this because, when my mother was growing up in the rural communities of Saskatchewan, it was discouraged to speak French. It was looked down on. If someone wanted to get ahead in southern Saskatchewan or in that Moose Jaw and Gravelbourg area, they did not speak French. That is what my mother was told. As a result, she could not speak a word of French, even though her mother, my grandmother, could speak French.

My father, on the other hand, went to and grew up in Manitoba. My heritage in Manitoba comes from St-Pierre-Jolys and the Transcona area. My father was still of the generation that could speak French. That was passed on to him.

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I was born in the early sixties, and I can understand my mother was the one who raised the children. She did not speak to us at all in French. My father could speak French, but my mother could not. However, like with my grandmother, it was deemed as something that was not important, even though we were in the province of Manitoba, and even though my father could speak French.

I believe it was Pierre Elliott Trudeau who ultimately recognized the importance of Canada being an English and French country. When Pierre Elliott Trudeau brought in the Official Languages Act, there was quite a resistance to it out in the Prairies, but it was that leadership and that initiative that started, in my opinion, to change the way that people on the Prairies viewed the French language.

Even though there was a cost factor to it, we have seen Liberal prime ministers from then all the way to now who say the same thing: It does not matter where we are in Canada when it comes to the importance of the French language, the French factor and French being one of our two official languages.

• (1730)

Through the Official Languages Act, we saw the growth of the French language in the province of Manitoba. We can put it in the perspective of the twenties, thirties and forties, when the French language was being rejected in the province of Manitoba, to the point when French started to be promoted. Communities such as St-Pierre-Jolys, Sainte-Anne, Saint Boniface and so many others are communities that really came alive. There is also Ste. Rose. Senator Molgat would never forgive me for not mentioning Ste. Rose.

In many ways I would like to think, and I may be a little bit biased, that Manitoba led the Prairies in understanding, appreciating and valuing the French language and in seeing the benefits of that diversity.

Even inside the Manitoba legislature, we started to move toward converting English-only laws into bilingual laws. At the end of the day, we can take a look at Winnipeg North and what is happening there today.

It is truly amazing, when we take a look at the waves of immigration that come to the province of Manitoba. I could talk for hours about things such as the Filipino heritage community and how it has had such a wonderful positive impact in the province of Manitoba, particularly in health care, or the Indo-Canadian community and how often Punjabi and Tagalog are spoken in the north end of Winnipeg, not to mention Ukrainian and a number of indigenous languages.

If we go to schools such as École Stanley Knowles and other schools in the north end, we will see that French is a part of a bilingual program. We will see kids of, let us say, Filipino or Punjabi heritage, in grade three or grade four, speaking English, their home heritage language and French. There is more French being spoken today in the province of Manitoba than there ever has been.

I would suggest to members that that is because of national policy. That national policy is ensuring that French is being spoken in every region of the country. There is no one in the Liberal caucus who would not recognize the French factor in the province of Quebec. The province of Quebec is leading the way, in many ways, in

ensuring that Canada plays that pivotal role, not only in North America, but around the world, in recognizing and appreciating the true value of the French language.

That is something for which it does not matter where one is from. One does not have to be from Quebec. Like me, one does not even have to be able to speak French to understand and appreciate the value of the French language and us being part of a bilingual nation.

What does Bill C-13 do? It modernizes legislation that was passed decades ago, to the extent that the last time we have seen this kind of modernization was with Pierre Elliott Trudeau back in the late sixties.

As a government, we have recognized the importance of the French language and how important it is to promote and support it, not only with legislation but also with budgetary measures. The actions of the government have been incredibly positive in recognizing, promoting and ensuring that Canada will continue to have a nation that is bilingual.

This is all while recognizing the important role that Quebec has to play in this. That is not by choice, but because Quebec has to play that role. It will continue to do so, but we will continue to build the French language from coast to coast to coast, because it is the diversity that is so critically important to our country.

• (1735)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak on this bill.

[*English*]

The member rises to speak to every bill. He began his speech by apologizing for his inability to address the House in French.

I wonder if he could have maybe not spoken, and let the member for Mount Royal or the member for Lac-Saint-Louis participate in this debate, because it would be great to hear their views on this bill.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am disappointed in the member. This member, more than probably any other member, seems to resent every time I stand in the House.

There is a significant francophone factor in the province of Manitoba, and it is important, as a Manitoban member of Parliament, I am able to express how important that community is to the province.

The Conservatives might take it for granted, but we, on the Liberal benches, recognize that there is an important French factor throughout Canada, even in the member's home riding. One should not be discouraged from addressing the chamber because they are unable to speak one of the two official languages. I would hope the member would show a bit more sympathy toward that fact.

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[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I find it odd to hear the member opposite extolling the virtues of the Canadian system and gushing about how wonderful and magnificent it is, when we know that teaching French has been banned in every Canadian province except Quebec.

Every Canadian province has attempted to prevent French from being taught and passed on from generation to generation. The member just said that it is because of Pierre Elliott Trudeau that we still have French today. That is incredible. Pierre Elliott Trudeau's dream was that anglophones in the rest of Canada would learn French and francophones in Quebec would learn English. That was his vision: bilingual coast to coast.

We know how that turned out. English has continued to grow in Quebec and in the rest of Canada as well. The member opposite, who prides himself on having French-Canadian roots, is the result of the Canadian state, where francophones outside Quebec are assimilated. Indeed, he cannot deliver his speech in French.

I would like to know how it is that the member can defend his tormentor.

- (1740)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member opposite is right, and it is very unfortunate. It does sadden me that I am unable to speak French in the House, and I apologize for not being able to do so.

Having said that, I am very proud of the advocacy I have done over the years as a parliamentarian. We have seen more French being spoken in the province of Manitoba than it ever has been, and that is because of the Official Languages Act. Pierre Elliott Trudeau played a critical role in ensuring the rest of Canada is now speaking French more than it ever would have if it were not for the Official Languages Act.

This legislation would modernize that. As I indicated in my comments, the province of Quebec plays an absolutely critical role, not only in Canada but also in the world, in ensuring the French language continues to survive and be promoted throughout Canada, not just in Quebec.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague and I share a riding border in Manitoba, and I also have the privilege of sharing a border with the community of Saint Boniface, which is a very strong Francophone and Métis community. I am wondering if the member feels the bill is going far enough to protect, for example, communities such as St. Boniface in Manitoba.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I think this legislation and the budgetary measures the Government of Canada has committed to and taken are going to assist the francophone community.

The member made reference to Saint Boniface, which is a rich francophone community with many types of activities throughout the year. It is a great source of pride that continues to ensure the French language is spoken even more.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-13, an act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the use of French in federally regulated private businesses act and to make related amendments to other acts.

If I wanted to sum up the clause-by-clause study of this bill in committee, I would say that this bill is like the mountain that laboured and brought forth a mouse. Modernizing the Official Languages Act was 50 years overdue, much like EI reform, which is still long overdue. We worked on this bill for a full year at the Standing Committee on Official Languages, and now we are finally at report stage, with additional amendments and yet another one of the Prime Minister's broken promises.

Should we be surprised? Making promises and not keeping them seems to be in the air in the spring of 2023 for this Prime Minister. Thousands of people across the country are extremely disappointed right now, and for a variety of reasons. Whether we take the Prime Minister at his word or believe he has been caught red-handed, his Liberal incompetence is pervasive throughout the machinery of government, and Bill C-13 is no exception.

We could hardly manage after all the delays caused by the pandemic, which was blamed for many things. I am thinking of passport delays, immigration, foreign workers and the labour shortage. Now the public service is on strike even though the Prime Minister had promised that it would not have to happen. In the middle of tax season and tax refunds, hard-pressed families waiting for their money will have to patiently put up with one more thing.

I like to be optimistic, but I am also a realist. With this Prime Minister, we can never say, "promise made, promise kept". For eight years, the Prime Minister has been perfecting the drama skills he learned at school, but it is sad to see that it has made him a man of all talk and no action. The last thing Canadians needed was a Prime Minister who wears rose-coloured glasses like his Minister of Finance, who does not know how to count given that she is spending \$43 billion more than what we have. This Prime Minister does not keep his promises and is eroding the French fact.

We have a Prime Minister who is good at speaking in both official languages and sweet-talking people at election time, but it is a whole different ball game when it comes to getting real results in any area. I have to say that we are losing that ball game, and badly. We have also lost precious time and money. Committed, well-meaning people have now become disillusioned.

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We are also seeing another disastrous consequence for thousands of French Canadians living in minority communities. I am talking about the decline of French. What I find the saddest is that, when faced with a Parliament that skimps on pretty much everything that Canadians care about the most, even the most steadfast individuals, those who have defended our country with strong, deeply-held convictions, have run out of steam and they no longer have the energy to fight the monster created by the Liberal Party of Canada: a country that is in social, cultural and economic decline.

