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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 8, 2023

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

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

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

ROUGE ET OR RUGBY TEAM

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to congratulate a group of exceptional young women and their coaches on their spectacular victory at the U Sports women's rugby national championship.

This victory, which is the result of hard work, immense determination and outstanding teamwork, is definitely something to celebrate. It is a second consecutive banner and a third title in four championships for the Rouge et Or. It is also worth noting that Laval University is the only francophone university to bring home this national title and win the record for the largest crowd at a women's university sports event in in Quebec.

I want to wrap up my statement with the words of Corinne Fréchette, the rugby tournament MVP, who said, “This is about more than just a match. It is bigger than just a medal. We represent all of the alumni who have worn the jersey and who did everything they could to help grow the sport. We are making history in our own way, and we are making our mark on women's sports. There are younger girls who will want to wear our colours.”

I want to congratulate these young women who are such inspiring role models.

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, according to a UN report, since the conflict began, over 1,400 innocent Israelis and more than 10,000 innocent Palestinians, including 4,000 children and more than 2,500 women, have lost their lives. The killing of innocent civilians is heartbreaking and painful. The whole population in Gaza is under siege. Access to food, water, electricity and medicine is being severely restricted. There are 1.5 million Palestinians internally displaced, and 14 of 35 hospitals have stopped functioning.

On Friday, the Prime Minister said, “We've all seen too much horror these last weeks. Kids being killed...We all want it to stop.” Many Canadians are calling for us to call for an immediate ceasefire to end the hostilities, the freeing of hostages and the full respect of international humanitarian law. I have heard them, and I will keep listening.

* * *

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as Remembrance Day approaches, I think of family members who sacrificed so that we may live in peace. I think of my father's uncle, John Schramm, who served in the navy. Great-uncles Gordon Schramm and Eddy Hanowski served in the army. Eddy was severely injured in Holland. On my mother's side, I remember my great-uncle Ronald L'Italien, who paid the ultimate price for his service to Canada. These sacrifices are remembered by generations, from my parents to me and to my son, who wrote this poem:

Today as I awake
The war takes place

No breaks are there
Where the war takes place

They fought together
Where the war takes place

The poppies grew as fast as the Flash
Where the war took place

They had to choose between their country or their family
Where the war takes place

The soldier is a lion when he is on the battlefield
Where the war takes place

They all go home
After the war takes place

Statements by Members

May we never forget.

* * *

[Translation]

BRIAN MERRETT

Ms. Anna Gainey (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an exceptional Montreal photographer, Brian Merrett, who passed away on September 21.

[English]

Born in 1945, Mr. Merrett became an activist and leader in the preservation of architectural heritage of Montreal. Through his works and the publication of several books, he recorded and fought to protect the fabric of Montreal at a time of tremendous change and urban development. He challenged infrastructure projects that threatened historic buildings, saving, among others, Windsor Station. His work played a crucial role in the restoration of Shaughnessy House, now integrated into the Canadian Centre for Architecture.

[Translation]

Mr. Merrett's work is also featured in the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. His photographs are in the museum's collection as well as in other private and public collections, including those of the McCord Stewart Museum, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec and National Gallery of Canada, just a few steps from here.

Let us take a moment to honour his legacy and the significant mark he left on our magnificent city of Montreal.

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GREATER SAINTE-AGATHE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it all began on March 9, 1933 in a room in Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts City Hall. The Sainte-Agathe chamber of commerce was born out of the desire to officially speak for commercial interests. The new chamber of commerce's first success was establishing a liquor commission store.

We can mention early initiatives such as the Carnival and the completion of the old Route 11 as well as the success stories of companies such as J.L. Brissette and Fenêtres MQ and of start-ups such as Origine Nature, La Manufacture, and La Veillée. The chamber of commerce, now known as the Chambre de commerce du Grand Sainte-Agathe, actively works to develop a region with huge potential.

Today, Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts is a services and activity organization hub as well as a development centre for SMEs.

Congratulations to the Chambre de commerce du Grand Sainte-Agathe on its 90th anniversary.

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● (1410)

ORLÉANS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, November marks Hindu Heritage Month in Canada. I would like to

thank the Hindu community in Orléans and across the country for their contribution to our society. I was very pleased to attend the Diwali events this week on Parliament Hill.

[English]

I am also very excited to welcome in this House 90 students from four civic classes of Cairine Wilson Secondary School in Orleans.

[Translation]

I thank their teachers, Malia Robin, Felicia Persaud, Paul Emerson and Marlene MacRae for having organized this visit.

[English]

Finally, this week is Veterans' Week, which will conclude with Remembrance Day on November 11. Several celebrations across our country will take place honouring those who fought and lost their lives for our freedom and our liberty. I thank all the veterans and acting members of the force, in Orleans, Canada and abroad, for their service.

Lest we forget.

* * *

INDIGENOUS VETERANS DAY

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, throughout the history of Canada, indigenous peoples have served with honour and distinction in the Armed Forces. They have defended our nation, protected our shared values and demonstrated unwavering courage and resilience in the face of danger.

In World War I, their bravery and contributions in battles such as Vimy Ridge and Passchendaele were instrumental in the allied victory. In World War II, indigenous peoples once again stepped up to defend freedom and democracy. During the Korean War and subsequent international conflicts, indigenous peoples continued to serve, making heroic contributions to Canada's peacekeeping efforts around the world.

As we remember those who fought and those who made the ultimate sacrifice, we must also remember the often overlooked stories of indigenous veterans, who returned home to face continued challenges and discrimination. On November 8, let us recommit ourselves to the principles of justice, equality, and reconciliation. Let us strive to ensure that indigenous veterans, who have served and who continue to serve, receive the recognition, respect and support they deserve.

Lest we forget.

ROYAL CANADIAN ARMY CADETS

Hon. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the 2332 Major EJG Holland VC Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps was founded on November 25, 1948. It will celebrate its 75th anniversary this month with a ceremonial parade.

Eighty cadets strong, and with a dedicated team of officers and civilian volunteers, this unit has volunteered with the Royal Canadian Legion Poppy Campaign, the Army Run, Christmas toy drives, the Boots on the Ground Walk and many other community events.

Cadets build life skills such as leadership, teamwork, resilience and discipline. This valuable experience has positively impacted countless youth throughout our community.

I send my congratulations to the 2332 Royal Canadian Army Cadets on their 75th anniversary.

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HINDU HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the second annual Hindu Heritage Month and in celebration of Diwali.

During this month, I would like to recognize and honour the countless contributions of the Hindu community to our nation. Over the past 120 years, it has been an integral part of Canadian society. Hindu communities have flourished and grown immensely, leaving their mark on several aspects of Canadian society, from medicine and cutting-edge technology to the arts and thriving businesses.

This weekend, I will also be celebrating Diwali with the Hindu community in Brampton. The festival of lights marks the victory of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and good over evil. It is a time for families and friends to come together, share joy and express their gratitude for the blessings in their lives.

During this special month, I encourage all Canadians to take the time to learn more about the Hindu culture and the significance of Diwali, to engage with our Hindu friends and neighbours, and to join in the festivities. Let us embrace the opportunity to foster understanding, respect and appreciation for the rich traditions that define our nation.

* * *

● (1415)

VETERANS

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we approach Remembrance Day, it is important to remember and recognize the sacrifice that so many Canadians made for our freedoms.

The toll of war weighs heavily upon our veterans, so it is our duty to honour their sacred contribution and ensure that they are cared for, yet this Prime Minister has told them that they are asking for more than he can give, and after eight years, we are seeing veterans suffering in record numbers.

We need to recognize that veterans, particularly those with injuries, are vulnerable to the cost of living crisis brought on by this

Statements by Members

government. The Veterans Food Bank of Calgary reports that demand for its services has doubled and expects the shelves to be empty by the end of the week.

Veterans are suffering right now, with more and more using food banks and homeless shelters. Now, the cost of living crisis has gotten so bad that there are serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces who are living in their cars because they cannot afford a place to live.

The Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. It is time to bring home a government that will honour the service and sacrifice of our veterans, not just on Remembrance Day, but every single day.

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INDIGENOUS VETERANS DAY

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today on Indigenous Veterans Day to express my gratitude and to celebrate the indigenous veterans who have served in the Canadian Armed Forces in Canada and across the world.

The service of first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples to our country in times of conflict, war and peace goes back generations. It is up to all of us to ensure that their sacrifices are never forgotten and that their contributions are fully appreciated. It is essential to acknowledge that many indigenous veterans faced unique challenges and discrimination during and after their service. Despite those challenges, they persevered, showcasing their remarkable resilience and determination.

On this Indigenous Veterans Day, let us all remember and pay our heartfelt tribute to those individuals who stood at the forefront of our nation's defence and exemplify the true meaning of service and sacrifice.

Lest we forget.

* * *

[Translation]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Prime Minister, he is trying to save his career any way he can.

As luck would have it, he has found a new partner in the centralist Bloc Québécois. Monday, we voted on a common-sense motion that would have given everyone a break on the carbon tax on home heating. That was not just for 3% of the population, but for all Canadians, contrary to what the Minister of Rural Economic Development would have us believe.

Statements by Members

However, the Liberals voted against the motion, as did the separatist Bloc Québécois. Voting for the Bloc Québécois is costly, and it is going to remain costly for a long time, because they want to radically increase the carbon tax. The costly new Bloc-Liberal coalition hurts everyone, including Quebecers. It is not me who is saying this, but the Parliamentary Budget Officer, since the second carbon tax will add 20¢ to every litre of gasoline.

Our proposition is clear: no gimmicks, no temporary measures. We have to eliminate inflationary taxes to bring common sense back to Quebec. That is common sense.

* * *

[English]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years under the Prime Minister, he is just not worth the cost. Canada is broken. Households and businesses across this country are struggling to hold on, losing hope that things will ever get better. The Prime Minister decided to pause the carbon tax on home heating oil for only 3% of Canadians. His divisive policies have left western Canadians out in the cold, having to decide between eating and heating.

The economic development minister thinks that westerners should just elect more Liberals if they want to afford home heating. Surprisingly, Albertans in Edmonton Centre and Calgary Skyview did vote Liberal; however, their MPs did not even try to get Albertans the same breaks as other Canadians have. In fact, on Monday, the same two MPs voted against our Conservative motion to axe the carbon tax on all home heating.

It is clear, now more than ever, that Canada needs a common-sense Conservative government to start fixing the problems created by the NDP-Liberal carbon tax coalition.

* * *

● (1420)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the last 32 days, I, along with colleagues for Kitchener—Conestoga, Kitchener South—Hespeler and Cambridge, have been listening to and consoling residents in the Waterloo region for the deaths of thousands of innocent Israelis and Palestinians. We feel their pain and grief, and we bring their calls to action to this chamber.

There are parents having to explain to their kids why they are seeing death and horror in their social media feeds. We have children who are afraid to wear religious symbols, neighbours grieving the loss of loved ones, faith leaders fearing for the safety of congregations and people feeling silenced and kept from publicizing their views.

We hear the range of calls from Canadians for a humanitarian ceasefire, the release of civilian hostages, the safe return of all Canadians and a dedicated humanitarian corridor. We must continue working hard to achieve a just and lasting peace for all Palestinians and Israelis for the sake of humanity.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we cannot turn away from the humanitarian crisis that is unfolding. In Gaza, there are over 50,000 pregnant women without access to medical care. Over 100 women give birth every single day amid the chaos. New Democrats, from the beginning, have called for a ceasefire, condemned Hamas's violence and called for a release of all hostages.

Now, as people who have nothing to do with Hamas's violence are getting killed, we must centre our focus on human rights, international law and human decency. C-sections are being performed without anaesthetic. Imagine being pregnant with no medicine, no food, no water and no electricity. Women are miscarrying. Mothers and their babies are dying daily amid bombings and attacks. Four thousand children have been killed since the start of this siege. Four thousand kids have been killed. How many more babies have to die before the government will call for a ceasefire?

* * *

[Translation]

TROIS-RIVIÈRES FERRY

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Centre de jour et d'entraide en santé mentale Le Traversier, the drop-in and mental health support centre in Trois-Rivières, is celebrating its 35th anniversary. The organization's mission is to support people living with mental health issues during the healing process and help them attain a better quality of life.

To better respond to the growing needs of clients, the organization unveiled an innovative project that will allow it to expand its services and reach more people in need: a mobile response unit. This unit will make it possible to reach out to people struggling with societal and mental health challenges, to meet them closer to their homes or communities. The fully autonomous vehicle is adapted to hold consultations and can even accommodate small groups for activities.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the exceptional work of Ms. Shanaz Moussa, the executive director, and Ms. Isabelle Fortin, the board chair, who successfully mobilized the team and the board members behind this project.

Congratulations to the entire Traversier team on this initiative.

[English]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, Canadians are seeing the Liberal-NDP government for what it is. The Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. He continues to divide Canadians over the carbon tax. He still plans to quadruple the tax on home heating, gas and groceries for 97% of Canadians, but he decided to pause the tax for 3% of families in areas where he was plummeting in the polls and where Liberal MPs were revolting. The Liberal rural affairs minister said that if people in other regions want to have the same pause, they should elect more Liberals. Is that politics or policy?

The people in Thunder Bay—Superior North did elect a Liberal MP, yet her constituents are not getting the pause. Why did she not use her influence with the Prime Minister to bring relief to her constituents? Why did the Prime Minister not allow the MP for Thunder Bay—Superior North to freely vote to take the tax off the heat and keep the heat on for her constituents?

* * *

MCGILL PUBLIC POLICY STUDENTS

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, public policy is a science and an art that relies on both rigorous analysis and an acute sense of the possible.

Today, graduate students from McGill's Max Bell School of Public Policy are on Parliament Hill to learn first-hand about government decision-making in a Westminster parliamentary system. They are accompanied by the program's founding director, Professor Christopher Ragan, one of Canada's most respected and influential economists.

Through Professor Ragan's leadership, the Max Bell program has brought together academics and public policy practitioners in a full range of subject areas to create one of the country's leading faculties of public administration. I ask members to join me in welcoming Max Bell students to the nation's capital today. Government necessarily plays a crucial role in our complex and rapidly evolving world.

We look forward to these bright, young minds taking up important roles and responsibilities for guiding our ship of state into a promising future.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1425)

[Translation]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois, who is not worth the cost, voted to increase the tax on heating across the country, in order to save the political career of this Prime Minister.

We asked whether the Bloc Québécois is part of a costly coalition. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change confirmed

Oral Questions

it. He said that there is a coalition in the House of Commons that includes the Bloc Québécois. The Bloc Québécois does nothing for free.

Will the Prime Minister tell us what he offered the Bloc to keep him in power and support the idea of quadrupling the tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I am offering Quebecers and all Canadians is an opportunity to grow and thrive in a greener, more prosperous future.