We are now trapped in a country led by a pair of scheming, illegitimate political parties, where a laissez-faire ideology and reckless spending are the orders of the day and where fine words are never followed by concrete and sustainable action for a better future or any kind of future at all for that matter.

Providing hope for far too long only to produce mediocre results is what the Liberal Party of Canada has done yet again with Bill C-13. In its priorities, legalizing drugs was the top priority, as was giving criminals lighter sentences. For months, if not years, we have been dealing with a flagrant lack of will and lack of meaningful actions. They are not making any real substantive changes, including when it comes to today's debate on modernizing Canada's Official Languages Act.

Both the community and the Conservative Party of Canada are unanimous: Bill C-13 does not meet the objective of offering solutions to the problems regarding French as the language of work and as the language used in society.

• (1745)

As a diligent legislator, and I know what I am talking about because I worked on the amendments to Bill C-13 in committee, and a concerned citizen who cares about promoting French, I read the disparaging newspaper articles about the Prime Minister, the Liberal Party and their desire to protect French in Canada.

As a member of Parliament for the people of Lévis-Lotbinière, who I proudly represent in my mother tongue, French, I would like to bring to the attention of all members two proposed amendments to Bill C-13.

Motion No. 9 adds an obligation in the English version.

[English]

It states:

The Minister of Canadian Heritage shall advance the equality of status...

[Translation]

In contrast, the French version is weaker. We would like to see a way to ensure that the two texts are consistent, so that the French version reflects the English version with that obligation.

I also want to draw my colleagues' attention to Motion No. 13. This motion does not put Canada's two official languages, English and French, on an equal footing. The Conservative Party of Canada supports bilingualism in Canada and equality of status. We can and must protect and promote French in a way that does not take away from the English language.

As we know, Bill C-13 is a failed attempt by the NDP-Liberal Party coalition to make us believe that bilingualism is being adequately protected in Canada. However, the Standing Committee on Official Languages did not listen carefully to a very large majority of the amendments called for by the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada and the Commissioner of Official Languages. Their amendments are not included in Bill C-13.

After eight years of talk about protecting the French language, it is safe to say that this bill is nothing but smoke and mirrors and does not guarantee that the French language is going to flourish in the future.

The objectives should have been to stop the decline of French and to protect and promote both official languages, but Bill C-13 achieves neither of those very laudable goals.

The Treasury Board should be the central agency for coordinating the implementation of the Official Languages Act. To ensure this coordination, the powers of the Treasury Board should have been extended to the entire act. The Treasury Board's powers in part VIII have not been extended to the entire act, not even to part VII. This is completely inconsistent, since all stakeholders were calling for the Treasury Board to become the central agency and to be given the tools to do so.

I would also like to call attention to another flaw in the bill. The current wording of the bill does not ensure that all children of rights holders will continue to be counted under section 23 of the Charter. It merely sets out a commitment to estimate the number of rights holders. There is no obligation to include these questions in the census, as they were in the 2021 census, which will lead to an underestimation of the number of children of rights holders.

Let us now look at how the legislation will be reviewed, since the Conservative Party of Canada proposed that a five-year review be conducted. Given the accelerating decline of French in Canada, this amendment could have provided an additional tool to react quickly and recalibrate.

As for the powers of the Commissioner of Official Languages, they were completely ignored. His order-making powers should have been extended to part VII of the act to enable him to do his job properly.

We worked hard, but in vain, to move amendments required to strengthen part VII. We needed to add obligations to ensure that federal institutions take the positive measures needed to protect and promote both official languages.

I will close by addressing an issue that is at the heart of this bill, the definition of francophone minorities. The bill should have included an explicit definition of the term "francophone minority" so that it would continue to refer only to minority francophone communities outside Quebec and thus avoid any interpretation by the courts.

In conclusion, this is once again a failed attempt in the history of Canada to protect and promote the French language. It is an example of the disastrous legacy of the Liberal Party of Canada and of the Prime Minister, who really is not interested in what Canadians across the country really care about.

• (1750)

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague's speech.

I would like his thoughts on the fact that today we are debating motions moved by the government. As a member of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, he participated in the clause-by-clause study of the bill. I would like to know if all of this is consistent. He probably heard what I heard. This bill urgently needed to be adopted and the Liberals were quite adamant about it. I would like the member to tell me whether we are wasting our time today because we are delaying yet again the adoption of the bill that was urgent. We also saw obstruction from the government in committee.

I am a bit confused. I would like my colleague to help me untangle all this.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for all his great work and the leadership he showed in committee this entire year working with the Liberals. It is not easy to work with the Liberals and it is harder still to work with the NDP-Liberal coalition.

Unfortunately, after all this great work that was done by our colleagues we are going to end up with a bill akin to the mountain that laboured and brought forth a mouse. As we know, in this great building, a mouse can easily get lost in the walls.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I noticed that the member seems to share my concern about the future of French in Canada. He also seems to share my concern about the fact that the Official Languages Act could even have a negative impact because we are not seeing any results for French.

I would like my colleague to share his point of view as a federalist. Would it not be easier to preserve the French language and ensure its vitality if Quebec were independent?

• (1755)

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. As I already said in the House, the only people who will defend French in this country are francophones themselves. We cannot expect others to defend the French language.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

FIGHTING AGAINST FORCED LABOUR AND CHILD LABOUR IN SUPPLY CHAINS ACT

The House resumed from March 6 consideration of the motion that Bill S-211, An Act to enact the Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act and to amend the Customs Tariff, be read the third time and passed.

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Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to Bill S-211, the fighting against forced labour and child labour in supply chains act.

I want to share a story from the International Justice Mission about the real impact of forced labour and slavery.

“Like most ten-year-old boys, Suriya was a dreamer. If you asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up, his answer might change depending on the day. A famous singer, an artist, a policeman, a pilot, a cricket player.”

One day, a cyclone hit southern India and destroyed Suriya's village. Suriya, his mother and his siblings all survived, but his father did not. Due to their desperate situation, Suriya's mother was pressured into taking a loan from a neighbouring farmer that required Suriya to work for the farmer.

“At only ten years old, Suriya's dreams, childhood and freedom were taken. Instead of the loving embrace of his mother, Suriya was beaten repeatedly with a stick. Instead of walking to school in the morning, he was forced to herd over 200 goats alone for miles.”

Thanks to the partnership of a local organization in India, IJM was able to find Suriya, bring him home safely and “fight for justice against the man who exploited his family.”

While Suriya was freed, millions more men, women and children remain in slavery today. In fact, it is estimated that today there are over 50 million people in slavery.

That is why this issue is so important, and I am glad we are debating Bill S-211 here today. As one of the co-chairs of the All-Party Parliamentary Group to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, it has been my honour to help advance this bill and work across party lines with my colleagues.

I want to thank in particular the sponsor in the House of this bill, the member for Scarborough—Guildwood, who has relentlessly championed this issue for years in this place, and our colleague Senator Miville-Dechéne, who brilliantly steered it through the Senate. I thank both other co-chairs of the APPG, along with the member for Shefford, and their offices for all they have done. I also want to recognize the hard work of their staff, people like Shawn Boyle, Jérôme Lussier and Joel Oosterman, who have been integral to assisting us with getting this bill done.

The APPG has been doing great work over the last few years, and I just want to take the opportunity to let members know that our AGM is coming up on May 8. We welcome anyone else who wants to join the All-Party Parliamentary Group to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking at the AGM. Come and join us to strengthen Canada's efforts to combat human trafficking.

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Human trafficking and modern-day slavery turn people into objects to be used and exploited. It is a vicious, growing and profitable crime here in Canada and around the world.

Earlier this spring, the York Regional Police announced that 64 men and women from Mexico were trafficked to work here in Ontario. I want to thank the officers for their hard work to apprehend the traffickers and rescue the victims. This vicious crime robs people of their God-given dignity and freedom. Over the past few years, due to the pandemic, the estimated number of people enslaved or trafficked has risen from 40 million to over 50 million.

These people are harvesting our coffee or the sugar we eat or making the clothes we wear, and while we finally will be updating our laws to prohibit imports made from slavery, our enforcement to this point has been terrible. In fiscal year 2021-22, the U.S. intercepted 2,300 shipments suspected of being tied to forced labour or slavery. Canada intercepted one, and that shipment was ultimately appealed and let through.

Canada does not yet require any companies to ensure their supply chains are free of slavery. That is why Bill S-211 is so important. This bill would require federal departments and large companies that do business in Canada to produce an annual report detailing the measures taken to prevent or mitigate the risks of forced labour or child labour in their supply chains. These reports would be made public, and there would be penalties for making false or misleading statements.

It is not necessary to get too much into the details of the bill at this stage. The bill has already gone through the Senate stages and has been at committee. In this House, it has gone through second reading and committee study, and we do not have to debate the bill to pass it. We know how long it takes for the government to simply implement legislation. With any further debate, this bill will be delayed, as will the ability for Canada to increase transparency and help stop slavery in our supply chains.

● (1800)

I want to draw members' attention to the former British member of Parliament and abolitionist William Wilberforce, who, motivated by his Christian faith, spent decades fighting against the transatlantic slave trade, every year reintroducing a bill to end it, only to see the bill defeated or delayed. He was eventually successful, but often impeding his efforts were the attempts by other MPs to change or amend the bill, or calls to delay or take a different approach. Those delays resulted in prolonged suffering and enslavement of countless Africans. That is why it is deeply disappointing to see that there are parties in the House who plan to vote against this bill. That is shocking. These parties make up similar excuses to those of Wilberforce's opponents as to why they cannot support the bill.

No one is suggesting this bill is the only step Canada needs to take, but it is an important step nonetheless. There are other approaches we can and must take. For example, Canada should adopt a zero-tolerance approach to modern-day slavery and human trafficking.

Three weeks ago, I was in Winnipeg at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, and we brought together survivors and leaders

in the fight against human trafficking. The symposium was organized by Paul Brandt and #NotInMyCity, the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery, the Mekong Club and the International Justice Mission. The focus of that conference was to galvanize support for "The Canada Declaration", a document that outlines the reality of humanity trafficking in our country and around the world, and looks for Canada to take a zero-tolerance approach that was informed by the voices of survivors. The co-chairs of the All-Party Parliamentary Group to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking had the honour of addressing the leaders in that room, and we are committed to bringing this declaration back to Parliament and urging our colleagues in the government to implement these calls to action.

Part of the declaration states:

We acknowledge that reconciliation with Indigenous peoples requires Canada to take a concerted effort to end the factors that lead to their over-representation as Victims of Human Trafficking.

We also recognize the resilience and courage of Survivors who have spoken out and raised their voices and lament that far too often, their voices have not been centered or heard....

We recognize that the maintenance of freedom requires diligence and sacrifice.

We recognize that Human Trafficking is a multi-faceted crime and requires a comprehensive, holistic and country wide effort to fight it on every front....

That is why we are calling on the Government of Canada and all Canadians to adopt a Zero Tolerance approach to end Human Trafficking.

One of the calls to action in "The Canada Declaration" is for Canada to implement robust measures that require supply chain reporting of Canadian companies. That is what this bill would do. It would help Canada move forward to a zero-tolerance approach, and that is why I believe that this bill should not be delayed any further. If it is in our power to help end slavery and bring freedom to men, women and children around the globe by passing this bill, why would we delay its adoption one moment longer?

Just yesterday, all members of Parliament received a letter from Peter Talibart, a Canadian and an international employment lawyer based in the U.K. Peter appealed to parliamentarians to adopt Bill S-211 and pointed to its strengths as it compares to existing international approaches. For example, unlike the U.K. and Australian laws, Bill S-211 proposes serious penalties, including fines and direct criminal liability. In fact, those countries are looking to adopt an approach that is reflected in this bill.

Peter ends his letter by saying that we know more about the wood in our chair, the coffee in our cup and the tobacco we smoke than we do about the welfare of the millions of men, women and children that produced them, and that that is wrong.

I urge all members to support the immediate adoption of Bill S-211.

Again, I want to thank the MP for Scarborough—Guildwood, our colleagues in the Senate and all who have worked so hard to get this bill to where it is today.

I want to leave members with the words of William Wilberforce as he challenged his parliamentary colleagues to action over 200 years ago. He said, “Having heard all this you may choose to look the other way but you can never again say that you did not know.”

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak this evening as the Bloc Québécois critic for international trade. The themes we are discussing are definitely linked to this issue. Of course, we are all in favour of trade, but not at any environmental, human or social cost. I believe that this means that we should study this bill very diligently.

Before dealing with the substance of the bill, I would like to salute the absolute sincerity of the member for Scarborough—Guildwood and also of Senator Miville-Dechêne. Since 2018, they have tried three times to pass a bill about this issue. Therefore, I want to say that I admire their efforts.

We know that the member for Scarborough—Guildwood has been looking at potential corporate abuses abroad for a long time. Back in 2010, he introduced a bill to make Canadian mining companies abroad accountable. It was defeated. We had a minority Conservative government at the time. With support from the opposition parties, it could have passed, but it was defeated because too many members of his own party had fallen ill at the same time. Consequently, he did not have enough votes to get it passed. It is a shame, because it would have been a bit of a step forward at the time.

I also have to say that this is an issue that is very important to me, both personally and in my capacity as critic. I recall moving a motion for unanimous consent that set out what a true due diligence policy could look like. I think that is the right term. Unfortunately, I could hear shouts of “no” off to my right, in every sense. The Conservatives yelled “no” so it did not pass.

I also tabled a petition in favour of such a law, such a policy, last June, if I am not mistaken, signed by nearly 2,000 Quebecers who were calling for due diligence legislation.

I also have here the report of the Standing Committee on International Trade that was tabled in the House not that long ago, regarding the study it did on the activities of Canadian mining companies abroad. We heard a lot of testimony on that subject, some of which made my blood run cold. We are talking about mining companies, of course, because we have often heard about the abuses committed by Canadian mining companies abroad. However, we could also talk about the textile industry, which, as members know, is hardly above reproach. Then there are the coffee, cocoa and palm oil industries. There are tons of industries like those, where we know that their activities and ways of doing things are having real conse-

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quences. Even if we like to have these sorts of products on our store shelves, there is an ethical and humane way of doing things.

It should be noted that Canada is a paradise for mining companies. Because Canada is a flag of convenience, a lot of companies that are not actually Canadian will come register here, incorporate here, because of the legal, tax and speculative advantages that the Canadian framework provides. After that, there is no real mechanism, except for this puppet ombudsman that was created by Ottawa a few years ago and that ultimately just gives this or that excuse, giving the government the right to say that it has taken action.

Taking action can be dangerous. Empty shells can be dangerous. Even certain policies can be dangerous, when they start out with laudable intentions but ultimately cause us to sit back and do nothing, unfortunately.

I would of course also like to talk about Bill C-226, which was proposed by my NDP colleagues and which I am co-sponsoring. I gladly put my name on it. A cause like that should not be partisan. It is too important. Lives are at stake; human dignity is at stake. That is why I am co-sponsoring the bill.

Unfortunately, I am going to have to make a comparison that is not very flattering for Bill S-211 and compare it to Bill C-262. The Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability produced an excellent document entitled “Don't Mistake Reporting for Accountability”.

• (1810)

The subtitle states, “Canada must require Canadian companies to respect human rights throughout their supply chains.”

This document contains a wonderfully clear, concise chart that compares the two bills. I would like to read it for all our colleagues who are present. This chart compares the features of Bill S-211 and Bill C-262, the bill I co-sponsored that was introduced by our NDP colleagues.

The first question is, “Does it require companies to respect human rights?”

In the case of Bill S-211, unfortunately the answer is no. The chart states that the bill requires companies “to report annually on whether they took steps to identify and prevent the use of forced labour, and what they found. It does not require companies to respect human rights.” In the case of Bill C-262, the answer is yes. The chart states that the bill “recognizes that companies have a responsibility to respect human rights, and must proactively take steps to prevent human rights violations throughout their supply chains and global operations.”

Here is the second question: “Does it require companies to prevent harm?”

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In the case of Bill S-211, the answer is no. The chart states that the bill “requires an annual report” but that it “does not require companies to prevent harm.” In the case of Bill C-262, the answer is yes. The chart states that the bill “creates an explicit obligation for companies to prevent serious adverse impacts throughout their supply chains and global operations.”

Here is the third question: “Does it require companies to take steps to identify, mitigate, prevent and account for human rights and environmental harm in their supply chains?” We are talking about due diligence here.

In the case of Bill S-211, unfortunately, the answer is no. The chart states that “[c]ompanies are not required to take any due diligence measures. A company may report that it has not taken measures and be in compliance with the law.” In the case of Bill C-262, the answer is yes because there is “an explicit obligation for companies to put in place adequate due diligence procedures.”

The fourth question is, “Are there meaningful consequences if companies cause harm or fail to implement adequate due diligence procedures?”

In the case of Bill S-211, the answer is no, because “[t]here are no consequences for failure to prevent harm or for failure to implement due diligence procedures.” In the case of Bill C-262, the answer is yes because the bill “provides people with a statutory right to sue a company”. That is the important part. That is what is missing from the role of the ombudsman, which basically serves as an online complaints office. It is a nice website the government created a few years ago.