Three parties in the House of Commons are working together to fight climate change. The Conservatives are unwilling to do anything to fight climate change. They fail to understand that no plan for the economy is possible without a plan to fight climate change.

We will continue to work with all members of the House who want to fight climate change and build a better world, while the Conservatives would have us return to the Stone Age.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he just confused the Bloc Québécois with Quebecers. There is a big difference. The Bloc Québécois has abandoned Quebecers. Apparently, the Prime Minister thinks the Bloc Québécois suddenly speaks for Quebecers. Perhaps it is because the Bloc Québécois wants to drastically raise taxes on the backs of Quebecers.

Now the Bloc Québécois wants to keep the Prime Minister in power, supporting his inflationary deficits and other centralizing policies. Just yesterday, the Minister of Environment admitted that there is a coalition with the Bloc Québécois.

What did the Prime Minister offer the Bloc Québécois to get this coalition?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are nearly half a million Quebecers who still heat with oil. All the members from Quebec, whether they are in the Bloc Québécois, Liberal Party or another party, should know that those who depend on oil to heat their homes—and therefore pay more and pollute more—are, for the most part, the poorer Canadians and Quebecers.

That is why we are offering to replace this oil heating with heat pumps. We are going to work with all the provinces that want them and deliver them free of charge to low-income people. Building a better world is something that needs to be done by all of us together.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost or the division after eight years. Panicking under pressure from MPs in a region where he is plummeting in the polls, he paused the tax for some people in some places, but his minister said that other people should have voted Liberal if they wanted the same break.

Now the panicking Prime Minister is further dividing the country with a confirmation from his environment minister that he is now in a coalition with the Bloc, the separatist party. We have a costly carbon tax coalition that includes the separatists.

What did he promise the separatists to get them to sign on to keeping him in power for two more years?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only division in this country as to whether we should be doing everything we can to fight climate change is within the Conservative Party. Canadians are unequivocal that we need to fight climate change, and we need to support Canadians through that. That is why our price on pollution returns hundreds of dollars every three months to the average family of four while fighting climate change and watching our curve bend faster over the past two years than the curves of the other G7 countries. We will continue to hold Canadians together as we fight climate change, while Conservatives continue to bring us backward.

• (1430)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's own environment commissioner confirmed that he will not hit his targets, and the Prime Minister has admitted that his carbon tax is not worth the cost for oil-heated homes. He did that to save his political hide, but his desperation went one step further this week, when he relied on the separatists to vote with him to quadruple the tax on home heating for everyone else in Canada.

The question is very clear: What did he promise the separatists to get their support to save his political hide and quadruple the tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no matter how much the Conservatives try to deny it, every single day in this country, we get closer to never again using coal to generate electricity. Now, we are choosing to phase out home heating oil, which is dirtier, more expensive and disproportionately relied on by lower-income Canadians.

The Conservatives may try to make up all the stuff they like, but the reality is that replacing home heating oil is good for Canadians when we put in heat pumps, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the Prime Minister has not eliminated coal-fired electricity. He has not eliminated oil-powered heating in homes. His carbon tax will not allow him to meet his own GHG targets, according to his environment commissioner. That is the reality: His carbon tax is not worth the cost. That is why all 10 premiers, Conservative, Liberal and NDP, are calling for him to take the tax off so Canadians will keep the heat on.

Will he be fair to all Canadians, or will he sign on with the separatists to divide our country some more?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to admit, I am a little worried for the Leader of the Opposition. When he has to stoop to bringing up the separatist bogeyman to try to scare Canadians, he must be running out of material.

The fact of the matter is that Canadians are afraid of climate change. They are afraid of the extreme weather events. They are afraid of the concerns we have about a brighter future. What we are doing is fighting climate change every day while we build a stronger economy, with greater careers, while we support Canadians every single day with the high cost of living. This is what we are delivering.

He has no plan to fight climate change, no plan for the future of the economy and no plan for Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this morning, the Prime Minister reiterated the government's position and called on Israel to agree to a truce in the Gaza Strip. Many international institutions and countries have reiterated this position over the past two weeks. Unfortunately, all calls have gone unheeded so far. Prime Minister Netanyahu is also completely ignoring the repeated calls made by Mr. Blinken, the U.S. Secretary of State.

In view of Israel's deplorable attitude, would the Prime Minister agree that it is time to call for a ceasefire, along with effective means of implementation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are calling for a humanitarian truce, a humanitarian pause, to allow the hostages, Canadians and other foreign nationals from all over the world, to get out of Gaza and, more importantly, to send humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza. Violence must be curbed. We need to create a path towards a two-state solution. The terrible images we are seeing every night must stop. They are breaking the hearts of all Canadians and people around the world. We will continue to work together for peace and security for all.

• (1435)

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I regret to say that the State of Israel broke the trust the international community placed in it to act with restraint towards civilians in the Gaza Strip. Thousands of people have died needlessly. Israel is planning a lasting occupation of the Gaza Strip. There have been repeated calls for a truce, but have we not reached the point where strong action must be taken by the international community to implement a ceasefire enforced by international peacekeepers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we all know, we are working with our international partners to try to protect the lives of civilians and restore safety and order for all citizens and residents of the region. We will continue to do that.

At the same time, as parliamentarians and Canadians, we must be very concerned about the divisions, fear and even hatred that we are starting to see across Canada. We must be there to stand up against Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and all forms of hatred. Let us remember who we are as Canadians.

* * *

[English]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal and Conservative corporate coalition may strike again today. We put forward a plan to help Canadians with their home heating bills, to help Canadians tackle the climate crisis and make big oil and gas pay for it. Environmental organizations are on board, but the “climate delay” Liberals and the “climate deny” Conservatives will back the profits of big oil again.

How can the Prime Minister and the leader of the Conservative Party justify voting against this?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was with confusion and consternation that I noted the way the NDP voted with the Conservatives against one of the most successful measures Canada has ever seen in the fight against climate change.

Putting a price on pollution is exactly how we have managed to bend the curve on our emissions faster than other G7 countries over the past two years and how we are moving forward with global leadership on the fight against climate change. Seeing the NDP vote with the Conservatives against a price on pollution is something that has disappointed millions of progressives across this country.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am going to ask members to please exercise great restraint. I would especially ask the member for York—Simcoe to allow other members who have the floor to hold the floor until it is his turn to speak.

The hon. member for Burnaby South.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has missed literally every single target he has set on emissions.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Here is our plan: reduce heating bills for all Canadians, fight climate change and make the big oil companies pay. Many environmental organizations agree, but the Liberal-Conservative coalition of CEOs are going to keep protecting the profits of the big oil companies.

How can the Prime Minister vote against our plan?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that progressives across the country were deeply disappointed to see the NDP vote with the Conservatives against the most successful measure to fight climate change that Canada has taken. Putting a price on pollution across the country has allowed us to fight climate change, invest in renewable energy and put more money in the pockets of eight out of 10 families where the federal price on pollution applies.

We will continue to fight climate change. We hope that the NDP will rejoin the battle.

* * *

• (1440)

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is almost tragic and heartbreaking to see these two squabbling in this way.

The Prime Minister was so disappointed in the NDP leader's flip-flop on the carbon tax on heat, but the good news for the Prime Minister is that the NDP leader has flipped-flopped on his flip-flop and now supports the Prime Minister's plan to quadruple the tax, this with two million Canadians, a record-smashing number, going to a food bank.

Will the Prime Minister create another carve-out on the carbon tax for farmers so Canadians can afford to eat?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that farmers are always focused on being good stewards of the land, and we are working with them in investing and in supporting them in many different ways to ensure that we can continue to put good-quality affordable food on people's tables right across the country. That is what we are going to continue to do.

Farmers, and indeed Canadians from coast to coast to coast, know that, as we fight climate change and as we put more money in people's pockets every three months, hundreds of dollars, with the pollution price return, we are going to continue to step up in building a strong economy for tomorrow, something the Conservatives simply do not understand.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is quadrupling his carbon tax on the farmers who make the food and quadrupling the tax on the truckers who ship the food, therefore quadrupling the tax on all who buy the food.

The good news is that there is a common-sense Conservative bill that has passed through the House and is in the Senate, where the Prime Minister's senators are holding it up.

Will the Prime Minister, once again, cave and allow another carve-out on the carbon tax for farmers, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many people living in rural areas across the country, including many farmers, continue to be stuck heating their homes with home heating oil. It is dirtier and more expensive, and it is something that is expensive to replace.

That is why we are stepping up with measures that are going to deliver heat pumps to families right across the country, to 1.2 million households across this country, in every part of this country, relying on home heating oil, so we can help them fight climate change and save money at the same time. That is our plan.

The Conservatives have no plan.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our common-sense plan is found in Bill C-234, which would give another carve-out to farmers on the carbon tax.

The Prime Minister has claimed that he will not cave again. He says there will be no more carve-outs. We are asking him to keep in mind that there are two million people who have to go to the food bank every month because of his policies.

Will he put his ego and pride aside and ask his Liberal senators to pass common-sense Bill C-234 to axe the tax and create a carbon tax carve-out for our farmers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, farmers across this country know the costs of climate change. They know the costs of extreme weather events, whether it be floods, fires or more intense storms. Farmers are worried about their future, worried about their kids' future and worried about the country's future.

That is why we put forward a plan that is reducing our emissions and growing our economy at the same time, while putting more money in Canadians' pockets. The Conservatives have no plan to fight climate change, no plan for the future of the economy and no plan for future generations. We will continue to do what is necessary to support Canadians, including farmers, long into the future.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister will not answer a simple question. It is about the common-sense Conservative bill to carve out farming from the carbon tax.

I understand why he feels he is in a bind, because his environment minister said that as long as he is environment minister, there will be no more exceptions to carbon pricing. That implies that he would resign if there were another carve-out.

Will the Prime Minister sacrifice his crazy carbon tax minister and support our common-sense bill to take the tax off—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1445)

The Speaker: All colleagues should know that we cannot use language that calls into question the character of individual hon. members.

I hear an explanation from the Leader of the Opposition, and I will repeat that so we could clarify the record. The Leader of the Opposition said that he was referring to the policy and not the person.

I thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for making that clarification because, otherwise, that language would clearly be unparliamentary.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we will all be waiting for a long list of corrections on factual errors from the Leader of the Opposition if we go down this road.

The fact of the matter is that millions of Canadians who understand that climate change poses an existential threat to our country, to our well-being and to our economy need action. They expect a government with a plan. They expect the government to deliver on that plan, and that is exactly what we have been doing for eight years.

Meanwhile, the only plan the Conservatives put forward is cuts: cuts to services, cuts to programs, cuts to rebates for Canadians and, yes, cuts to the most successful measure to reduce climate change emissions that this country has ever seen. When is the Leader of the Opposition going to come forward with a real plan?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is crazy to quadruple the carbon tax on our farmers when two million people are going to a food bank every month. Now the Minister of Environment has threatened to resign if there are new carbon tax carve-outs. We have a common-sense Conservative bill that would carve out the carbon tax for farmers. All it needs is for the Prime Minister to give his senators permission to pass it. Will the Prime Minister please just cave at least one more time and allow a carve-out on the carbon tax for our farmers, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will not use the word “crazy”, but I will say it is deeply, deeply irresponsible for the Conservative Party of Canada to continue to deny that taking action against climate change is important and to continue to deny that climate change is a real threat to Canadians and to our economy. The fact is that we have put forward measures that both fight climate change and put more money back in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadian families. We are going to continue to fight climate change because the cost of inaction against climate change is far more than the cost of action.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, his carbon tax is not working, he has missed every single target, he is on track to miss his 2030 targets and Canada is ranked 58th out of 63 on climate action.

The question is about our farmers. There is a bill, Bill C-234, a common-sense Conservative bill to carve out farmers from the carbon tax. All it needs is for the Prime Minister to give his senators permission to adopt this carve-out. Will the Prime Minister stand up to his environment minister and stand up for farmers and let Bill C-234 pass and allow this carve-out to go ahead?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will admit it does not happen often, but every now and then I am a little bit envious of the position that the Leader of the Opposition finds himself in of being able to criticize, on the one hand, that we are not doing enough to fight climate change and then, on the other hand, saying that we need to stop everything we are doing to fight climate change.

Fortunately, Canadians are smarter than he takes them for. Canadians know that the only way to build a strong economy for the future is to fight climate change at the same time. That is exactly what we are doing. Until the member puts forward a plan that is responsible and real on fighting climate change and growing the economy, Canadians will continue to dismiss him.

* * *

● (1450)

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the next few seconds will be very difficult. Here is what preacher Adil Charkaoui said:

O Allah, destroy the Zionist aggressors. O Allah, destroy the enemies of the people of Gaza. O Allah, count their number, slay them one by one and spare not one of them!

Does the Prime Minister think imam Charkaoui committed a Criminal Code offence when he uttered those comments in public?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these words are unacceptable. They are anti-Semitic. They are an insult to life and to the hopes of millions of people around the world, including millions of people who perished in the Holocaust because of their Jewish faith.

We will always stand up against anti-Semitism. We will always be there to promote peace and compassion among peoples around the world.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I publicly warned the Prime Minister three hours ago that I was going to ask this question so that he could have a clear and precise answer.

Is it a criminal act or not? Based on my understanding, it is criminal and warrants a reaction commensurate with a criminal act.

As for government tools that could be used, someone has been appointed to act as a bridge between various communities. Where is Ms. Elghawaby now? Is she needed?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is true that there are people all over the world who say unacceptable things, even here in Canada.

What we need to do here in the House and across the country is encourage people to listen, be compassionate and return to the values we all share as Canadians. We need to be sensitive to our neighbours' plights and cries; we need to show empathy and compassion.

As far as criminal charges and prosecution are concerned, that is up to the police and the Public Prosecution Service, and I am counting on them to make the right decisions.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the panicking Prime Minister is not worth the cost or the division after eight years. He recently announced that he would pause his carbon tax on heat for some people in some places where he is plummeting in the polls and his caucus is revolting. He claims this is not regional, but his own rural affairs minister said that if people on the Prairies want the same pause, they should elect more Liberals.

Can he confirm whether he endorses these comments or whether he condemns them?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Conservatives think phasing out coal was divisive, because some parts of the country had already phased out coal and it only targeted the parts of the country that still relied on coal to generate electricity.

We are united in our desire to fight climate change, as Canadians. We are united in our desire to support Canadians who need it, through into a better future. That is why banning and phasing out home heating oil by replacing it with heat pumps right across the country is an approach that will unite Canadians.