The fifth question is, “Does it help affected people to access justice or remedy?”

In the case of Bill S-211, the answer is no. The bill does not address this. In the case of Bill C-262, the answer is yes, because “[t]here are several ways in which the legislation helps address existing barriers to accessing Canadian courts.”

The sixth question is, “Does it provide agency to impacted communities / workers?”

In the case of Bill S-211, the answer is “no”, because “[t]here is no role for impacted community human rights defenders and workers.” In Bill C-262, however, “[c]onsultation with rights holders is required in a company's due diligence procedures.”

Here is the seventh question: “Does it apply to companies of all sectors and all sizes, down the entire chain?”

Bill S-211 applies only to “companies with 250+ employees, with significant revenue or assets.” However, Bill C-262 “applies to companies of all sizes, from all sectors, down the entire value chain.” Human rights abuses need to be called out, no matter how big the business is or how much money it makes.

Here is the eighth question: “Does it apply to all human rights?”

Bill S-211 applies to forced labour and child labour. We applaud that and are quite pleased. However, “[t]his ignores the internationally accepted principle that human rights are indivisible, interrelated and interdependent, a principle upheld by successive Canadian

governments.” In contrast, Bill C-262 “upholds the principle that companies must respect all human rights. It makes reference to the core international human rights conventions, the fundamental ILO conventions...” and even “makes specific reference to the right to a safe, healthy and sustainable environment.” Now that is real legislation with teeth.

Now, what do we do with Bill S-211? Of course we know that it could be a step in the right direction. We know that an obligation to report cannot be a bad thing in and of itself. However, as with the ombudsman created by the government, these situations have extremely serious consequences, particularly at a time when we are thinking about a new world order post-COVID-19. In this new world order, trade would not be an absolute, and we could show more respect for sovereign states, the environment and peoples. Unfortunately—

• (1815)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member is out of time. I signalled to him several times. His time is up unless he has the consent of the House to finish his thought.

Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their solidarity.

I just wanted to add that all of this, along with the Bloc Québécois amendments that were rejected in committee, unfortunately mean that we must oppose the bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank members of the community who have stepped up for the Simon Fraser University football team.

As members know, the administration at SFU cut the football program just a few weeks ago. This program has produced some of the best football players in Canada. We have had a remarkable reaction from the public, which put in place a financial plan that ensures the continuity of the program. It is now really up to the SFU administration to reverse its decision and stop the cuts to the program.

[*Translation*]

I am here to talk about Bill S-211. To avoid the problem that my colleague had, I will start by saying that the NDP will be voting against this bill because it is an empty shell. It does nothing to change the situation of people experiencing systemic human rights violations around the world. I will talk about a few cases later in my speech.

The fact of the matter is that this bill really does nothing to change an extremely difficult situation when it comes to human rights violations.

[*English*]

I just have to speak of three of the many examples of systemic human rights violations that have taken place on the grounds of Canadian companies. We can think about this for just a moment. Canada is standing up for human rights, but when it comes to some of our corporations acting abroad, they have acted in the most nefarious ways and trampled on basic human rights. Bill S-211 would not address any of the three examples I will give, which is why we need robust legislation.

I appreciate my colleague from the Bloc Québécois endorsing NDP bills, which I will speak about in a moment, from me and the member of Parliament for Edmonton Strathcona, the NDP foreign affairs critic.

The first example is about forced labour by Nevsun in Eritrea. Forced labour, or slavery, occurs on the grounds of a Canadian-owned company. This is the most outrageous abuse of human rights, and yet it is connected to Canada. We must all bear the shame of a company that acts in that way and allows systemic slavery on its grounds.

The second example is in El Salvador, and the company involved is Pacific Rim. We are talking about the most egregious, horrific torture and murder of environmental activists who were speaking up against the mine. Again, here is an example of a Canadian company functioning abroad with systemic human rights violations.

The third example is Barrick Gold in Papua New Guinea. We are talking about systemic sexual violence and torture of many women in the area of that mine.

In all these cases, the judicial systems simply do not work. There is no protection from government. We are talking about corrupt judicial systems and police who have been paid off. We are talking about a complete Wild West for human rights violations.

Each one of these examples, most egregiously, involves Canadian companies. Members can imagine the horrific results for the victims, whether we are talking about forced labour and slavery, systemic sexual violence or the torture and murder of environmental activists. This is why we need legislation that will actually do the job to force companies to comply and ensure that those companies are held liable and held to account.

There simply cannot be two fates for Canadian companies, one when they are subject to the rule of law here in Canada and a second in the Wild West, where the most outrageous, atrocious human rights violations can occur with impunity on the grounds of these Canadian firms, and where these companies can act without any regard for fundamental human rights and values. This is why I brought forward Bill C-262.

• (1820)

I want to state very clearly that this bill that I am presenting on the floor, Bill C-262, comes after incredible work by the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability. It includes activists from some of the most significant organizations in Canada, such as Ox-

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fam Canada, Amnesty International Canada and Human Rights Watch Canada, along with a number of very important labour organizations, in both the private and the public sectors. They are all standing together to say that Canada's appalling corporate human rights violations abroad need to be treated with the rigour and the type of legislative framework that will force companies to stop these appalling abuses and practices. The Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability did much of the vital groundwork for the bill that I am bringing forward, Bill C-262.

This is a bill that would actually address human rights abuses. It would hold companies to account and force them to do their due diligence before an investment. It would make them liable. These are just three cases among many. If there was systemic sexual violence, torture and murder of activists, or slavery or forced labour, the companies would be held to account. The directors and leaders of those companies would be held to account.

That is why Bill S-211 falls so far short. It is just an empty box that asks a few companies to prepare some kind of report. It does not hold them liable. It does not hold them to account. It does not force them to stop the most egregious human rights violations that are taking place in their operations on their property.

If those companies can be proud of their relationship to Canada, I can say that Canadians are not proud of those companies' relationship with Canada; we have done nothing. The current and previous governments did nothing to address violations that continue to this day. It may be a different country. It may be a different set of appalling human rights violations, but the reality is that what we are seeing is these companies acting with impunity.

That is why Bill C-262 is so very important. It would force an end to slavery, forced labour and systemic sexual violence. It would force an end to companies' security guards torturing and killing activists, who are speaking up for their community, with impunity. These are all things that need to be addressed, and that is why I wanted to thank the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability and all its member organizations, which worked so assiduously on this for Canada to finally start addressing the elephant in the room. We pay lip service to human rights abroad, but we do nothing to force our companies, as well as their directors and leaders, to be accountable for the actions that they allow to take place on their property and in their operations.

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The NDP, as the worker bees in this Parliament, tried to improve Bill S-211. We tried to give it a backbone. We tried to take the empty box that is Bill S-211 and bring some content to it. We offered half a dozen amendments that come from the activist sector, those organizations that are most attuned to the issue of human rights. We saw Liberals and Conservatives systematically rejecting each one of those amendments.

We can just think about that for a moment. Every member of Parliament is aware of the appalling human rights abuses that have taken place through Canadian companies acting abroad. A bill that pays only lip service to that is before a committee. The NDP offered amendments that would actually make the bill meaningful, and the Conservatives and the Liberals voted against them.

We will be voting against this bill, and we will be bringing forward very strong human rights legislation. That is what the world calls for, and that is what Canadians deserve.

• (1825)

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first I would like to acknowledge that this debate is taking place on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people.

I want to begin by stating that the government will be supporting the bill.

The Minister of Labour has a mandate to introduce government legislation that will eradicate forced labour in our supply chains. This was also part of a platform promise in our last election. In budget 2023, we committed to introducing that legislation by the end of next year. The government's priority is to pass the most effective legislation possible. Bill S-211 represents an important first step, and through government legislation, we will seek not only to improve upon it, but to go further.

How prevalent is this problem? The latest numbers from the International Labour Organization estimate that there are over 27 million victims of forced labour worldwide. This number has increased by 2.7 million people since 2016, in part due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we have strong indication that this number still likely underestimates the pandemic's full effects on forced labour. In addition, global estimates indicate that at the beginning of 2020 there were approximately 160 million children who were victims of child labour, including forced child labour, and this number, too, is expected to rise, given increased poverty driven by the pandemic.

These types of practices are deplorable, and our government strongly condemns the use of forced labour and all forms of exploitation in the production of goods.

This issue has garnered attention on a global scale. In fact, many countries have introduced or announced measures to address labour exploitation in supply chains, including different forms of supply chain legislation. Others have import prohibitions on goods produced using forced labour, such as the U.S., Canada and, soon, Mexico. The European Union is considering a regulatory proposal on prohibiting forced labour goods from its market as well.

Fighting forced labour and child labour is a complex problem that demands a comprehensive solution. Supply chains are becoming increasingly multi-faceted, with multiple tiers that could involve a parent company, a subsidiary company, suppliers and subcontractors spread across the world. This makes it difficult to pinpoint at which stage forced labour, child labour or other forms of exploitation may occur.

Despite this, our government is taking action. Over the past few years, the government has introduced a number of initiatives to help tackle labour exploitation in global supply chains. For example, when it comes to negotiating trade agreements with other countries, we include comprehensive and enforceable labour provisions to protect workers, and we help uphold those protections, including by providing assistance to partner countries in meeting these obligations. For example, we are providing funding through World Vision Canada to increase protections against child and forced labour in several agricultural sectors in Mexico.

In addition, in July 2020, we included a ban in the Customs Tariff to prohibit the importation into Canada of goods that are mined, manufactured or produced by forced labour. This is a relatively novel mechanism to address the issue, with the United States being the only other country with such a ban in place, which has evolved over the last 90 years. Departments are in regular contact with American counterparts to learn from the expertise they have built up over decades.

We have also taken steps toward strengthening federal procurement. Its entire contracting regime has changed, including updating the government's code of conduct for procurement to include clear expectations for suppliers and their subcontractors when it comes to human and labour rights.

In 2022, our government introduced a new responsible business conduct strategy. The strategy focuses on ways to build awareness and increase company-led due diligence and accountability. We know that government action alone is not enough. We need all hands on deck: government, industry and civil society.

As I have mentioned, the COVID-19 pandemic has widened social inequalities and increased the risk of fundamental labour and other human rights violations for the most vulnerable around the world. If we want to make Canadian supply chains more resilient and sustainable for years to come, we must eliminate forced labour and employ a range of measures to address exploitation in supply chains.

This is a priority for the government and a key mandate commitment for the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Public Safety, as well as the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development.

• (1830)

While labour exploitation is a global problem, we must also take an approach that fits the Canadian context. In 2019, the government held extensive consultations on this issue with more than 55 stakeholders in Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver. We also held online consultations and garnered more than 100 responses.

Last spring, the Government of Canada released a report entitled, “Labour Exploitation in Global Supply Chains: What We Heard Report”. This report captures everything our stakeholders shared through those consultations. They told us loud and clear that labour exploitation, including forced labour, is unacceptable and that the Government of Canada should take further action to address it.

Since then, our government has continued to engage with numerous stakeholders on the issue of forced labour in supply chains, including civil society organizations, advocacy groups, industry, foreign governments and international organizations. In recognition of what we heard from stakeholders and international developments on this issue, we have been gathering information on global best practices from international partners and organizations, including further input received from stakeholders on key elements that often form part of supply chain legislation.

These include the scope of potential legislation, the type of requirements that should be imposed on businesses, the entities that should be captured by the legislation and other potential flexibilities that could be considered, the approach to enforcement and governance, as well as non-legislative tools and other measures that are needed to support entities in meeting their obligations under supply chain legislation.

There is no doubt that the sponsor of this bill has done a tremendous amount of work and has worked on this for many years. Many members from many parties have also undertaken this work. I also want to thank those in the other place for the work they have done, including the other sponsor of this bill. This is an extremely important issue, and for that we continue to applaud the tireless efforts of our esteemed colleagues.

We must act, but also, as has been said in this chamber, legislation cannot just be words on paper. The legislative framework needs to be on strong legal and operational footings.

It should be in line with the latest approaches being undertaken by like-minded countries, with whom we must collaborate to end this scourge. We need to equip businesses and other regulated parties to comply, and ensure that expertise and capacity exist for the regulator to monitor and enforce, so the legislation has the desired impact, and so it is a strong legislative framework that will be effectively enforced.

Ultimately, while this is a complex endeavour, we are committed to doing this work, and we will get it done. In closing, I want to once more make it clear that forced labour is unacceptable in

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Canada or any place in this world. This bill represents an important first step, but it will not be the last one.

Working with parliamentarians, industry and civil society, the government has committed to developing and introducing legislation that will go further. Everyone has the same goal here, which is eradicating forced labour from Canada's supply chains.

The Government of Canada is committed to that work, and to employing a range of measures so that Canadian businesses do not contribute to this or other forms of human rights abuses.

We will do everything in our power to ensure that goods coming into the country, our stores and our homes, and that the practices companies are engaging in abroad, are free from the stain of forced labour.

• (1835)

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is nice to rise in the House to speak to a bill that comes to us from our colleagues in the Senate, where there is general agreement among the parties that there needs to be action taken on this issue. After listening to some of the speeches earlier today, it does not sound as though there is going to be unanimous support in the House for this bill, but I think there will be enough to get it across the finish line.

I am a father of three and a grandfather of 10 children, some of whom may even be watching today. The issues related to children are very important to me today, as I think they are to all of us in the House. I am pleased to have the opportunity to share my thoughts on this bill, which our friends in the Senate have put before us.

I want to thank Senator Miville-Dechéne for presenting this bill, as well as Bill S-210, which I am also very strongly in favour of. The latter is a bill that calls for age-verification methods to be implemented to protect children from online pornography, another type of exploitation. It passed the Senate last week and I hope we will be debating it in the House very soon.

UNICEF, in its 2021 report, showed that the number of children involved in child labour had risen to 160 million worldwide, an increase of 8.4 million over the preceding four years, the first significant increase in this generation. The most significant jump was for kids aged five to 11, and the number of children doing hazardous work rose from 6.5 million to 79 million between 2016 and 2020. Again, those numbers are from UNICEF.

Private Members' Business

We know who the culprits are. We know which corporate entities are utilizing child labour, and we know about the children in Congo getting sent down mines to bring up the cobalt so that we here in Canada can have the latest device or drive an electric car. However, it goes even deeper than that, with many layers to consider.

Canadians are great people. We are kind, generous and compassionate. We can ask any Canadian if they think that child or forced labour is a bad thing and every one of them would say yes. If we ask them if the Government of Canada should do something about it, they will say, "Yes, we must." Should we ban products produced with forced labour or child labour? Absolutely. That is good, but what are they willing to give up in order for that to happen? I realize that it is hardly that simple, but, really, that is the question. To be honest, most Canadians would be shocked to discover what products we use and enjoy on a daily basis that, in fact, contribute to robbing children of their freedoms.

While I may not always see eye to eye with my colleague from Vancouver East, I would like to reference some statistics from her speech in March. According to a 2016 report from World Vision, it is estimated that 1,200 companies operating in Canada are importing over 34 billion dollars' worth of goods produced by child or forced labour every single year, and that is right here in Canada.

I serve a rural riding and I am an agriculture kind of guy. Canada's farmers are the best in the world, but internationally, the agriculture and grocery industries are among the worst offenders for forced labour and child labour. Seventy-one per cent of all child labour takes place in the agriculture sector, and many of its items end up on Canadian grocery store shelves. In 2019, more than 3.7 billion dollars' worth of these food products were imported into Canada, a 63% increase from 10 years ago.

I look at that number and think about the fact that, as Canadians, we waste somewhere around 58% of the food we produce here in Canada. According to research done by Toronto-based Second Harvest, some 4.8 million tonnes of food is lost or wasted during processing and manufacturing and some 2.38 million tonnes is lost at the consumer level.

In short, the abundance of food we produce here in Canada has led us to dismiss its intrinsic value and we actually waste more than we consume. In a world struggling to feed itself and in a country where one in five families is struggling to feed itself, it is hard to fathom those numbers. Then we turn a blind eye and import billions of dollars' worth of food from countries and companies where we know it is kids slaving to produce it. It is mind-boggling. It is so wrong.

I am glad we are having this conversation. I am glad we have this bill, and there are positive aspects of this legislation. However, I just wish this bill had more teeth. The legislation is great in principle, but there are still some problems with this bill. Given that this will likely be the last chance we have to address these issues, I am going to raise a few of them here.

• (1840)

First, the bill does not prescribe what specific measures a company must take to be in compliance. Yes, it includes general guidance as to what information should be provided, but it is the reporting

entities themselves that will retain discretion over the design and implementation of compliance systems.

The Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability, which includes such members as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch Canada, puts it more bluntly. It states that Bill S-211 would only apply to a small minority of companies and it "does not require companies to stop using child or forced labour...or to conduct human rights due diligence."

If that is the case, or even if we are just leaving it up to the individual companies to police themselves, which in some cases is the very reason why this type of legislation is necessary and has been brought forward, then this legislation may really not have the teeth we all want it to have.

I think this is a situation where it is appropriate for the government to give specific and binding measures and standards to remediate forced labour or child labour in order to be in compliance; otherwise, this is what I see happening.