The only division is among Conservatives, who still think climate change is fake.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, stating falsehoods about our position will not distract from the original question. Here is the question. The Minister of Rural Development said that if people in the Prairies wanted a pause on the carbon tax for home heat, they should elect more Liberals.

Does the Prime Minister denounce these comments or does he agree with them?

Oral Questions

● (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tens of thousands of people across the Prairies are getting the chance to replace their home heating oil with heat pumps because we have put forward programs to help in that transition, as we pause the price on pollution for people in the Prairies who rely on home heating oil, tens of thousands of them. We are there for people in the Prairies who want to save thousands of dollars a year, who want to get heat pumps and who want to fight climate change. Why are the Conservatives not there for those people?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are there for all Canadians.

This is really troubling. We thought perhaps it was a gaffe when his Liberal rural affairs minister said that the Prairies would have to elect more Liberals if they wanted a pause. If it really just is a fair policy that applies evenly across the country, then why would one have to elect more of any particular party in one's region to benefit from it?

I will just give him one last chance. If he cannot answer it, we will assume that he agrees with her. Does he agree with his rural affairs minister that if the Prairies want a pause on the carbon tax pain they have to elect more Liberals, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no, because people in the Prairies who heat with home heating oil already are benefiting from a pause on the carbon price. That is because this pause we put in applies right across the country, so the tens of thousands of Canadians in rural Canada, in the Prairies, are going to be able to benefit from the transition to heat pumps. That is why we are going to continue to step up, including in doubling the rural top-up on the carbon price rebate. We will continue to deliver for Canadians right across the country, and we will continue to be there for all Canadians, including women and—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister only divides to distract. That is all he ever does when he gets into trouble. He divides people along every possible battle line. He did that with the carbon tax carve-out for only some in a region where his support is plummeting and his caucus is revolting. For 10 days, he refused to condemn the comments of his own Liberal minister who said this policy was applying based on how people voted, and now he signs on with the separatists to divide Canadians again.

Will the Prime Minister, instead of dividing Canadians, reverse the policies that are driving them to the food bank?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we see the Conservatives' approach to partisan politics and to personal attacks. The reality is that when we stood with the 80% to 90% of Canadians who chose to get vaccinated, they called us divisive. When we chose to stand with women across this country who want to control their own bodies, they called us divisive. When we stand with the 2SLGBTQI+ kids who are being discriminated against in schools across this country, they call us divisive.

I ask Canadians: Who is dividing Canadians more than Conservatives with their attacks, with their choices, with their politics?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I thank the hon. opposition whip for helping.

I would ask all members to please exercise restraint so that we can hear the next question.

The hon. member for Burnaby South.

* * *

● (1500)

HOUSING

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people are struggling to find a home they can afford and the federal government has the power, the land and the resources to end the housing crisis. On one side, we have the corporate-controlled Conservatives who want to sell off our public land to their rich investor friends, which helps no one, but on the other side, we have Liberals who are openly admitting that their plan is to use public lands to build luxury homes.

How can the Prime Minister justify using public lands to build homes that people cannot afford?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is simply not true. We know Canadians are worried about paying their rent, finding an apartment or buying a home. That is why we are working on housing affordability right across the country.

It is why we put forward the affordable housing and groceries act, which would help build more affordable apartments by cutting the GST on construction. Housing advocates and developers have described this move as a game-changer that will get more affordable housing built. It is why it is essential that all members work with us to move these important measures forward.

HEALTH

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, every single Canadian deserves to have health care when they need it, public, universally accessible health care, but Conservative leader Danielle Smith just got caught trying to make health care more chaotic and more bureaucratic. She is not hiring more health care workers, not treating health care workers with respect and leaving the door wide open for more privatization. Does that sound familiar? This is right out of the Conservative playbook and on the Liberals' watch.

Why is the Liberal government sitting on its hands while Alberta has its health care privatized?

The Speaker: The Chair will soon be issuing some reflections upon the issue raised by several House leaders from different parties, who questioned the relevance of questions in terms of the administration of government or questions that should be directed to committee chairs. That will be coming shortly. In the meantime, I will ask all members to make sure they ask questions that are relevant.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a relevant question because we have taken actions in the past to claw back transfers to provinces that have not been obeying the Canada Health Act, and we will continue to do that. Let me be clear. We will always defend Canada's access to health care and will not hesitate to use all available tools under the Canada Health Act to protect this right. We expect all provinces and territories to adhere to the act when they make decisions regarding Canadians' access to health care.

The Minister of Health will be closely reviewing the details of the Alberta premier's plan, but we remain unequivocal that when it comes to access to our health care system and access to pension supports, we will always stand with Canadians.

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the planet is burning and 72% of Canadians are worried about climate change. Sadly, the Leader of the Opposition does not appear to be one of them. He stated that he will do nothing to reduce our emissions, nor work with the global community within the Paris accord to protect our future. In fact, just like Donald Trump, the Leader of the Opposition will take Canada out of the Paris accord.

The federal government is committed to net zero and has invested over \$120 billion in a greener future. Will the government stand for future generations, unlike the reckless Conservatives with their—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Fortunately, the Speaker was able to hear the question.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Oral Questions

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the MP for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill for her great question on this important file.

It is shameful that the Conservative leader has no plan to address the crisis facing all of humanity. His emphasis on technology to fight climate change means nothing, because he is somebody who has been opposing the development of offshore wind technology in Atlantic Canada.

While our government has a serious plan that addresses affordability and the climate crisis, that leader has no plan and no vision. Perhaps he should put his glasses back on.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with or without glasses, I will not lose \$54 million on an app that does not work.

This is a Prime Minister whose government is now under RCMP investigation again for giving out contracts to firms that did absolutely no work. Now senior members of the bureaucracy are blowing the whistle and saying that his top officials lied about it before committee.

Will the Prime Minister personally co-operate with the police in this latest criminal investigation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but wonder how many millions of dollars Canadians would have lost if they had followed the Leader of the Opposition's advice and bought Bitcoin so they could opt out of inflation.

When it comes to serious matters, both the RCMP and the CBSA's professional integrity division are investigating. The CBSA has also launched an internal audit to look into contracting at the agency and has increased oversight processes when it comes to contracting.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the former director of the CBSA, our principal border authority, said that he felt "incredibly threatened", in his words, by the former president of the organization, and members of the Prime Minister's bureaucracy lied, according to this testimony, in order to cover up this \$54-million scandal.

The matter is now under Auditor General and RCMP investigation. Will the Prime Minister co-operate with the police, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously the reports coming out are extremely concerning, and I know that the respective authorities will be taking this extremely seriously. We expect our professional public servants to always conduct themselves with the utmost integrity, and I am sure that will continue to happen.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, well, the entire government only takes direction from a guy who has two convictions for breaking the law. In this case, it is not just \$54 million. There was \$11 million given to a two-person IT firm to do absolutely nothing. The same firm has gotten \$60 million from the Liberal government since 2017 alone.

The entire matter is under criminal investigation, so for a third time, will the Prime Minister personally co-operate with the police, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members can understand that I will not take overly seriously accusations from an individual who was minister of elections when he was found to have broken elections law.

When we see matters of wrongdoing, we ensure that the proper authorities are looking into them. Of course, our government will always ensure full co-operation with investigating authorities.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is a man of conviction. He has had two of them. He actually doubled the amount of money spent on outside consultants after promising to bring it down. We pressured him on this. He said, "I know what I'll do. I'll pay \$670,000 to another consulting firm to find out how we can spend less money on consulting firms."

Here is some free common-sense advice. Will he take it? Why not just stop spending on juicy contracts for his friends?

• (1510)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, we need to ensure that we are getting the best value for funds spent in the public service. The minister agrees and is looking into it.

Let us talk about being a person of conviction. I am convinced that we need to fight climate change. I am convinced that the only thing we can do to build a strong economy for the future is protect the environment and fight climate change while putting more money in people's pockets. These are my convictions. I have continued to be consistent on them over the past 15 years that I have been in politics.

We look forward to hearing what the Leader of the Opposition believes in, because right now it sure is not clear.

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[Translation]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Copernicus observatory is reporting that 2023 will be the warmest year on record.

At the same time, the commissioner of the environment has revealed that Canada will once again miss its 2030 greenhouse gas reduction target. This tenth federal climate plan since 1990 is headed for a tenth failure. The Liberals are all talk and no action.

How many forest fires, heat waves and hurricanes will it take for the government to take meaningful action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past eight years, we have done more than any other government in history to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The reality is, as my hon. colleague said, that we need to do even more. The big challenge is that it is difficult to have a debate in the House on the best way to do more, because we are stuck with an opposition party that insists that climate change requires no action, no plan and no rigour in how to tackle it. Unfortunately, they still want to debate whether or not climate change even exists.

On this side of the House, we know it exists and we continue to take climate action.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals want to combat climate change, as long as it does not cost them too many votes. They will continue to grant subsidies to oil and gas companies and weaken carbon pricing if that is what it takes to win votes.

The bottom line is that the federal government has never been able to meet its reduction targets, and the current plan will do nothing to change that. Meanwhile, the commissioner of the environment has clearly stated that it will soon be too late to avoid the catastrophic effects of climate change.

It is time to be brave for the future of our planet. What is the government waiting for?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party has chosen to form a government that will fight climate change and bring together Canadians who are concerned about climate change. As a government, we are taking substantive action to put a price on carbon, to invest in green technologies and to find innovative ways to combat climate change by helping Canadians pay their bills.

Unfortunately, the members of the Bloc Québécois have always chosen to remain in opposition. Instead of taking action, they are here to criticize. It is time for real action. Quebecers and Canadians are joining forces to take action, to combat climate change.

That is not the Bloc's doing.

[English]

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a leaked secret recording of a top Liberal government official reveals that the billion-dollar green fund the Prime Minister is running is not worth the cost or the corruption. Here are some extracts from that recording: “It was free money” and “a sponsorship-level kind of giveaway”.

Since the Prime Minister learned of these allegations in March, he has not fired a single, solitary person. This is a billion-dollar slush fund. Is he worried about firing the insiders because he does not want them to blow the whistle on this broader Liberal scandal?

• (1515)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, ISED was made aware of allegations of mismanagement at SDTC. The Auditor General has now decided to conduct an audit of SDTC. Our government has been working closely with them on this and welcomes the decision.

In addition, SDTC has agreed to enable a thorough third party review of the allegations regarding HR management. We are committed to ensuring that organizations that received federal funding adhere to the highest standards of governance.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a billion-dollar taxpayer-funded slush fund that top officials now say amounts to a sponsorship scandal kind of corruption. It says they were giving away free money. This is at a time when a record-smashing two million people are forced to food banks every month and nine out of 10 people cannot afford homes.

How could the Prime Minister have thought it appropriate to blow \$1 billion when Canadians cannot afford to eat, heat or house themselves?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me to be perfectly clear. Any allegation of wrongdoing in any government department must be fully investigated. There are established processes for situations such as these, and this is precisely why the Auditor General has made the decision to conduct an audit.

This is a serious situation and we are taking it with the seriousness it requires. Unfortunately, the Conservatives, as usual, are looking for a way to score cheap partisan points. We are going to continue to govern responsibly.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing cheap about losing \$1 billion. That is exactly why he is not worth the cost. He sees no problem throwing away \$54 million on an ArriveCAN app that did not work, that we did not need and that is now under criminal investigation. Now, six months after he learned of corruption, cronyism and mismanagement in this billion-dollar fund, he has kept his handed-picked cronies in their positions.

If he really thinks it is serious that this billion-dollar fund had so much corruption, why will he not fire the people running it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a country of rules and laws, and that is why we need

Oral Questions

to make sure we are doing proper investigations and ensuring appropriate consequences for any people involved in wrongdoing. This is how a country of laws and rules functions.

Unfortunately, Conservatives are still choosing to make cheap partisan points on very serious issues. We are going to continue to take these issues seriously.

* * *

[Translation]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are proud of those who have worn the Canadian Forces uniform and defended our rights and freedoms. However, the important contributions of our indigenous veterans have not always been properly recognized.

On this Indigenous Veterans Day, I would like to ask the Prime Minister what the government is doing to ensure that the sacrifices of these brave men and women are given the recognition they deserve.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Charlottetown for his question and his commitment to veterans.

Even when previous governments were not there for indigenous communities, the indigenous people were there to defend Canada and our freedoms.

That is why it is so important to recognize their immense sacrifice. That is why we are taking measures like the creation of a team dedicated to supporting indigenous veterans.

We are also committed to redoubling our efforts to commemorate their sacrifice, as we did with a delegation to the Netherlands earlier this year.

Lest we forget.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the United Kingdom's foreign office has given travel advice to its citizens that says the risk of terrorist attacks happening in Canada is “very likely”. Does the Prime Minister agree with the U.K. foreign office's assessment, and what is he doing to protect Canadians from such an attack?

Oral Questions

● (1520)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has a robust and sophisticated process around determining levels of threats to Canadians. We elevated the level of threat back in 2014 to medium, and it is staying there right now. We are continuing to make sure that we are doing everything we possibly can to keep Canadians safe. We understand that these are trying times around the world right now, but the best thing we can do as Canadians is stay true to our values, be respectful of one another, feel each other's pain and be there to support others through these very difficult times of a rise in hatred, including Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, terrorists are not interested in feeling other people's pain; they are interested in causing other people pain. The U.K. Foreign Office has said that "the risk of terrorist attacks happening in Canada is very likely", yet the Canadian government rates that risk at medium. Why is there this difference?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously I cannot speak to how other countries make their determinations on travel advisories, but I can say that the work is done daily in Canada to assess the threat level to Canadians and what can be communicated to keep them safe. We elevated the threat level to medium in 2014, and it has remained at that level since. Every single day, we re-evaluate and ensure that we are doing everything we can, privately and publicly, to keep Canadians safe.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if they simply read the U.K. foreign department's assessment of Canada, that "the risk of terrorist attacks happening in Canada is very likely", then there is a very serious risk. Why did Canadians have to learn from a foreign government about an increasing threat of terrorism in Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I cannot speak to how the U.K. makes its determinations, but I can certainly say that, in Canada, we have top security agencies and officials who work daily to reassess the threat levels to Canadians. They are working every single day to keep Canadians safe, and they will continue to keep Canadians informed on the best ways to keep safe.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the residents of my riding of Davenport are proud of Canada's unwavering support for Ukraine and our proposed modernized Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, also known as CUFTA. It is becoming increasingly clear, though, that the Conservative caucus does not support CUFTA, criticizing it in committee. The opposition leader had no shame in filibustering CUFTA in this House. While the Conservative leader would gladly let Ukraine down, can the Prime Minister tell this House why this trade legislation is so important?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Davenport for her advocacy on this file and her steadfast hard work. We have been solid in our support of Ukraine since day one, and we will be there to help it re-

build when it wins. We have committed over \$9.5 billion in financial, military and humanitarian aid. The modernization of our trade deal with Ukraine is another important area of co-operation between our two countries and will be crucial to rebuilding Ukraine.