We will pass this bill. Let us pick a corporation. We will call it the Orange Company. For years, it has used child labour to source its material and build its products. When this legislation comes into effect, Orange Company needs to send its report to the minister's office, so it looks at the guidelines, creates its own reporting system and prepares a report. Who needs to approve this report? If we look at part 2, subsection 4(a), it is the entity's governing body. What other verification is required? One signature. It states in subsection 5(b), "the signature of one or more members of the governing body."

Without me needing to stretch out this illustration, we can foresee how this does not provide sufficient accountability. Not only that, the systemic concerns run deep, far deeper than what I have time to discuss here.

Let me affirm the efforts identifying, in part 2, subsection 12(1), the minister's prerogative of asking for a revised report in the event of skepticism. I can imagine how this step would force companies to dig deeper and divulge more. However, the consequence for non-compliance is only a fine, really a small fine compared to the revenue that many of these companies will actually generate.

I recognize this legislation is a starting point and we do need to start somewhere, but like so many other topics, this requires a much broader national conversation, one that considers all different layers, including those of the victims. We can slap on band-aids and promise the world, then pat ourselves on the back, but real change always comes with a cost, a cost that would probably infringe on some of the many treasured items that we use daily. That is true of the economy and it is true of our society.

Author Rosie Danan wrote:

Change always comes with a closing cost. But it's still worth trying. Not because the odds are particularly good, mind you, but considering the alternative. There's value in the struggle. Value in touching the raw and bloody parts of our souls, opening them up to the sunlight, and hoping they heal.

As parliamentarians, we have the ability to pass a child and forced labour law that has teeth. We have the ability to ensure that no products made with forced or child labour enter Canada. We can levy severe financial or criminal penalties on those entities that use forced labour, and that do or want to do business here in Canada. We can do all that. The question is this: As Canadians, is that really something that we are willing to do?

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be one of the last people to speak to this bill. My colleague opposite and I worked together on the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security when he was chair, and I know that he worked hard on this. I therefore commend him for his work. I also want to commend Senator Miville-Dechéne for her work.

I know that almost everything has already been said about this bill in the House, but I think it is important to put things into context. In order to do so, I referenced the open letter that Senator Miville-Dechéne wrote in *La Presse* last November. The letter had to do with a subject or a reality that we know very little about or that we are aware of but would prefer to cravenly ignore. I am talking about forced labour and child labour.

Like many of my colleagues mentioned, these types of labour help provide consumers in wealthy countries like Canada with all sorts of products at low prices. This is not a new concept. The International Labour Organization's Forced Labour Convention defines forced labour as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily”.

The International Labour Organization estimates that in 2019, 25 million children and adults were in forced labour. World Vision Canada estimates that Canadian imports worth \$43 billion may have been produced through the work of children and forced labour in 2020. That is nearly 7% of Canadian imports that come from forced labour.

It is likely that the pandemic brought this sad phenomenon into sharper focus. The race to procure personal protective equipment exacerbated the exploitation of the most vulnerable. For example, in October 2021, the United States seized at its border a shipment of medical gloves from a Malaysian company alleged to rely on forced labour. It was the fourth Malaysian business to be hit with this type of sanction in 15 months alone.

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Our own country bought and used millions of gloves from two of these tainted suppliers, even though a law has been in place for more than a year at the border to ban the entry of such shipments. As you can see, this is not enough to prevent the phenomenon from spreading to our borders.

This forced labour or child labour—which is sometimes referred to as modern slavery—has infiltrated our everyday consumption for a very long time, especially in the western world. Unfortunately, on this issue, Canada has just sat idly by, unlike many European parliaments. The UK, France and Germany have already passed laws that require companies to investigate and report on the risks of forced labour in their supply chains.

While reading up on the topic yesterday, I came across a news report on Radio-Canada's RAD platform about fast fashion. It is a phenomenon that led to the 2013 factory collapse in Bangladesh that killed over 1,000 people. Ten years later, there are questions about whether working conditions in the textile industry have improved. This is an industry that produces clothes that we wear here—brands like Mango and Joe Fresh. The answer, unfortunately, is quite definite. The rights of the workers in this industry are still being violated and their working conditions are still poor. People even said they had concerns about their health.

As long as we do not change our economic model, then forced labour is here to stay. What is being done to prevent this, to ensure that Canada is not contributing to forced labour? We need to require companies to be more transparent about their practices in order to eradicate the risks of forced labour and child labour in their supply chains. That is a good place to start.

Is that enough? Unfortunately, the answer is no. That is where we see that Bill S-211, although it is a very good bill, may not go far enough. I was given a comparative chart on the difference between Bill S-211 and Bill C-262. My colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot spoke earlier to Bill C-262, which he co-sponsored.

● (1845)

When we ask the basic question of whether the bill ensures respect for human rights, the chart tells us that for Bill S-211, the answer is no. That is because the entire responsibility for reporting and investigating is placed on the companies, but they are not asked to take action.

Conversely, Bill C-262 “recognizes that companies have a responsibility to respect human rights, and must proactively take steps to prevent human rights violations throughout their supply chains and global operations.”

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When we ask ourselves this basic question, we already know that if we have to choose one of these bills, we will choose the more binding bill.

We voted in favour of Bill S-211 at second reading because, as I mentioned, it would require Canadian companies to be more transparent about the measures they are taking to prevent and reduce the risk that forced labour or child labour is used in their supply chains.

This is a very good thing, but the question is and remains: Can we go even further? The answer is yes. In reading about the subject, I learned that although the United States sometimes lags behind Canada, in this particular area, it is quite the opposite. The rules that apply at the borders are more restrictive in the United States. We would do well to emulate that country or to draw inspiration from it.

• (1850)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood has five minutes for his right of reply.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank colleagues for participating in this debate. I am probably a bit more enthusiastic about some colleagues than others. Nevertheless, I thank them.

This is close to the end of a four-year journey for us. We have introduced this bill a couple of times. However, for World Vision, it has been a 10-year journey. I want to commend the work of Martin Fischer, Michael Messenger and Matthew Musgrave for their tireless work over the last 10 years to get this legislation to where it is today.

I also want to recognize my staff, Shawn Boyle; my colleague in the Senate, Senator Julie Miville-Dechêne; and her staff, Jérôme Lussier.

Yesterday, Stop the Traffik, a world-leading, U.K.-based anti-trafficking organization had a press release that began, “The Canadian Parliament Debate World-Leading Bill.” I will repeat that for my colleagues who seem to be a little skeptical. It said, “world-leading bill”.

The press release continues on the “supply chain transparency and the application of company law and then introduced the concept of governing body signing off on the modern slavery statement, to make the law more meaningful by triggering Director duties and other elements of the legal system.” I will note that it is not just anybody signing off on any statement anytime, anyplace.

It continues, “Canada is now proposing to take this legislative approach much further and to add serious penalties – including fines and direct criminal liability for noncompliance.” Those people, who are knowledgeable and working abroad, have noticed the work of Canadians working here at home.

Border controls have been tried with not a lot of success. Trade treaties, again, were tried with not a heck of a lot of success. Criminal prosecutions are spotty. ESG and social responsibility efforts are good and are to be encouraged, but again, they are non-enforceable and somewhat sporadic. We are not debating a phantom bill

such as my colleagues in the NDP want to debate. Bill C-262 has little or no chance of getting on the floor. What is on the floor is Bill S-211, and Bill S-211 is a transparency bill which, over time, has morphed into more of a due-diligence bill with due-diligence characteristics.

I want to remind colleagues that Bill S-211 carries fines, and not insignificant fines. The bill would entitle the minister to search and seize computers and other records, entitle the minister to a warrant, create indirect criminal liability for non-compliance and false statements, and have financial consequences for failure to file a report. To be truthful, these have consequences, financial and regulatory, which some of my hon. colleagues may not fully appreciate. The bill would also give the minister the ability to draft regulations that may over time become tougher each year.

I sincerely want to acknowledge the work of the Minister of Labour and his commitment in budget 2023 to introduce legislation in 2024 that would eradicate forced labour from Canadian supply chains and to strengthen the ban on goods produced using forced labour.

I am not pretending that Bill S-211 is the final step. It is a first step, and the first step actually puts us at the head of all nations who have legislation such as this. I encourage my colleagues to vote in favour of the bill, as it is a useful way to move us from laggard to leader.

• (1855)

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

[*Translation*]

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*]

The hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

Hon. John McKay: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 3, 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.

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[English]

● (1900)

TAXATION

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise virtually this evening to pursue a question I initially asked in question period on February 13. This was in advance of receiving our federal budget from the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance did respond, on the floor of the House, to the question I asked that day.