On this side of the House, our support for Ukraine has been unwavering. Unfortunately, the leader of the Conservative Party cannot say the same.

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the planet is on fire, so what is the difference between the Conservative leader's approach and the Prime Minister's? The Conservative leader is a climate denier, and he would pull us out of the Paris accord; the Prime Minister is simply a denier of his global obligations, which is why we are not going to meet our 2030 targets. The United Nations is pointing out that, under the Prime Minister, Canada is planning a massive increase in oil and gas production. It is no wonder we are the worst country in the G7 for tackling emissions. There has been enough of the denial of facts; where is that emissions cap?

● (1525)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member to be a staunch advocate for the environment and a strong defender of more action against climate change. This is why I know it must have been extraordinarily difficult for him the other day to vote with the Conservatives against the most effective measure Canada has ever used to fight against climate change.

On this side of the House, we will continue to step up in the fight against climate change every single day, while putting more money in the pockets of Canadians right across the country.

* * *

[Translation]

FINANCE

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, for the past few weeks I have been asking questions about the Governor General's outrageous spending. Each time, the ministers who answer me get a little offended and they half-heartedly condemn the practice, but then nothing is done to change the culture that has taken root in this institution.

Meanwhile, we keep changing governors general, but the extravagant spending on meals, alcohol, luxury hotels, travel and cleaning services continues unabashedly. Today, I put my question to the Prime Minister. Does his government intend to cut the Governor General's \$33-million budget? Clearly, she does not seem to be able to manage taxpayers' money seriously and responsibly.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Governor General Mary Simon is a dignified and humane individual with tremendous compassion. She plays a key role in our society and our democracy. We will continue to ensure that expenses are well managed, but the reality is that she occupies an important position for the stability and future of our democracy.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I believe if you seek it you will find unanimous consent from the House for the following motion: We need a ceasefire in Gaza and we also need all hostages returned.

The Speaker: Is there consent?

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

SITUATION IN ISRAEL, GAZA AND THE WEST BANK

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That the House unequivocally rejects and condemns the heinous terrorist attacks against Israel by terrorist organization Hamas on October 7, 2023, and demands that Hamas unconditionally and immediately release all hostages, regardless of nationality, that it kidnapped during its attacks.

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

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That the House immediately and unequivocally demands that unimpeded humanitarian aid be allowed into Gaza, and in particular, food, fuel and water; that every measure be taken to protect civilian life in Gaza; that all foreign nationals be allowed to immediately leave Gaza, including Canadians and their families; and that the House reiterate its firm and unwavering commitment to a two-state solution, with a viable Palestinian state, living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel.

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

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

Orders of the Day

ORDERS OF THE DAY

● (1530)

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

The House resumed from November 1 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 3:30 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, October 31, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment of the hon. member for Brantford—Brant to the motion for concurrence in the sixth report of the Standing Committee on International Trade.

Call in the members.

● (1540)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 445)

YEAS

Members

Aboultayf	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	Desbiens
Desilets	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Gaudreau
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Khanna
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Majumdar	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)

Orders of the Day

McLean
Michaud
Morantz
Motz
Nater
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Rood
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shields
Simard
Small
Steinley
Stewart
Stubbs
Therrien
Tochor
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer— 145

Melillo
Moore
Morrison
Muys
Normandin
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Scheer
Seeback
Shipley
Sinclair-Desgagné
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Thomas
Tolmie
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

Hughes
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Miller
Morrissey
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Morrice
Naqvi
Noormohamed
Oliphant
Petitpas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schieffe
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
Sousa
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Trudeau
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 174

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Ali
Anandasangaree
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Battiste
Bendayan
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blaney
Boissonnault
Bradford
Cannings
Casey
Chahal
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Victoria)
Coteau
Damoff
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dubourg
Duguid
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Garrison
Gerretsen
Green
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Beech
Bennett
Bittle
Blair
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Carr
Chagger
Champagne
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davies
Dhaliwal
Diab
Duclos
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Gazan
Gould
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather

PAIRED

Members

Drouin
Joly
Plamondon

Godin
Liepert
Virani— 6

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

[*English*]

The next question is on the main motion.

The hon. whip for the government.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to apply the results of the previous vote to this vote, with Liberal members voting yes.

[*English*]

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives agree to apply the vote, with Conservatives voting nay.

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the results of the previous vote and will vote in favour of the motion.

● (1545)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply the results of the previous vote and will vote yea.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party agrees to apply the vote, and we will be voting yes.

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

(Division No. 446)

YEAS

Members

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

Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lemire
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saarich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Michaud
Morrice
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Perron
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Schieffe
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
Sousa
St-Onge
Tassi
Thériault
Thompson
Trudel
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Villemure
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi — 205

Orders of the Day

Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Larouche
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Miller
Morrissey
Ng
Normandin
Oliphant
Pauzé
Petitpas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sinclair-Desgagné
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Trudeau
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vignola
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Deltell	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast

Business of Supply

Ferreri	Findlay
Gallant	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Khanna
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Lawrence	Lehoux
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Majumdar	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Poillievre
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shipley
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Wauh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer— 113	

PAIRED

Members

Drouin	Godin
Joly	Liepert
Plamondon	Virani— 6

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—REDUCING HOME HEATING COSTS

The House resumed from November 7 consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the deferred recorded division on the motion from the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley relating to the business of supply.

The question is as follows. May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

● (1555)

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

(Division No. 447)

YEAS

Members

Angus	Ashton
Bachrach	Barron
Blaikie	Blaney
Boulerice	Cannings
Collins (Victoria)	Davies
Desjarlais	Erskine-Smith
Garrison	Gazan
Green	Hughes
Idlout	Johns
Julian	Kwan
MacGregor	Masse
Mathysen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McPherson	Morrice
Singh	Vuong
Weiler	Zarrillo— 30

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Blois
Boissonnault	Bradford
Bragdon	Brassard
Brière	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carr
Carrie	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Chambers
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Chong
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cooper
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Dalton
Damoff	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Doherty	Dong
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battleguards—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast

Private Members' Business

Ferreri
Findlay
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Gaine
Garon
Généreux
Gerretsen
Gladu
Gould
Gray
Hajdu
Hanley
Hepfner
Holland
Hutchings
Ien
Jeneroux
Kayabaga
Kelly
Khanna
Kitchen
Koutrakis
Kram-Neuman
Kusie
Lake
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lapointe
Lattanzio
Lawrence
Lebouthillier
Lemire
Lewis (Essex)
Lightbound
Lobb
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Majumdar
Martel
May (Cambridge)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Miller
Morantz
Morrissey
Muys
Nater
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Robillard
Romanado
Rota
Sahota
Saks
Sara
Scarpaleggia
Schieffe

Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Gallant
Gaudreau
Genuis
Gill
Goodridge
Gourde
Guilbeault
Hallan
Hardie
Hoback
Housefather
Iacono
Jaczek
Jowhari
Kelloway
Khalid
Khara
Kmiec
Kram
Kurek
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lantsman
Larouche
Lauzon
LeBlanc
Lehoux
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
Maguire
Maloney
Martinez Ferrada
Mazier
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLean
Melillo
Mendicino
Michaud
Moore
Morrison
Motz
Naqvi
Ng
Normandin
Oliphant
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Poilievre
Qualtrough
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Rogers
Rood
Ruff
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Scheer
Schmale

Seebach
Shanahan
Shields
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Small
Soroka
Steinley
Stewart
Strahl
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Thompson
Tolmie
Trudel
Uppal
Van Bynen
Van Popta
Vandenbeld
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Wagantall
Waugh
Wilkinson
Williamson
Zahid
Zuberi — 293

Serré
Sheehan
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sinclair-Desgagné
Sorbara
Sousa
Ste-Marie
St-Onge
Stubbs
Tassi
Thériault
Thomas
Tochor
Trudeau
Turnbull
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Williams
Yip
Zimmer

PAIRED

Members

Drouin
Joly
Plamondon

Godin
Liepert
Virani — 6

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1600)

[*English*]

RADIOCOMMUNICATION ACT

The House resumed from November 2 consideration of the motion that Bill S-242, An Act to amend the Radiocommunication Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill S-242 under Private Members' Business.

● (1610)

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

(*Division No. 448*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Angus
Ashton
Baldinelli
Barrett
Berthold
Blaikie

Aitchison
Allison
Arnold
Bachrach
Barlow
Barron
Bezan
Blaney

Private Members' Business

Block	Boulerice	Baker	Barsalou-Duval
Bragdon	Brassard	Battiste	Beaulieu
Brock	Calkins	Beech	Bendayan
Cannings	Caputo	Bennett	Bergeron
Carrie	Chambers	Bérubé	Bibeau
Chong	Collins (Victoria)	Bittle	Blair
Cooper	Dalton	Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Dancho	Davidson	Blois	Boissonnault
Davies	Deltell	Bradford	Brière
Desjarlais	Doherty	Brunelle-Duceppe	Carr
Dowdall	Dreeshen	Casey	Chabot
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis	Chagger	Chahal
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Champagne	Champoux
Falk (Provencher)	Fast	Chatel	Chen
Ferri	Findlay	Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Gallant	Garrison	Cormier	Coteau
Gazan	Généreux	Dabrusin	Damoff
Genuis	Gladu	DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Goodridge	Gourde	Desilets	Dhaliwal
Gray	Green	Dhillon	Diab
Hallan	Hoback	Dong	Dubourg
Hughes	Idlout	Duclos	Duguid
Jeneroux	Johns	Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
Julian	Kelly	El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Khanna	Kitchen	Fillmore	Fisher
Kmiec	Kram	Fonseca	Fortier
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek	Fortin	Fragiskatos
Kusie	Kwan	Fraser	Freeland
Lake	Lantsman	Fry	Gaheer
Lawrence	Lehoux	Gainey	Garon
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)	Gaudreau	Gerretsen
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lloyd	Gill	Gould
Lobb	MacGregor	Guilbeault	Hajdu
Maguire	Majumdar	Hanley	Hardie
Martel	Masse	Hepfner	Holland
Mathysen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Housefather	Hutchings
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)	Iacono	Ien
McLean	McPherson	Jacek	Jowhari
Melillo	Moore	Kayabaga	Kelloway
Morantz	Morrice	Khalid	Khera
Morrison	Motz	Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Muys	Nater	Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Patzer	Paul-Hus	Lametti	Lamoureux
Perkins	Poillievre	Lapointe	Larouche
Rayes	Redekopp	Lattanzio	LeBlanc
Reid	Rempel Garner	Lebouthillier	Lemire
Richards	Roberts	Long	Longfield
Rood	Ruff	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Scheer	Schmale	MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Seebach	Shields	Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Shipley	Singh	May (Cambridge)	McDonald (Avalon)
Small	Soroka	McGuinty	McKay
Steinley	Stewart	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
Strahl	Stubbs	Mendès	Mendicino
Thomas	Tochor	Miao	Michaud
Tolmie	Uppal	Miller	Morrissey
Van Popta	Vecchio	Naqvi	Ng
Vidal	Vien	Noormohamed	Normandin
Viersen	Vis	O'Connell	Oliphant
Vuong	Wagantall	O'Regan	Pauzé
Warkentin	Waugh	Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Webber	Williams	Powlowski	Qualtrough
Williamson	Zarrillo	Robillard	Rodriguez
Zimmer— 143		Rogers	Romanado
		Rota	Sahota
		Sajjan	Saks
		Samson	Sari
		Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
		Schiefke	Serré
		Shanahan	Sheehan
		Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
		Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
		Sorbara	Sousa

NAYS**Members**

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Atwin
Badawey	Bains

Ste-Marie	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Thériault	Therrien
Thompson	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vignola
Villemure	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Zahid	Zuberi— 178

PAIRED

Members

Drouin	Godin
Joly	Liepert
Plamondon	Virani— 6

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

[Translation]

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 40 minutes.

[English]

Hon. Rechie Valdez: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I had technical difficulties on the app, and I am requesting unanimous consent to allow me to change my vote on the opposition day motion to against.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

ALLEGED UNPARLIAMENTARY GESTURE IN THE HOUSE—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: The Chair would like to follow up on the point of order raised by the chief opposition whip regarding an alleged offensive gesture by the member for Avalon during a recorded division held on Monday, November 6, 2023.

[English]

As mentioned when the matter was first raised, the Chair committed to reviewing the video in order to determine if an offensive gesture was made by the member during the vote. Having done so, the Chair cannot make a conclusive determination as to the nature of the gesture.

For his part, the member for Avalon stated that he did not make the gesture in question. The Chair is left with two versions of the same event, and consistent with past practice, the Chair must take members at their word. I therefore consider the matter closed.

[Translation]

The final point I would make is the responsibility for improved decorum falls to every one of us. As I said in my statement of October 18, 2023, found at pages 17592 and 17593 of Debates, and I quote:

Speaker's Ruling

Because of the collegial character of the House and the broad privileges enjoyed by its members, no one—not even the Speaker—can act unilaterally to improve the level of decorum in the chamber.

Despite my own strong individual determination to maintaining the dignity and decorum of the House, ultimately those efforts will come to naught without members themselves taking responsibility for their behaviour and conduct, and showing their own personal efforts in comporting their business in an appropriate and civil manner. I will therefore need your help in order to succeed.

● (1615)

[English]

There was obviously disorder in the House during the vote that took place last Monday. All members must be mindful of the impact that their sometimes heated words and behaviours might have on others. I ask all colleagues to do their part to elevate the proceedings to ensure that they are more respectful and constructive. Remember that Canadians are watching us and that we are all accountable for our words and actions in this place. Rather than finding ways to skate right up to the line of what is acceptable, I would encourage all members to stay well inside the boundaries of respect and decorum.

I thank all members for their attention.

Mr. Ken McDonald: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

On Monday, after the vote on the opposition day motion, the member for South Surrey—White Rock rose and accused me of making an obscene gesture. You offered me the opportunity to defend myself, which I did. Your ruling today confirms that the accusation was false. Members of the official opposition used footage of my vote and posted it on social media, encouraging people to email and call my parliamentary and constituency offices.

In the last 48 hours, I have received threats of violence. I have had people threaten to cause violence at my constituency office, and I regret to say that I have also received death threats. This is not okay. My staff are scared and members of my family are scared, and this is all because members of the official opposition misled this House and misled Canadians because they were unhappy with the way I voted on their motion.

I was elected to this place to represent the people of Avalon. On two separate occasions, I have stood in this chamber and voted in support of Conservative opposition motions on carbon taxes because I believed it was the right thing to do for my constituents. Monday's opposition day motion did not reflect the needs of my constituents, so I voted against it. I will continue to stand up for what is best for the people in my riding.