I have contrasted what Canada is doing to go after the excess profit garnered by particularly large oil corporations and fossil fuel companies to what is being done in the United States. I cited, at that point, what had been a recent state of the union address from U.S. President Joe Biden, who recently spoke in this very place, that called out big oil for its excessive profits.

The President of the United States called that “outrageous”. He pledged to quadruple the tax on corporate stock buybacks. Around the same time the Secretary-General of the United Nations called such excess profits “immoral”.

In Canada, the biggest oil and gas companies in this country amassed more than \$66 billion in profits in one year. That is double what they accumulated in the previous decade.

I think of the call months ago from the business pages of *The Globe and Mail*, which is not generally a strong critic of excess profits. The *Globe and Mail* veteran journalist, Eric Reguly, commented that not only were these excess profits, but they amounted to, in his words, “war profiteering”.

My parents' generation did not tolerate war profiteering. War profiteers were not celebrated and rewarded. What Eric Reguly's column pointed out was that the excess profits of the fossil fuel sector, in the recent past, have nothing to do with business acumen or good planning for which corporations and their shareholders should be rewarded. It was entirely due to Putin's brutal attack on Ukraine, allowing some corporations to benefit, and I will again use the word of United Nation's Secretary-General Guterres, who called it “immoral”. This is almost unbelievable.

We just had, before the environment committee days ago, testimony from Mr. Brad Corson. He is the CEO of Imperial Oil, which is really an American company operating in Canada. It is a subsidiary of Exxon. I struggle to understand how the poor man made ends meet when just a year and a half ago he only made \$8.5 million a year. This last year, his salary doubled, so he now makes more than \$17 million a year.

This is the same company that did not divulge, and one could say “hid”, from first nations and Métis people in the vicinity of the oil sands, that toxic materials that were carcinogenics were leaking into the watershed and surrounding areas. He is rewarded with the doubling of his personal salary, but that is nothing compared to the profits received by these oil and gas companies in a period of time when their benefits have to do with Putin's attack on Ukraine. Surely we can do better.

The PBO estimates we could get \$8 billion with a tax on excess profits. What are we waiting for?

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise on behalf of the good people of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour and the folks in the beautiful province of Nova Scotia. I wish my friend from the Green Party was here in the House today, as it is always lovely to see her. I am pleased to take part in tonight's debate.

When my hon. colleague posed her initial question, she asked about the possibility of increasing the windfall tax in Canada following an announcement made by President Biden. As the Deputy Prime Minister rightly noted, our government has already introduced a 2% share buyback tax, which is double the current U.S. level. We introduced this tax because we absolutely believe it is appropriate for our tax system to encourage Canadian companies to invest in Canada and invest in Canada's workers and our economy.

It does not stop there. Our government has been and remains committed to making sure that everyone pays their fair share of taxes. We know that the programs and services Canadians rely on are dependent on a robust national tax base. That is why we have moved forward with several measures since 2015 to ensure that everyone pays their fair share.

Since 2015, we have taken actions to close loopholes, crack down on tax avoidance and ensure that the wealthiest pay their fair share. For example, we understand that through the significant use of deductions, credits and other tax preferences, some of the wealthiest Canadians pay little to no personal income tax in a given year. That is why we are proposing, in budget 2023, legislative amendments to raise the alternative minimum tax, or AMT, rate from 15% to 20.5% and to further limit the excessive use of tax preferences. These amendments would generate an estimated \$3 billion in revenue over five years, beginning in the 2024 taxation year.

Another proposed reform is that the basic AMT exemption would increase more than fourfold, from \$40,000 to \$173,000, significantly increasing the income level necessary to pay the AMT. This would result in tax cuts for tens of thousands of middle-class Canadians, while the AMT would more precisely target the very wealthy. Under these reforms, more than 99% of the AMT paid by individual Canadians would be paid by those who earn more than \$300,000 per year, and about 80% of the AMT paid would be by those who earn more than \$1 million per year.

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Budget 2022 announced a permanent increase of the corporate income tax by 1.5% on the largest, most profitable banks and insurance companies. It also announced the Canada recovery dividend of 15% on banks and insurance companies to help support Canada's broader recovery. In addition, our government is committed to phasing out or rationalizing inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that give fossil fuels an unfair advantage over much cleaner solutions. We have accelerated the previous timeline for doing so from 2025 to this year.

In budget 2022, the government also committed to eliminating the flow-through share regime for fossil fuel activities. This is being done by no longer allowing expenditures related to oil, gas and coal exploration and development to be renounced to flow-through share investors for flow-through share agreements entered into after March 31, 2023.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, it is easily researched that the Government of Canada charges less tax on oil and gas companies than the United States does, and this is in a period of time when we are still subsidizing oil and gas. While I do appreciate the comments from my friend, the hon. parliamentary secretary, we are still subsidizing oil and gas, with increased subsidies in budget 2023, by providing more access to government funds for carbon capture and storage. If those in the industry want to use that method, they should pay for it themselves. We are also introducing a new approach to use fossil fuels in producing hydrogen, which should only be produced from renewable sources so that it is truly green energy.

We have enormous potential in Canada to move to a green economy and to decarbonize, but not if we keep shovelling money at companies that are already experiencing obscene levels of profit.

• (1905)

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member that we have enormous opportunity here in Canada. We are seeing the things we have done since 2015 come to fruition. We have said from the start that the economy and the environment go hand in hand, and we are seeing partnerships working in a cleaner, greener Canada.

Budget 2023 is making targeted and responsible investments to build a stronger economic future for all Canadians. In the end, these will make Canada a better place to live, work and thrive for everyone. However, our government understands that the programs and services Canadians rely on, including old age security, the Canada child benefit, early learning and child care, and transfers to provinces in support of health care and education, are dependent on a national tax base. That is why, in budget 2023, we built on the progress we have made since 2015 to close loopholes, crack down on tax avoidance and ensure that the wealthiest pay their fair share.

SENIORS

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am grateful to be here today to ask the member some follow-up questions around tax fairness for seniors.

I want to first give a big shout-out to Single Seniors for Tax Fairness for its advocacy and work to bring light and solutions forward around the unfair tax system that negatively impacts single seniors. In my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, BC Seniors and Pensioners

Nanaimo has been serving our community for more than 80 years. This organization provides vital services and social activities for seniors.

I am here to talk a little bit more about, and get some more answers around, why we are not implementing the changes necessary to support seniors.

One statistic is that 39% of seniors in Canada are single. Just to clarify, I am defining these seniors as being 65 and older with no partner: single, widowed or divorced. Of these single seniors I am referring to, women are disproportionately represented, for many reasons. One is that they live longer. Another point that is important is that singles need two-thirds of the income of couples to maintain a similar lifestyle to their coupled counterparts.

I think of Margaret, a constituent in my riding who is widowed. She is living off OAS and CPP. She shared with me that she has all these expenses that just keep adding up. She is asking herself when it will stop. She pays \$800 each month for prescription drugs. She asked herself if she will be forced to reduce her prescription medications due to their high cost. Margaret has various health conditions that require monitoring by a health professional but she no longer has a family doctor, so she has nobody to turn to for necessary ongoing health concerns. She shared with me that she is suffering and feels like she has been pushed to the side and is not getting any help.

Currently what we see in place is that coupled seniors are experiencing tax advantages, rightfully so. They are able to make the most of their money, through income splitting of pension income, for example, which reduces the amount of taxes that each partner pays, and makes them both often eligible for full OAS payments with no clawbacks. They are able to transfer between portfolios like RRSPs, RRIFs and TFSA's.

Single seniors, on the other hand, are not able to take advantage of these same tax rules. For example, they are not able to split their full pension income. They pay full taxes on pensions, which increases the probability of OAS clawbacks. Ultimately, they are receiving less income. There are multiple ways in which single seniors, just because of their relationship status, are being placed in a position of further disadvantage.

Seniors have contributed to our communities in endless ways. At this time in their lives, more than ever, they should not have to worry about having the funds to make ends meet or about their loved ones not having access to the funds intended for them when they pass.

The question I asked the Prime Minister when he was here earlier was why single seniors are not receiving the same tax advantages as their coupled counterparts. Why is the Liberal government not making the necessary changes to ensure that seniors are not disadvantaged based solely on their relationship status?

• (1910)

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are a lot of wonderful members of Parliament in the House of Commons, and I can tell colleagues that this member is one of them. I am perfectly willing to continue this conversation about seniors at any time with this member and other members.

I agree wholeheartedly with this member that this is a very important issue. After a lifetime of hard work, seniors deserve a secure retirement. They should not need to be worried about making ends meet.

That is why our government is continuing to step up to put more money into the pockets of seniors, including older women, when they need it most. We recognize that, although global inflation rates are declining, Canadians, including seniors, are facing affordability challenges, particularly when it comes to filling their grocery cart.