I ask that the member for South Surrey—White Rock take responsibility for her actions, apologize and recognize that this misleading accusation fuelled hate and threats of violence against my staff and me.

I thank the Speaker for allowing me to address this matter.

The Speaker: I am not certain that this is a point of order, but I see that the member for South Surrey—White Rock is on her feet, and I would be happy to recognize her.

Points of Order

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, if you are ruling that it is an appropriate point of order, I am prepared to respond, but I do not think it was a point of order. It was a prepared statement, written out.

We all face threats being public servants and being in the public eye in this House, including me and many of my colleagues, for a variety of reasons. The ruling here was not that the member did not do what I stated I saw him do and what others stated they saw him do. The ruling was that it was inconclusive.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the hon. whip, has raised a very important point. Your ruling is that you are not in a position to make a determination. The Canadians who saw that gesture can and clearly are, and they know what the hon. member did; they can see the obvious gesture.

Mr. Speaker, you have said that you are not in a position to take one member's word over another, which is fine. It is now on social media. It lives on there. Canadians, especially the voters in Avalon, can make their own determination about whether they think it is appropriate, when people are struggling with their home heating bills, to get the finger from a member who was voting against our common-sense motion.

• (1620)

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we had a question in question period today from the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona that had absolutely nothing to do with the administrative responsibilities of government. It was directed at the Conservative opposition, and you allowed the Prime Minister to respond.

In a question currently before you, the House leader for the NDP quoted extensively from one of my previous rulings as Speaker on questions that have nothing to do with the administrative role of government. I just want to quote it, only because it has been referenced in previous points from other members intervening on this question. I said:

...as I said on December 1, 2011, (Debates, p. 3875), the Speaker is called upon to make decisions about the admissibility of questions on the fly. In that regard, since members have very little time to pose their questions and the Chair has even less time to make decisions about their admissibility, it would be helpful if the link to the administrative responsibility of the government were made as quickly as possible.

Accordingly, these kinds of questions will continue to risk being ruled out of order and members should take care to establish the link to government responsibility as quickly as possible.

I have had a chance to look at the blues and the question from the member for Edmonton Strathcona. There is nothing about the federal government's area of responsibility in it. It was an attack levelled at the leader of the Conservative Party.

I wanted to cite that part about making the point as quickly as possible because what we found today is that you allowed basically a 35-second attack against the Leader of the Opposition but did not allow the Leader of the Opposition to respond. You allowed the Prime Minister to respond.

I understand why that would be the normal instinct, as it is government members who answer questions during question period. However, what I would urge you to reflect on as you come back to the House on this larger point about these questions is that if you wait until the very end of a question to make that determination and if members do not make a link to the administrative responsibility of the government early, you end up running the risk of having an unanswered attack on a member or another party.

When the government has the ability to defend itself, you, as many Speakers have in the past, have allowed the government to answer questions that may otherwise have been ruled out of order for precisely that reason: An attack has been levelled and a charge has been made. The courteous thing to do is to allow a minister who would like to respond to use the opportunity to do so. However, when that attack is made against an opposition leader, there is no opportunity for a response to be made. It puts the House in a difficult situation when we have members being accused of something.

In every other aspect of debate, including questions and comments during speeches and when we have motions for time allocation, there is an attack and a counterattack. There is a response to the questions being asked. The scenario we had today was an attack on the Leader of the Opposition, followed by an attack on the Leader of the Opposition. It was a coalition partner asking another coalition partner a question about the Leader of the Opposition. That is the unfortunate situation that arose out of question period today.

What I would urge you to do when an attack is being made against an opposition party is to quickly determine early on in the question whether there is a link to government business and then not allow the government coalition partner to respond to an attack from the junior coalition partner. That does not respect the tradition and purpose of question period.

The Speaker: I thank the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle for his intervention on this matter. I am certainly going to review the blues and very much reflect upon what the member has raised about previous ruling that the member had the benefit of sharing with this House when he occupied the chair.

I think the member has made a *prima facie* case as to why it is important to make sure that questions asked quickly come to a point relating to the administrative affairs of government or of a committee chair. It will be useful in the reflection I am working on as we speak, on which I will come back to the House, on the point of order originally raised by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Speaking of which, I see the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby on his feet. I am assuming it is on a point of order. I hope it is a new point of order the member is going to make, because I think we have exhausted, on all sides of this House, the issues that have been raised, which are going to be helpful to me in making my determination.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief, because I have raised this issue a number of times, quoting of course my friend, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, but also Speaker Bosley and Speaker Milliken.

It is absolutely true we have seen a lot of examples from the Conservatives of questions that have had nothing to do with the administration of government. In the case of the member for Edmonton Strathcona, she established that link to government administration in the responsibility for the Canada Health Act in the very first sentence of the question.

I agree with the argument of my friend from Regina—Qu'Appelle that questions should carry on government administration. That is exactly why the member for Edmonton Strathcona established that link in the first sentence of her question.

• (1625)

The Speaker: I thank all members for their interventions, and I also appreciate the interventions being brief.

I would like to thank again the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle for a very substantive intervention.

I hope to come back to the House soon. It might be after the constituency break, but I hope it can be sooner than that.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move that the 26th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, presented to the House on Tuesday, February 14, be concurred in.

To start, I want to say that I will be splitting my time with my hon. colleague, the member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Before I begin, I want to mention that this week is the birthday of the member's predecessor, the wonderful Kevin Sorenson. It was his 65th birthday.

Since Mr. Sorenson and I used to fly together a lot, I had the pleasure of enjoying a birthday with Kevin one night. We were flying back to Edmonton, we landed and we went to our cars. I got in to an Uber to go home and Kevin went to pick up his car from the outdoor lot. It turned out that, although it was a brand new car, it would not start. He thought, “crap, it is my birthday”, and so he went back to the airport to rent a car. He handed over his credit card and driver's licence, but it turned out his licence had expired about five minutes earlier, because we were five minutes in. So, poor Kevin, not only on his birthday did he have to spend it with me on a plane, but his car would not start, he could not get a rental car and he had to catch a cab all the way home to Battle River—Crowfoot.

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I am pleased to be talking today regarding the study in question. Actually, Kevin, at the time I first started doing some work on public accounts, was the chair of the committee. However, the greening government report that we are chatting about today is actually perfect timing for a lot of reasons, and I will comment on some of the timing as I go. One of the reasons this is great timing is because in public accounts we are actually studying the green hydro sham. I call it a sham, because there are various issues that come up about the government's actions, and I will cover them later in my talk.

On the greening government report, I will give a couple of points to give some background.

Treasury Board launched the greening government strategy back in 2017 with the ultimate goal to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. I will comment from the Auditor General's report, which says that “The Government of Canada has indicated that it is committed to leading by example in both the domestic and global transition to a low-carbon economy.” Again, I get back to the great timing, because we just heard from the environment commissioner commenting that the government has not once yet achieved a single one of its environmental goals. Yet, we have here the public accounts committee looking at a report stating that the government's goal was to be a domestic and global leader and transition to a lower-carbon economy, but failed.

It is an interesting comment from the Auditor General that said that the federal government is responsible for 3% of all GHG emissions, which is larger than any single corporation or company in Canada. One would think that this government would actually work to reduce its own GHG emissions instead of driving out of business so many companies across Canada. Instead, we see its goal is to reduce GHG by eliminating revenue-producing companies, especially in Alberta, but at the same time growing its own emissions.

From the findings of this report, the Auditor General comments that “5 years into the strategy, the [Treasury Board] secretariat's efforts to reduce emissions were not as complete as they could have been—especially considering...[their statement that they were going to be a] global leader in transitioning”. So here we have the Auditor General pointing out that the government is all talk and no action on this issue.

Further into the report there is the comment, “We found that the overall reported results from Crown corporations were neither included on the secretariat's website nor aggregated”. Why is this important? Again, I talked about timing and the government. Treasury Board does not cover Crown corporations.

We, of course, have the green scam going on right now with the SDTC where we have a \$1-billion Liberal green slush fund and where we know millions have been diverted to companies without any oversight. Here we have the Auditor General herself commenting that the Treasury Board has provided no oversight on these programs with Crown corporations.

Routine Proceedings

The Auditor General continues to argue that the Treasury Board Secretariat of the government also left an important context out of its reporting, such as “an overview of...government’s key sources of emissions”; “key activities undertaken by the secretariat”; “opportunities, risks, and related mitigation measures likely to affect the government’s ability to implement the strategy over the remaining 28 years”; and “information about how the strategy supported the United Nations 2030 Agenda.”

● (1630)

Liberals did not know what they were doing, they did not know what they were going to achieve, they did not know how they were going to achieve it and they did not know when they were going to achieve it. That pretty much sums up the government in a lot of areas, but especially on the green front.

The Auditor General also concluded, “we found that the Greening Government Strategy did not contain sufficient detail about some important commitments. Additional information would give parliamentarians and Canadians a clearer picture of what is to be accomplished, including the government’s plans [how] to transition”. It is very clear that throughout this report it says there was a lack of transparency in the government’s reporting.

Then the Auditor General finished up commenting on limited risk management. This is important because at this time in the ethics committee and others, we are talking about the \$1-billion slush fund, with no oversight and no risk of management on the government’s programs for spending. She stated, “We also found that the secretariat did not identify how it would consult departments on their risks in order to come up with a more comprehensive, accurate list of these.... We found that only 8 of 27 departments had created emission reduction plans for...” government programs, and that was all.

I want to talk about the SDTC. It is important because the Auditor General has made it clear that Treasury Board, which is responsible for oversight, has not provided oversight. It failed on the oversight of Crown corporations, which the SDTC is, and did not provide risk management or risk mitigation.

There is a comment in the SDTC mission statement that says their “investments translate to economic and environmental benefits.” We heard earlier that the environment commissioner stated the Liberals have not achieved one target in their environmental plans. I have to disagree. The Liberals have achieved one plan, and that is stuffing taxpayers’ money into connected Liberals’ pockets through the SDTC. We have looked up donations from the directors of the SDTC. Tens of thousands of dollars have flown into the Liberal government’s coffers and, at the same time, millions are going out the door that are unaccounted for.

The SDTC also said, “We help Canadian companies develop and deploy sustainable technologies by delivering critical funding”.

The SDTC mission statement further stated, “committed to full transparency”. That is very similar to the government saying “open by default”. Both are not true. We have had to fight in committee to get information.

I will read a couple of comments from the whistle-blower on the SDTC about some of the money that was wasted, “There’s a lot of sloppiness and laziness. There is some outright incompetence and, you know, the situation is just kind of untenable at this point.” It seems very similar to the \$54-million ArriveCAN scandal, but I think this is going to be much larger.

The whistle-blower went on to say, “The minister is going to flip out when he hears the stuff and he’s going to want an extreme reaction, like shut it all down.” I will note that the minister found out in March and here we are in November before we have seen some action by the government. “It’s unlikely that certain members of the board”, we will remember the board that funnelled tens of thousands of donations into the Liberal coffers, “or the entire board, and executives are going to be able to continue to serve. Like they’ve kind of lost the confidence. So really, the discussion will be the mechanisms for getting them out.” It continues, “...pretty well prepared to talk him off the ledge. Like minister, [That’s a] bad idea, we’ve got other ideas.”

We have the Auditor General’s report on the greening government strategy very clearly laying out problems. Back in 2022, a year ago, we knew there were problems with Crown corporations. In March, whistle-blowers came forward about the waste of taxpayers’ money. Now it is November and we still have not seen action. It is very clear that Canadians cannot afford the costly government after eight years and, after eight years, it is very clear the environment cannot afford the government either.

● (1635)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member was aware that, according to today’s agenda, we were supposed to be debating Bill S-9, which deals with the chemical weapons convention and updating that legislation. It was brought in through the Senate. My understanding was that there would be unanimous consent for getting this bill passed.

I wonder if the member could explain why the Conservatives chose to play games today, games that will ultimately prevent Bill S-9 from being introduced. This means that Canadians will have to wait once again because of the filibustering methods of the Conservative Party. How does the member justify filibustering important legislation?

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Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, the question I would ask of the member is how he justifies the continuing cover-up of this slush fund. At committee, we tried to get this information. The Liberal government and its Bloc allies voted against requiring documents related to the Liberals' green slush fund to be released at committee.

He talks about games. I would like his party to end the game of this cover-up and release the information to Canadians, Canadians who are suffering across the country, coast to coast, with paying their bills, paying their rent and affording food. They are struggling, and the government continues to cover up. That is at least \$40 million of taxpayers' money wasted.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the timing of this report is rather odd. I would like to ask my Conservative colleague if that was intentional.

The Conservatives have led the charge, which the Bloc Québécois and the NDP support, to get to the bottom of public funds being used or misused in a green fund that was created by the government. We are dealing with an independent group, but we see that the use of funds is not optimal.

Is there an order to follow when we question the use of these funds? The purpose of these funds is to invest more in our green economy, which is a good thing, but if, at the end of the day, the money is not going to the right place, we can ask questions about that.

Is the member's goal to highlight that today?

• (1640)

[English]

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, I agree with what my colleague is saying. The money is not being used as it was intended. Whether someone is for one type of ideology or the other, we do have very clear rules about our spending. We have clear rules about how the Treasury Board should react and what rules they should follow.

It is very clear from the greening government report from the Auditor General that the government is not following the rules. In fact, only eight out of 27 of the government's departments handed over documents backing up its emission reduction claims. That is how much confidence the government has in its propaganda. It was only eight out of 27, so 75% of the departments refused to hand over information to the Auditor General to back up the government's claims.

Canadians do not believe the government is committed to helping the environment. I think it is only committed to helping its propaganda points.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in a previous Parliament, the member for Edmonton West and I did a lot of work on what was at that time called vote 40, which had all the appearances of a Liberal slush fund. We did some good work together to hold them to account for that.

We do not hear this as much in the chamber anymore, but at that time it was common to hear the phrase "sunshine is the best disinfectant". I wonder if the member for Edmonton West remembers who it was who would so often utter that phrase and what that would mean in this case.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, we do miss my colleague on OGGO. I enjoyed working with my NDP colleague from Vancouver Island. We certainly miss his interventions.

It was, of course, the Liberals who talked about sunshine being the best disinfectant. A commitment to transparency is actually in the mission statement of this green slush fund. We have the government saying that openness is the default. We would like to see them follow through on that.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order. Today, I was attempting to vote and was not able to because of technical difficulties. I am still on the line with the technical department. I would like unanimous consent for my vote to be registered as yes for the last vote, which was for Bill S-242.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: 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 Kitchener Centre, Small Business; the hon. member for Victoria, Climate Change; and the hon. member for London—Fanshawe, Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise in this place to debate issues that are so important to Canadians.

I would thank my hon. colleague from the West Edmonton Mall constituency. He did bring up my predecessor, who I remember very fondly, having worked with and volunteered on his campaigns in my home constituency of Battle River—Crowfoot, which was then called Crowfoot.

I would like to give a big shout-out to Kevin Sorenson, who was chair of the public accounts committee during the 42nd Parliament. It was his birthday the other day. I will not tell the House how old he is, but I wish Kevin a happy birthday. I know he was able to enjoy some time with his grandkids.

Here we are again talking about government corruption. It has become something that I hear about regularly as a Conservative MP. It has truly disillusioned so many in our country on whether or not they can trust the government. Increasingly, across the country, north, south, east, west and everywhere in between, we hear that Canadians simply cannot trust the government. This is so concerning because it is one thing to disagree with the government, its policies and its ideology, but increasingly, because of the last eight years, the Liberal government and the Prime Minister have decreased their trust.

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There has been a significant erosion in the trust Canadians have in our general institutions. That is so problematic because it transcends politics. It transcends any particular party. The damage that has been done to this country by the Prime Minister and the Liberals has truly created a circumstance where there are more people all the time who are saying that they simply do not believe our country can continue to function as is.

As a parliamentarian, as somebody who believes so very much in the future of our country, somebody who is proud to represent the constituents of Battle River—Crowfoot, it is so unfortunate and distressing that all the MPs in the Liberal caucus, the NDP caucus and the Bloc caucus support the Prime Minister up.

Here we are today debating another motion. The committee brought forward a report that speaks to some of this corruption. It truly emphasizes the point that the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Carleton, made, which is that everything in Canada feels broken. That is certainly the case when it comes to the cover-up that seems to be taking place with respect to the whistle-blower revelations from SDTC.

There is a report that the minister requested to be done on some of these documents. At the ethics committee, we asked for this document. We had Liberal members, along with members of the Bloc and NDP, who said that they would ask nicely. Although I, the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes and other Conservatives made the case that it is past the time to ask nicely because the Liberal government refuses to be honest and allow for the truth to get out. We have a report before us that is heavily redacted. While Conservatives brought forward a motion that would have demanded those answers, it was the other political parties of this place that joined together to allow the cover-up to continue.

We have delegations and whistle-blowers who came forward because they were distressed about how there were millions of dollars and words being thrown about, saying that this could make the sponsorship scandal seem small. There is a level of corruption and connections with Liberal insiders that is truly astounding, and this contributes to that further erosion of trust. It is to the point where I am increasingly hearing from constituents and folks across our country that they find it difficult to keep track of the number of scandals the Prime Minister has found himself embroiled in. This is increasingly making it a challenge for the government to administer, and that trust is being broken with Canadians. There are millions of dollars disappearing in a way that has become commonplace. Also, and this cannot be lost in the midst of this, it has reduced the trust that any Canadian has in the government being able to accomplish its objectives.

• (1645)

Now, we can agree or disagree with what the objective is, but one should be able to trust that the government would work toward fulfilling it. The proof of this is so very clear with that government's own environment commissioner's report, which was released earlier this week. We see that the Liberals are failing to meet their targets, yet they are spending hundreds of millions of dollars, billions of dollars, on things where money is being skimmed off the top. It leads one to that conclusion.

The insiders seem to be the ones who get these lucrative contracts, where \$38 million and a billion-dollar green slush fund evaporates. While whistle-blowers are saying it as loud as they can, releasing, publicly, some of this information. We have members of the House, in every other political party, covering up that corruption.

This cannot be lost on the environment commissioner. Not only is there corruption but the corruption is leading to the government not being able to accomplish anything.

The carbon tax is not leading to emissions reductions. The fact is that we have a whole host of green programs, more than I could name, probably, in a 10-minute speech, that are not leading to the promised emissions reductions.

I will quote the report from the public accounts committee we are debating today because I think it is quite something. These are not my words, but it states:

Parliamentarians and, more importantly, taxpayers must have complete confidence in and oversight over the federal governments long-term strategy to achieve Net-Zero or the current plan should be scrapped in its entirety. Through their own admission, neither department studied in this report could accurately state Net-Zero was possible...

We see that, by the government's own admissions, it is now realizing that they cannot accomplish their objectives. We have a corrupt Prime Minister and a corrupt government being propped up by a host of either willing participants or those who are blind and are showing an unbelievable level of cowardice to the corruption that is being perpetuated within our country, which is contributing to that erosion of trust taking place in our government.

This is not simply Conservatives saying this. Recently, in a study at the access to information and ethics committee, which I am proud to be a part of, we studied the idea and issues surrounding government access to information.

The Prime Minister divides at every turn for his own political gain, whether it is premiers from coast to coast uniting against the carbon tax, as an example, or when it comes to unanimous agreement, and this was very important, that the access to information system was broken. Every witness who came to committee agreed that the access to information system in Canada was broken, with one exception. The former president of the treasury board was the only one, the only witness, who came to testify before the ethics committee who said there was not a problem.

It is that wilful blindness, that ignorance and that intentionality that are leading to a culture of secrecy, a culture of corruption, that needs to be addressed. Canadians have zero confidence in the government's ability to accomplish its objectives. Canadians have zero trust in the Liberal government's ability to administer, with integrity, the public purse.

Increasingly, I am hearing from Canadians from coast to coast to coast who are ready for a change, for somebody to bring common sense back to this country, so that when they pay taxes, when tax time comes, they can trust the fact that, while the government takes, they can trust that it is being administered properly because that has been destroyed by those Liberals.

It is time to bring home some common sense to our country. It is time to bring back some integrity to our government. The only way that this would happen would be when the member for Carleton, after what will be a carbon tax election, can take the Prime Minister's chair and bring back, bring home, common sense to this nation and restore trust in our governmental institutions to truly bring back the Canadian advantage, which has been lost under those Liberals and that Prime Minister.

• (1650)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has been talking about trust quite a bit in his remarks. I am just curious why he thinks the Canadian people could trust the party opposite when we know the kinds of reckless ideas that they are putting forward, such as crypto, misogynistic hashtags, photos with illegal protesters, legislation that is trying to use backdoor methods to open up debate on a woman's right to choose, and all the other things that Canadians are very concerned about.

I just do not understand how the member could accuse this side of a lack of trust, when that party has been so reckless and is doing things which are of great risk to Canadians.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, what is so very interesting is that the member seems either to be wilfully ignorant of the corruption or to be complicit in it, maybe benefiting from it, because the member, along with her caucus colleagues, is refusing to allow sunlight to shine in order to ensure that Canadians can get answers for where the money is going and who is getting rich.

The member needs to look back over the last eight year at funds, at the SDTC, which has turned into a scandal that whistle-blowers are saying is bigger than the sponsorship scandal; at a carbon tax that is failing to meet its objective; and at a government that is truly seeing an erosion of trust in the very foundations of things that we, in this country, used to be able to take for granted.

The member should look closely at her government and her caucus colleagues, and ask why they are contributing to a culture of corruption, a culture of secrecy that is destroying the very foundation for the government that we should all be able to trust in this country.

• (1655)

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I am tabling the government's responses to Questions Nos. 1742 and 1743, and the revised responses to Question No. 1738, originally tabled on November 6, 2023, and Questions Nos. 1745 and 1744.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his great speech.

To summarize it briefly, he said that the money needs to go to the right place and that we need to manage the money better here, in terms of the public finances and so on.

There is one thing that I know. Right now, today, oil companies are making \$200 billion in profit. Then, the Conservatives are telling us that it costs a lot to heat a home, that the price of gas is

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rising, that the cost of every fossil fuel is skyrocketing, and that all of these things are hard for taxpayers.

If the oil companies are making \$200 billion in profit and the Canadian government continues to provide them with \$83 billion in subsidies from now until 2035, can my colleague tell me whether he is actually serious when he asks where the money is going?

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, the question is an interesting one. I would simply mention that Alberta contributes approximately \$13 billion into the equalization formula, which is very complex, admittedly, but it is about \$13 billion, and Quebec receives about \$13 billion from it.

Alberta has been clear that it will unleash its potential. Alberta is a world leader in producing clean, green resources, whether that is new tech and clean tech, or whether that is the traditional forms of energy like LNG, natural gas and oil.

I find it so unfortunate that members like that would push our people into energy poverty as opposed to allowing our country and our people to prosper. When it comes to prosperity in this country, the Bloc Québécois members should look at themselves in the mirror and ask why they are keeping our people in poverty.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for their excellent presentations on the issue this afternoon. My colleague from Edmonton was talking about how only eight of the 27 targets the government had set were met in this, and I will ask our colleague from Alberta to expand. I wonder whether the member can just expand on his thoughts on why, if the government had such a great plan, it was such a failure.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, it is quite something. As we look through this report, we see how failure defines the government's strategy when it comes to the environment, when it comes to public finance and when it comes to every metric. It is so unbelievably irresponsible of the members, especially the backbench of those three political parties, to continue to prop up the corrupt coalition when Canadians truly deserve better. That is what they will get when the member for Carleton becomes Prime Minister and Conservatives form a strong mandate to get our country back on track.

• (1700)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I guess this is nothing new. Here we are on another day of the legislative session when the government is attempting to get legislation through, legislation that really matters to Canadians, and once again we are witnessing the Conservative Party, in a determined way, wanting to prevent government legislation of all forms from being able to pass.

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I am going to get into that shortly, but before I do, I want to recognize the significance of the legislation members are prepared to debate here. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs was chatting with me just prior, regarding Bill S-9, which is legislation that has come through the Senate. It was very well received, and it appeared that it would be passing through. From what I understand, everyone is supporting Bill S-9. It is not going to have a problem even getting through the Senate.

Bill S-9 is about amending the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act. The convention has 190 parties that have signed onto it, and it updates the list of chemicals. It is relatively uncontroversial yet very important legislation. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs was saying to me that he was anticipating that the legislation would pass with all-party support.

There is a sense of disappointment. There is no reason we could not have debated it and allowed the debate to come forward. I do not know, and I guess we would have to ask the parliamentary library or someone to find out, the number of times now that the Conservative Party has brought in a concurrence report during government business in order to prevent government legislation from being debated. This is an ongoing destructive force that the Conservative Party wants to use. Today, the Conservatives brought up a report dealing with the environment. We have been talking a lot about the environment in the last few days. I have a lot of thoughts I would like to share with members about the environment. We had two opposition days, both of which were dealing with the environment.

Today was supposed to be a government day when we would be dealing with the chemical weapons convention, but the Conservatives want to talk about a report. When they started talking about the report, what were they emphasizing? It was not necessarily the report itself. There is a lot of latitude given, just like the Speaker gave me latitude to be able to express my thoughts, but what they were more concerned about was incorporating the word “corrupt” as much as they could and trying to portray something that is just not there. They try to create a false narrative on this issue, like a million other issues, because they have been engaging in character assassination since before the Prime Minister was even the Prime Minister. In this case, they are trying to make the Prime Minister look bad in the eyes of Canadians, and they are using this particular report to try to amplify that.

● (1705)

They are also talking about transparency and accountability. I was in the position of being in a third party on the opposition benches when the current Prime Minister became the leader of the Liberal Party. One of the very first actions that he took was around the issue of proactive disclosure, indicating that we wanted to be able to share in a very transparent way that ensured accountability for how individual members of Parliament were spending money. When the government of Stephen Harper and the official opposition at the time opposed it, the leader of the Liberal Party, today's Prime Minister, imposed it on the Liberal caucus members.

Virtually from day one, since becoming the leader of the party, not to mention the Prime Minister of Canada, the leader has been a

strong advocate for accountability and transparency. I can say to go back and read some of the S. O. 31s and look at some of the actions that were taken back then. We can fast-forward to virtually day one, when we took power back in 2015; what members will find is that the Conservative Party, in particular, was more focused on trying to make Canadians feel bad about the personalities within the government. That is my nice way of saying that the Conservatives' focus was on character assassination. Nothing has changed. For eight years, I have witnessed that first-hand.

Today, not only do the Conservatives want to filibuster legislation, but they also want to continue the line of anything and everything that they can point a finger at and say it is corrupt, bad and so forth. If they can factor in character assassination, they do.

In terms of the environment and what the government has been able to accomplish, I should probably go over the last couple of days. Maybe a couple of weeks back, the Conservative Party members brought up the issue of the Canada Infrastructure Bank. We will see the relevance of that here, because the Conservative Party of Canada opposes the Canada Infrastructure Bank. When the Conservatives talk about the environment and look at this report they say it is a slush fund. That is the way the Conservative Party looks at it. The Conservatives are saying that if they were in government, they would get rid of the Canada Infrastructure Bank.

They can look at the results and the things that are coming out of the Canada Infrastructure Bank. I think a progressive, and I underline the word “progressive”, Conservative government would have been very supportive of today's Canada Infrastructure Bank. However, that is not the case with the far-right, reckless and risky Conservative Party. Some people laughed when a question was posed today in question period referring to the Conservative Party and, in particular, the leader of the Conservative Party being a junior Donald Trump. The idea is that the Conservative Party today is so far to the right that the members of the party do not even recognize good public policy.

When I had talked about the Infrastructure Bank, I talked about bringing back the Homer Simpson award that I used to give out when I was an MLA, a number of years back, for dumb ideas. We can think about the Conservatives' position on the Infrastructure Bank and its impact on Canadians, the economy and our environment. Someone told me it was actually 48 projects, but I know it is at least 46 projects, with \$9.7 billion being supported through the government. Through that, there is close to an additional \$20 billion, because of other sources of funding.

● (1710)

There are transit projects, in the double-digits, out there. Gas buses are being converted into electric buses. I know that my colleague from Brampton North, a very strong advocate for the entire community of Brampton, is a big fan of the electrification of public transit. Through the Canada Infrastructure Bank, we are now seeing that conversion taking place.

It is better for the environment. Ultimately, there would be cost savings on that. That is one of the biggest investments we are seeing from the Canada Infrastructure Bank. That is not to mention school buses in different regions of the country that are also being converted into electric school buses.

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We talk a lot about rural Internet. In fact, earlier today we had a vote on spectrum. The Conservative Party was talking about rural Internet connectivity. The Canada Infrastructure Bank is investing in Manitoba fibre Internet. That is going to benefit rural Manitoba, and that is not the only fibre it is actually investing in.

It is supporting our communities, yet the Conservative Party would say that the Canada Infrastructure Bank is a boondoggle or a slush fund. These are the actual words that Conservatives use to describe it. One member across the aisle is heckling that it is a waste of money.

The Conservative Party of today does not appreciate, nor does it value, the role that government can play in ensuring that we have a cleaner, healthier, stronger environment.