That is why, in budget 2023, we created the one-time grocery rebate, providing \$2.5 billion in targeted inflation relief to the Canadians who need it the most. This means that 11 million low- and modest-income Canadians and families, including seniors, will benefit from extra money to pay for groceries, transportation, rent and other daily expenses.

I am also happy to say that budget 2023 proposes \$13 billion over five years, \$4.4 billion ongoing, to implement the Canadian dental care plan. This plan will help up to nine million uninsured Canadians, including seniors, access dental care.

On top of these new measures, budget 2023 also touches on our previous measures for old age security and the guaranteed income supplement, which both provide an important stable income for seniors.

Also, allow me to remind members about the programs and recent increases. The OAS program is considered the first pillar of Canada's retirement income system. Benefits under the OAS program include, among others, the basic OAS pension and the GIS for low-income seniors. There are also special allowances for low-income seniors aged 60 to 64, who are the spouses or common-law partners of GIS recipients or who are widowed.

Last summer, our government increased the OAS pension by 10% for seniors over the age of 75, more than half of whom are women, putting over \$800 more in the pockets of seniors in just the first year. We also increased the GIS by 10% for nearly a million low-income single seniors. These measures are just a few in a basket of supports that the Government of Canada has provided for seniors.

We also reversed the former government's reckless decision to raise the age of eligibility from 65 to 67 for GIS and OAS, something that would have come into effect this very month without our government's intervention.

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We provided tangible assistance in the form of program changes, tax breaks and top-ups. We reduced income taxes through increases to the basic personal amount and, for working Canadians, we enhanced the Canada pension plan, which is considered to be the second pillar of Canada's retirement income system. I want to emphasize that CPP offers a number of provisions, like CPP's child-rearing provisions, to support people who had a lower labour force attachment, especially women who took time off to care for their families.

Our plan is working. In fact, since 2015, we have lifted hundreds of thousands of seniors out of poverty, leading to poverty rates among seniors that are the lowest in our history and among the lowest in the world. All of these measures show that the financial well-being of seniors, including older women, is a priority for the Government of Canada.

• (1915)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Speaker, there are many seniors who are reaching out to me who are struggling to make ends meet. I want to mention two seniors in particular.

Robin is a single senior in my riding living on a fixed income. She currently pays 75% of her income on housing. This is way too much for her to be paying.

Mary, another constituent in my riding, who is widowed and living off of a fixed income, is experiencing health conditions. She has diabetes and renal failure, to be specific, and has been recommended a special diet to minimize the impacts of these health conditions, but she cannot afford to purchase the foods that are being recommended to her by the dieticians so she can live her healthiest, happiest life.

There are some real solutions being put forward by Single Seniors for Tax Fairness, which I believe are tangible and clear ways that the government can move forward to help seniors. One example is to give seniors, upon their death, the right to transfer their—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but the hon. member's time is up. That one minute does go by very fast.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, I would be pleased to offer the opportunity to chat in a sidebar with that member at any time on any type of advocacy for seniors in Canada.

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The Government of Canada continues to do more to support seniors, including older women. Please allow me to provide members, once again, with a snapshot of what a 76-year-old woman in British Columbia, with a maximum GIS entitlement, could now receive. She could be eligible for more than \$2,000 in additional support in 2023, thanks to the grocery rebate, the GIS top-up, the increase for single seniors introduced in 2016 and the new increase to the OAS pension for seniors over 75. That could be an extra \$2,000 in her pocket this year.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am happy to take to my feet, and I have some follow-up questions about the Minister of Environment's carbon tax scam, which has now been shown by the Parliamentary Budget Officer to take more money out of Canadians' pockets than the rebates put back in.

I have a few questions. I hope the parliamentary secretary does not need to read prepared notes on this one. Does he agree with the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who stated that Canadians are going to receive less in rebates than they are going to pay out in carbon tax?

Does he agree with his environment minister, who stated that same fact on a popular TV show when he said that it is true Canadians are going to pay more in carbon tax than they are going to receive back in rebates? Actually, some Canadians are going to pay between \$1,500 and \$1,800 more in 2030 than they are going to receive in rebates, which is something the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed in his latest report. I would like to hear the answers to that.

We have had this discussion about the carbon tax over the years in this chamber, and when I was a member of the legislative assembly, we also ran against the carbon tax in Saskatchewan. In Saskatchewan, a lot of people do not have any choice but to drive their own vehicles. They have to drive in rural and remote Saskatchewan on farms. People use their vehicles to get to and from work. There are no other options, as there are in urban Canada. Some of the people I represent see this as a wealth transfer from rural Saskatchewan to urban Saskatchewan.

How do the rural people feel in Nova Scotia? My sister is from Halifax. I know that, in Dartmouth, there are people who need to travel a lot to and from work. What are their options if there is no public transportation? Has the parliamentary secretary heard from his constituents that they are paying a lot more in carbon tax than they are getting back?

He is shaking his head "no", but I am wondering if there are some people in Nova Scotia who have that feeling. Some members on our side say they have had conversations with people in Nova Scotia who feel the carbon tax has taken more out of their pockets than they are getting back.

We had the conversation around the supply chain and grocery stores. Obviously, when one charges more for fuel, anything that is trucked is going to cost more. Groceries have gone up through both inflation and the carbon tax.

Winters in Saskatchewan get pretty cold, and the same happens in Nova Scotia. Home heating costs have gone up exponentially because of the carbon tax. We know that in 2030, the gas tax, or the carbon tax, is going to be 41¢ a litre in this country. If the Liberals and the NDP do not think that is going to affect the price of anything that is trucked into our country, where it is going to hit the consumer harder than anyone else, they are fooling themselves.

We will continue to fight against the carbon tax scam. Once again, these are a few questions I have, which the parliamentary secretary should be able to answer without reading from his prepared notes from the PMO.

How does the carbon tax affect his people in Nova Scotia? Does he agree with his environment minister, who, after years of saying people are going to receive more in rebates, finally admitted the truth on national TV, that Canadians are going to pay more in the carbon tax scam than they are ever going to get back? Those are a couple of the follow-up questions I have for my hon. colleague.

• (1920)

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think the member probably should have had some prepared comments, because everything he just spouted was basically wrong. There is no carbon tax in Nova Scotia yet and there is no price on pollution in Nova Scotia yet. How can he be speaking to constituents in Halifax and Dartmouth about the impact of something that does not exist? However, I will move along.

It is hard to dot an i and cross a t for someone who says he has been fighting against the carbon tax when, in 2021, he campaigned on it. It was in his platform. I have a copy in my office. He knocked on doors, asking his constituents to vote for him based on what was in that platform. It is hard to cross that t and dot that i.

We know Canadians are facing a really difficult time right now, which is why we will continue to be there for them, investing in them responsibly so they can make it through these tough times and get to the brighter future ahead.

Far be it for the member to agree to this, but climate change is real. It is happening. It is a huge issue, the biggest issue, but it is the biggest opportunity of our lifetime. The latest science warns that to avoid severe impacts of climate change, greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced significantly and urgently to limit the global average temperature increase to 1.5°C. I knocked on doors too. Canadians want and expect real action on climate change.

Adjournment Proceedings

The member can stand and say Canadians do not want a price on pollution, but the Conservatives have lost three elections in a row. What do Canadians want? They want action on climate change. Clearly, the member is not listening to what Canadians are saying when, for three elections in a row, his party has been on that side of the House. It is going to be a fourth. It is going to be a frustrating time for Conservatives to sit on that side for a fourth time because they do not understand that Canadians want real action on climate change.

I will take the word of our environment minister any day of the week over someone who one day says he does not support a price on pollution and in the next election says that his platform says he believes in it. What about the next election? They probably will not believe in it. Who knows? Fifty-five per cent of the grassroots members of the Conservative Party of Canada said climate change is not even real. I am glad to say that Canadians do not agree, and they showed that in the election.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I wish the member had read from his prepared notes, because everything he said was untrue.

First, I wish he would find a piece of literature that said I ran on a carbon tax in my riding. That would be interesting to see.

Second, if the member agrees with his environment minister, then he agrees that people are going to pay more in the carbon tax

than they are going to get back, because that is what the environment minister said. It is nice that he finally agrees with the Conservatives.

Third, most people understand that we have to do something about climate change, but the hilarious part is the Liberals have never met a target they have made. They are 58th in the world in reducing emissions. That is a fact. That is from the recent COP report. The fact that they think this carbon tax scam is actually going to lower emissions is false, and they should stop spreading misinformation to Canadians.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, emissions are coming down. The economy and the environment do go hand in hand. Climate change is a huge issue but a massive opportunity. I will take no lessons from the member and the party across the way.

• (1925)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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 7:25 p.m.)

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