An hon. member: No vision.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, there is no vision, as my colleague says.

We see that in another policy related to the environment, something that we have been talking a great deal about, the price on pollution, or as Conservatives love to call it, the carbon tax.

It is interesting that every political party inside this Chamber actually supports the price on pollution except for the Conservative Party. In fairness, in the last federal election, the Conservative Party of Canada supported the price on pollution. However, this new leader has decided that the Conservatives no longer want to acknowledge climate change. Progressive measures, such as the price on pollution or the carbon tax, are a big no-no for Conservatives.

What they do not realize is that the carbon tax that is actually paid goes back to the provinces and to the people. It is the most cost-efficient way for the public as a whole to get engaged in having a cleaner and healthier environment. In fact, a majority of the residents in Winnipeg North actually benefit from the price on pollution, or the carbon tax. That is not me saying it: The independent Parliamentary Budget Officer makes it very clear. Eighty per cent of my constituents would get more than they actually pay in.

When the leader of the Conservative Party goes around the country saying that he is going to axe the tax, referring to the carbon tax, or the price on pollution, he is really saying that 80% of the constituents I represent would have a net loss of actual dollars in pocket. However, the Conservatives do not talk about that.

That is the reality. That is the truth.

• (1715)

I will tell colleagues that, when they look at the report that was provided, the government and minister have provided a detailed response to the six or seven recommendations. We can look at the actions we have taken as a government to demonstrate strong, national leadership on the environment; most recently, we can look at the oil debate and the price on home heating oil.

As I said yesterday, there was a day when a lot of people were heating their homes using coal. A lot of those wartime houses had little steel plates where they shovelled the coal in. This was not done any more as people modernized. Nowadays it is more of the natural gas, electricity, oil and propane. Those are the things heat-

ing homes. Despite the Conservatives' attempts to mislead Canadians, the government came up with a national program that would encourage people to convert from using oil for heating to heat pumps across Canada. They will say, no, it is happening in one region. There are federal dollars actually being spent.

When they talk about how the federal government is spending money on the environment and how we are looking for net zero, this is a policy platform that is going to help us get there. The Conservatives say that only a few hundred have actually been converted over the last number of years. That is false information again. We are talking about tens of thousands of homes today that have taken advantage of government programs to convert to using home heating pumps.

There is no problem in terms of talking about the issue that the members have brought forward on this particular concurrence report. The real tragedy we are talking about today is that the Conservative Party of Canada does not believe that it has to behave in a responsible fashion on the floor of this chamber. Conservatives continuously bring in concurrence report after concurrence report, with some sort of a lame excuse that cannot be justified. I would challenge any of them to go to a university in Winnipeg or Ottawa with me, go to an intro poli sci class or something of that nature, and defend their irresponsible behaviour in trying to filibuster all types of legislation.

They do not want to have a vote on the Ukraine trade deal. What do they do? They bring in concurrence reports. They do not allow it to come to debate. They talk about foreign interference. We bring in legislation that deals with international investment, and they bring in concurrence reports. They do not want to debate. Then they will go crying to the media that the Liberals are bringing in time allocation. Well, duh. We cannot pass anything with the Conservative Party unless we bring in time allocation. Conservatives made a point of making that a reality today. They did not want the legislation to pass the House of Commons.

In a minority government, there is a responsibility that the official opposition has too. I see it as part of my job to hold the Conservatives accountable for their behaviour, which is absolutely irresponsible. They prevent legislation that supports Canadians, whether through pandemic situations, supporting a Ukraine trade agreement or the legislation today, which was supposed to be on the chemical weapons convention. The Conservative Party wants to take this reckless, risky way of dealing with all those issues to the floor of the House.

I say shame on the Conservatives. They have an obligation to Canadians, and they are not living up to it.

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• (1720)

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there has been plenty of legislation that Conservatives have agreed with and voted for. There were bills on disabilities, child care and extending COVID support payments. If it is good legislation, we will vote for it. In fact, the Liberals have legislation they still have not brought back to the House, such as Bill C-56, which Conservatives have indicated they would support.

Canadians were told that Liberals could not cut or pause the carbon tax for any Canadians because of fires, floods and hurricanes, and I want to know how any member in the Liberal Party sleeps at night. How does the member sleep at night knowing that they paused the carbon tax on heating oil when just six months ago, they said they could not pause anything because of hurricanes, floods and fires?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I do not have any problem sleeping at night. The greatest frustration I have is entering the House of Commons each day trying to figure out what game the Conservative Party is going to play in order to prevent legislation from passing. I am never disappointed because this is how they behave. It could be a motion for concurrence on a report. I have seen members of the Conservative Party move that someone else be heard and then cause the bells to ring so they do not have to debate legislation. I have seen Conservatives move to adjourn the House. I have seen the Conservatives deny the House sitting past six o'clock because they do not want to sit until midnight as they do not think Canadians want their MPs to do that. These are all behaviours we see from the Conservatives because they do not really want legislation to pass.

Yes, if they can be shamed in certain situations, we are able to get some bills through, but it is, in good part, because of shaming them and time allocation.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, listening to my colleague, one would almost think the Conservatives are giving him hives. I can understand that, given the rhetoric we are hearing day after day. With the Conservatives, it is always something.

My colleague must be a bit of a navel-gazer. Some aspects of his speech were quite interesting, but I would like to remind him that the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development just told us that Canada is the only G7 country that has not reduced its greenhouse gas emissions since 1990.

Worse still, the government will continue to invest up to \$83 billion until 2035. What does my colleague have to say about that? It seems to me that some of his remarks make no sense or are highly contradictory.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I very much value the Minister of Environment and his general attitude in making sure that Canada is on the right track. We have seen over the last few years that we are going in the right direction. As a government, we continue to be committed to reaching net zero. That is why we brought in the net-zero legislation not that long ago, perhaps 18

months or two years ago, though I am not exactly sure when it was, which also incorporated reporting mechanisms so there would be updates and reports every five years.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, to refresh the hon. member's memory, Bill C-12, the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act, was brought forward in 2021 and I voted against it because it would do absolutely nothing toward climate accountability. I know we are not debating climate tonight, but it is coming up.

The Government of Canada just found out from the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development that we are not moving in the right direction. We continue to ignore the budget that really matters, which is the carbon budget. Net zero by 2050 is irrelevant if we do not hit the near-term targets by 2030, because then we will be on a trajectory to an unlivable world for our own children. It is an unforgivable and unnecessary failure.

I know the Conservatives are not helping, but I do think the Liberals owe the Conservatives a large thanks, because, if not for the Conservatives, the Liberals would not have any claim to having a better record than anybody else in the history of time.

• (1725)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I, for one, always believe that there is room for improvement; there is no doubt about that. However, as I said, I have every confidence in the Minister of Environment and his leadership on the file, and we are moving in the right direction.

I believe that net zero is in fact achievable. I look forward to continuing to bring in and see policies through the government that will actually help lead us in that direction, whether through the Canada Infrastructure Bank and the investments it is making in co-operation with other stakeholders to direct government involvement or with things such as heat pumps.

I do recognize that the Green Party actually voted with the Liberals the other day in relation to the heat pumps and the incentives in supporting the price on pollution. I do appreciate that.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his speech. I think it is a tough job that he has to continue, and I think that endurance is admirable. However, what is not admirable is that this report outlines clearly that the commissioner found that the government actually lacked the ability to manage key risks, which prevents it from meeting its strategy by 2050.

What does the member have to say about how the government can rectify something like this? If it has a plan that says the commitment is to be net zero by 2050 but does not understand the risks associated with getting there, how is it going to be able to get there?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, allow me to report the conclusion. It does not say “all recommendations”, but six or seven of them were responded to, and there is a conclusion:

As the Government continues to strengthen its approach to greening government operations and to performance measurement and reporting under the GGS, we will take the Committee’s recommendations into account. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you and the Committee members for your important work in reviewing the report of the CESD on the Strategy.

Suffice it to say that I do believe that, at times, we see fantastic work coming out of the standing committee. I know that the respective ministers take it seriously and I believe will ensure that we continue to go in the right direction.

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have seen day after day, actually it has been a few weeks now, the Conservatives continue their filibuster through concurrence reports in the House when these studies have taken place in committee.

Today we were supposed to be debating Bill S-9, an act to amend the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act. Canada has been a leader in this area and I think the clarity that this proposed act would be providing when it comes to the list of chemical weapons is greatly needed. I was wondering what the member thinks about that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member brings up two really good points.

First and foremost, the member recognized that the report we are talking about today has been extensively debated, talked about and analyzed thoroughly at the standing committee. So, members of Parliament would have had all sorts of opportunities to be able to contribute to that whole discussion that had taken place.

The second issue the member raised is the impact of not having a debate on Bill S-9, which is very important. Not only is it important, but I believe that all political parties in this House actually support the bill. It is a non-controversial piece of legislation. Had the Conservatives not played this game, we would have probably even seen the bill pass today, from my understanding.

It is a real shame that the Conservative Party is putting party politics over the best interests of good, sound public policy. Sadly, it is not the first time, because one of the greatest frustrations of the filibuster I have seen with the Conservative Party of Canada was on dealing with the Ukraine-Canada trade agreement, and maybe I will get some more time to expand on that point soon.

• (1730)

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are here to talk about report that was done a long time ago. Little time was given to prepare to talk about it in the House today. Unfortunately, this report was mishandled on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. Let me explain.

We called witnesses and they were only able to give their opening remarks. After that, the committee was interrupted and we had

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to leave the room to vote. In the end, the witnesses got nowhere and left without hearing a single question or making a single comment.

Luckily, we were able to ask some of the questions at the next meeting, but suffice it to say that the subject was not a popular one. So that surprises me. I am very happy to see the Conservatives so interested in the green transition and in going green that they are now bringing back a report that they themselves mishandled.

First, let us talk about the purpose of this audit. The commissioner of the environment and sustainable development was trying to establish whether the government had taken the necessary steps to meet six targets laid out in the greening government strategy. This audit therefore focused on the Treasury Board, the Department of National Defence and the Department of Transport in terms of efforts made.

The main findings are quite damning. The government simply has not put in the resources needed to achieve its targets. That is nothing new; we say it fairly often. It came as no surprise to committee members.

Another important finding is that the departments of transport and national defence have no risk management strategy. That is pretty disturbing in the 21st century. Even companies are starting to adopt a number of risk management strategies, particularly for climate risks. When we talk about climate risks, we are talking about risks that are systemic and physical. Of course, there are potential floods and risks that can completely change operations, in other words, operational risks. There are also reputational risks. There are a multitude of risks associated with climate change. Most companies are already in the process of identifying them, because they know that climate change is happening now and it will have an impact on the economy. However, government departments, which are supposed to be at the forefront, have no risk management strategy. That is a pretty scathing observation.

The next observation is that Treasury Board simply lacked the necessary data to determine whether it was going to meet its targets. Not only was it unlikely to meet them based on the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development's observations and audit, but Treasury Board had also failed to collect the necessary data. Obviously, the first step is to collect the data and then to organize, analyze and use them. This means there is no data and no analysis. Good luck advancing a strategy that way.

Furthermore, Crown corporation GHG emissions were not accounted for. I know that this topic was raised by a colleague who I am pleased to sit with on the committee. Still, the fact that Crown corporations were left out of the government's GHG tally, when they account for a large part of government, is a big problem.

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Let me give a brief reminder about Crown corporations. We are talking about organizations that are responsible for implementing the government's public policies. They receive large sums of money and spend it as they see fit, without being accountable to the government or the public in the same way that government departments are required to be.

The government's new strategy is simple: spend as much money as it can in the form of tax credits or funds allocated to Crown corporations that they themselves manage. It is very simple, and no one will know where taxpayers' money is going. No one will know whether Crown corporations are participating in the greening government strategy or whether they are really trying to come up with a strategy to make a green transition. There is no way to track what Crown corporations are doing. Let us just say that it is very useful for the government.

At one of the first committee meetings, we heard from PSP Investments.

• (1735)

It is important to point out that this is the federal Crown corporation that manages the pension fund. In the fall of 2021, it was described as lagging behind other pension funds in terms of its sustainable development strategy. It was very difficult for parliamentarians and even for my team to get access to the actual dollar amounts for workers' pension funds. It was very hard to determine how much money was sent to oil companies in western Canada, for example, because the fossil fuel energy category was folded into the broader energy category. I think that we can all agree that investing in wind energy and investing in oil are two very different things. How are we supposed to know whether the Crown corporations are doing the right thing? At this juncture, it is basically impossible because of their lack of transparency. That is another point that was rightly raised by the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development.

The last point might make some people smile and others cry, unfortunately. The reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that were reported during the pandemic are purely a result of the pandemic. They had absolutely nothing to do with the government's strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That was a great finding by the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development.

The Conservatives are bringing up a report that, for whatever reason, they did not seem so interested in when we were in committee, but they absolutely want to debate it in the House now, more than a year later. How odd. I notice that they are bringing it up at a time when we are hearing a lot of noise about the carbon tax.

If I may, I will put on my teacher hat and give a little lesson on what is happening in Quebec in terms of fighting climate change and how it is using economic tools to fight climate change.

Quebec has a cap-and-trade system.

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Quebec, the Government of Quebec applies a price per tonne of carbon emitted.

I wonder if people are following what I am saying. I am looking at a certain bench in particular to see if they are following me. I have uttered only one sentence.

Quebec's chosen strategy, which was initially implemented in 2013 and then expanded to include distributors of fossil fuel products in 2015, is a carbon market that applies to [Quebec's] major emitters. Moreover, it is worth bearing in mind that, in Quebec, road transportation has been the main source of rising greenhouse gas emissions since [then].

Instead of imposing a fixed price for each tonne of carbon emitted, the Quebec government imposes a total emissions cap and lets emitters divvy up shares of that cap among themselves.

That is why it is called a cap-and-trade system, because instead of putting a price directly on each tonne of carbon emitted, there is a quota. It is regulated by quantity, and then the market itself determines what price companies should pay per tonne of carbon.

Under this system, the government grants a certain number greenhouse gas emission allowances equal to the total amount of emissions it wants on its territory for a given period and auctions them off. The emitting businesses then have to compete to obtain allowances if their activities produce carbon. All things being equal, as the number of emission allowances goes down, based on the emissions reduction target set by the jurisdiction, their price goes up.

Among the emitters, every business distributing more than 200 litres of fuel and fossil fuels a year, or emitting more than 25,000 tonnes of CO₂, has to have emission allowances. Refineries in Quebec are also subject to the cap-and-trade system, not only for their refining activities, but also for their activities as wholesalers and distributors. However, for their refining activities, they get free allowances distributed by the Government of Quebec that cover 95% of the emissions produced, a ratio that should gradually go down.

I want to mention that in my role as a professor, I received a lot of help from the research chair on taxation and public finance, who is doing a great job working to educate the public on the effects of the cap-and-trade system.

• (1740)

I hope this topic will be spoken of in the House in a more logical and realistic way from now on.

To continue:

The purchase of emission allowances increases the cost of distributing fuel and is reflected in the price at the pump (affecting the price before tax). Consequently, although [cap-and-trade] levies are not directly reflected in the price of gas paid by the end purchaser, they are nonetheless paid by the end purchaser.

I think this is an important point. The consumer picks up part of the tab. That should be of interest to the people here. Consumers end up paying a small share. I will be getting to that soon. I know that everyone is waiting to find out how much the consumer pays for the cap-and-trade system in Quebec.

Here is the answer: "Therefore...since 2015, the effect of the [cap-and-trade system] on the price of a litre of gas has increased from approximately 4¢ in 2015 to nearly 9¢ in 2023". We therefore know the impact of the cap-and-trade system on prices at the pump in Quebec.

However, experts with the Université de Sherbrooke research chair on taxation and public finance noted that:

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...a portion of the tax revenue goes toward maintaining and developing the road network. In the context of fighting climate change, these fuel taxes can also be viewed as a disincentive to use this greenhouse gas-emitting product. After carefully examining the taxes levied on fuel, the authors [of the report that I am quoting] found that, in Quebec, these taxes have had a limited effect on the recent fluctuations in the price at the pump...

However, fuel is subject to other taxes, such as the GST, the QST and the excise tax. All of those taxes were considered together with the cap-and-trade system. Once all of these levies were put together, the authors found that they “have had a limited effect on the recent fluctuations in the price at the pump and that their level in constant dollars has remained stable over the past 10 years, whereas their weight in the economy is dropping and they remain relatively low in comparison to the taxes being charged elsewhere in the world”.

That is how Quebec used existing economic tools to fight climate change. The Conservatives are saying that it has been eight horrible years where everyone in Quebec has been complaining about the extra 9¢ a litre on gas. That is not the case. People have not been complaining that much. On the contrary, Quebec has accepted that it must take responsibility in the fight against climate change.

There is a very important example that shows just how well these measures are working. By 2015, Quebec had reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 8.8% compared to 1990 levels. It is working. Governments need to be able to introduce certain measures to combat climate change.

This should serve as another reminder to the House that Quebec often stands alone in fighting climate change. In 2014, Quebec linked its cap-and-trade system with California's. It had to go south of the border to find someone willing to open this carbon market with it, because unfortunately, people here in Canada were too focused on other issues to realize that fighting climate change was an important issue and that this type of economic tool works. Quebec linked its cap-and-trade system up with California's. Members may recall that Ontario joined the system with great fanfare, only to pull out two or three years later.

Quebec may have been ahead of the game back then, but this is not the first time I have said that in the House, nor will it be the last.

To set the record straight again, the cost of climate change is higher than the cost of fighting it.

I can give many examples of this. Several years ago, I had the opportunity to work as an economist at Ouranos and prepare a report commissioned by the Government of Quebec to determine how much climate change in Quebec would cost over the next 50 years. This fascinating report was published in 2015. We studied the costs of climate change and identified six areas where those costs would be especially high. In terms of infrastructure, there was the issue of permafrost. Rising temperatures are causing the ground to thaw, allowing greenhouse gases to escape more quickly. This is happening all over northern Quebec and, obviously, in the rest of Canada as well. Erosion is another area we identified. Climate change and rising water levels are eroding shorelines. As we know, erosion is very expensive.

● (1745)

Sometimes roads and houses have to be moved. Should a disaster hit, this can often even cause landslides.

Then there is flooding, as I mentioned. We know that with climate change, flooding will be not only more frequent but also more severe. Both the frequency and intensity of these events will increase. We know that the cost of climate change is enormous.

Another cost that we did not study at the time, but that should be studied, is the effects of climate change on forest fires. The cost of forest fires is also huge, and we in Quebec paid the price this summer. It was catastrophic. I am thinking in particular of all the forestry workers we are trying to support and the people of Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Nord-du-Québec who have suffered enormously because of these forest fires caused by climate change.

There are also health implications.

Heat waves are going to have a huge impact on health. Many seniors' residences do not even have air conditioning yet. Human lives have been lost. Unfortunately, there is a price to pay for this loss of life, because human life obviously has a value, and that value can be determined.

Then there is pollen. People tend not to think of that when they think about the economic consequences of climate change, but climate change is increasing the prevalence of allergies and reactions to pollen. Some people are highly allergic to pollen, and I am lucky not to be one of them. When these people are unable to go to work, they are obviously less productive, and that has an economic cost.

Finally, there are zoonotic diseases, diseases transmitted by animals. Rising temperatures are causing zoonotic diseases to spread in Quebec. There is West Nile virus, a virus that is transmitted by mosquitoes. As the climate changes and temperatures rise, mosquitoes are heading further and further north in Quebec and infecting more people. This has a cost. It is an extremely powerful virus, and the people who catch it become very unproductive.

Then there is Lyme disease, which is gaining a lot of ground in Quebec. If an individual who contracts this disease does not act quickly, they may have to deal with very serious consequences for many years or for the rest of their life. This disease needs to be treated quickly, but in Quebec, people may not be used to checking for symptoms of Lyme disease. When someone is bitten by a tick, they need to find out whether the tick is infected with Lyme disease, but not everyone knows that. Those are some of the economic consequences of climate change.

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I want to do a quick cost-benefit analysis of measures to combat climate change. On the one hand, there is the additional cost of 9¢ per litre, and on the other hand, there are all the costs I just mentioned, which amount to billions of dollars. I will let people draw their own conclusions. I personally think that we know how to do things in Quebec, and that, in the end, we do them well. We can always ask ourselves whether or not we want to continue working with the government. Right now, we do because we want to develop a green strategy. That said, perhaps the government should take a closer look at what Quebec is doing, because we are doing pretty well, and we are proud of that.

[English]

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I welcome the member's speech. She is passionate about the environment.

I know that the government is also committed to the environment. In response to the report, of course, it is laying road maps ahead as to how government departments can all reach the targets and what we are looking for. The member mentioned some of the aspects where the government has not necessarily reached the goals that are needed, but there were many areas that the government has made many improvements in.

I want to ask the member whether she feels there are areas, in construction and procurement that the government is doing, where we are doing a good job on reducing our GHG emissions.

• (1750)

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Madam Speaker, yes, I know there are areas in which the government has made progress. Still, if I may offer a sobering reminder, when we are barely over the starting line, it is easy to pat ourselves on the back and say we have made progress. However, there is still a long way to go, and the government needs to focus on what is left to be done.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, as my colleague aptly pointed out, the report in question is a little out of date, but it looks at the issue of greenhouse gases and the environment, as well as the associated costs. When we go through the documents, one interesting thing we find is that there is a supplementary report. The government's response was mentioned, but the Conservatives also make recommendations, including "That TBS provide Canadian taxpayers with clear and transparent cost projections for achieving net-zero emissions by 2050."

Is this not precisely more grandstanding from the Conservatives, something we often see, for example when they talk about the carbon tax and other things only to ultimately steer us toward the conclusion that protecting the environment is costly?

In this regard, I congratulate my colleague on her excellent speech.

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for that question. Often, we see that the Conservatives are not doing anything to help themselves or their country to make progress in the fight against climate change. There is a lot of filibustering. We see it in every committee. We see it in the

House. Unfortunately, that does not help anyone, even their constituents, in the fight against climate change.

[English]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have spent some time with the member in our Standing Committee on Public Accounts, and I quite enjoy our time there. I find ourselves often agreeing, in particular when it comes to environmental work.

When I received the report from the environment commissioner, I was quite shocked that, with the current government in particular, which touts being one of the most environmentally friendly there has ever been, we see damning reports. How would the member rate the government on environmental issues, given the auditor's responses?

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague with whom I do have the pleasure of sitting on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. We definitely tend to agree on these issues.

I will not be giving the government a grade today in the House. However, I can say that, if I did, it would not be a passing grade, since the government is not even capable of achieving its own objectives. It cannot pass a test. I will not give it a grade, but, what I do know is that it would be well below 60%, which is the passing mark.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her very clear and enlightening speech on the repercussions of climate change and the social cost of not taking care of the environment. Our Conservative friends could not care less about that, but there is a social cost. My colleague talked about what that costs a society. This social cost has even been highlighted by the International Monetary Fund, or IMF. The IMF—which is not Equiterre, Greenpeace or some far-left environmental organization—published an analysis that revealed Canada's fossil fuel subsidies reached \$38 billion U.S. in 2022. The article states the following:

The vast majority of the subsidies cited by IMF researchers, or \$36 billion U.S., comes primarily from public funds linked to our dependence on fossil fuels. These include the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions and the associated climate crisis, the consequences of air pollution (including premature deaths), and the costs of traffic congestion and road accidents.

We are talking about \$50 billion in 2022 handed over to an industry that made \$200 billion in profits that same year. The math is simply unbelievable. That amounts to \$50 billion in repercussions for Canada. I think my colleague gave a really brilliant outline of the \$50 billion. I thank her very much.

• (1755)

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for mentioning that figure, because it is really very important. It shows that, when it comes to the government, the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing.

On one hand we have a minister who is quite pleased to talk about strategy and say that it is fantastic, that the government is good and that the friends at Equiterre are happy with the government. On the other hand, \$50 billion is being sent to an extremely polluting industry that pockets exorbitant profits.

It is really problematic that there is so much hypocrisy in the government, a government that does not know how to walk and chew gum at the same time. It is disastrous. As I said in my speech, if we do nothing, the cost of inaction on climate change is very high.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am sure the member can appreciate the fact that today we are having this particular concurrence motion being discussed and the Conservative Party now and on many occasions has brought in concurrence reports, which has really prevented government legislation from being passed. Today, for example, we were supposed to be dealing with Bill S-9. I believe the Bloc is actually supporting it, as are all political parties in the House.

I am wondering if the member can provide her thoughts. Much as they would not want opposition days constantly interrupted by concurrence reports, it does have a negative impact on legislation being ultimately passed. Would the member not agree?

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Madam Speaker, I must say that I rather agree with my hon. colleague. These repeated attempts to change the agenda and talk about certain things that, for whatever reason, are of interest to them, amount to filibustering.

The Conservatives apparently got up this morning thinking that they were very keen to talk about a greening government strategy, which was studied in committee over a year ago. Those people who watch us and follow politics a bit know that this is a broad strategy to obstruct the work of Parliament.

I think it is frankly deplorable that a party that claims to be deserving of taking power is obstructing the work of Parliament, an institution that said party is supposed to want to represent. I think it is a real shame, even though it gave me an opportunity to give a lecture on environmental economics, which I am always happy to do.

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limouilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague's remarks are particularly interesting and important because they shed light on a subject that is controversial in the House but usually not very controversial among the public.

My core values often lead me to say that a coin has two sides and one edge. Still, we have to want to see both sides, if only by listening to the interpretation, to get all the information when a member speaks in Parliament.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the fact that, when we speak, people do not put on their earpiece and therefore cannot see the other side of the coin.

Routine Proceedings

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Madam Speaker, as the former leader of the Bloc Québécois likes to point out, unfortunately, Canada is all about French and simultaneous translation. It is such a shame to see that many people, especially those I was talking about in my remarks, did not listen to me, and if they did listen, they probably did not understand what I was trying to say.

It is a shame because it was an opportunity for them to learn more about environmental economics, about their carbon tax, and maybe even understand that although it does not apply in Quebec, even if it did, it would not be the end of the world.

[English]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to the concurrence motion about the audit in the public accounts committee report tabled by our Auditor General in relation to the greening government strategy.

The greening government strategy is something that, unfortunately, at committee we spent not all that much time on, and I am quite surprised today to see the Conservatives' move to speak an awful lot about it. I think it is indicative of their actions in this place. Nonetheless, I am happy to rise to speak to our findings, because it is always a good opportunity for New Democrats, particularly when Conservatives want to speak about the government's record and our country's record on climate change. It is important that we take the lessons of our past to hopefully plot a better future. Today is no exception to that, and I will be speaking about that a bit in my speech. I will speak directly to the report in just a moment so I can highlight for Canadians that in the report, which dealt largely with a strategy by the Treasury Board Secretariat to develop a greening government strategy, part of the strategy was to look at ways the government could better procure items that could reduce greenhouse emissions, as well as reduce its emissions through its systems.

With respect to that, the environment commissioner found two really troubling things. One is that the plan that was audited, the greening government strategy itself, lacked enough detail to suggest to the commissioner that it would be sufficient. The most particular, and probably the biggest, glaring concern I had with the report, as a member of the committee, was the fact that it lacked an approach to deal with key risks and making sure the strategy would achieve its ultimate goal, which is to reach net zero in its operations by 2050. If there is not enough detail to ensure that the government can get to a net-zero strategy by 2050, in addition to not understanding the risks of achieving it while simultaneously investing in these things, it is important for Canadians to have further transparency. I think that is what the Auditor General's office, by way of the environment commissioner, is calling for.

Routine Proceedings

It is important to note that the recommendations that were outlined by the environment commissioner's report spoke specifically to two departments, National Defence and Transport Canada, understandably, as both are very large ministries that procure a lot of things. Also, in our fight against climate change, we understand that cars and carbon-emitting fuels that are high in intensity, like gasoline, which are still available in markets across Canada today, are still high-polluting. It is no different with government-procured fleets that include a variety of vehicles. We heard in testimony from some of the officials at committee about a plan to try to find ways to reduce emissions by way of procurement. Knowing that those are our two largest ministries, it is going to be really important to deal with the greening government strategy in an appropriate way to see tangible outcomes, maybe even by way of providing details on how many vehicles will be replaced in x amount of time with vehicles that emit less carbon, or electric vehicles. That is a tangible recommendation that I think could be included in the greening government strategy, which right now lacks that level of detail, according to the environment commissioner.

It begs the question of how seriously the government, in its totality, is actually taking its fight against the climate crisis. We have seen, for example, the really troubling debate over the last few days and weeks on the Liberals' decision to create a "carve-out" for Atlantic Canada in relation to the carbon tax. New Democrats supported Conservatives in that, not because we disagree with climate change, which is the reason Conservatives did it, but because we understand that, when it comes to our principles with respect to taxation in this country, we must apply those things equally, and we have seen an unequal application of that. The provinces were very loud and clear on that, and we heard those things. We made the reasonable decision to ensure that we could help at a time when the cost of living is so bad. That is why New Democrats fought to put forward a motion today that we thought was reasonable and a good invitation to the Liberals and Conservatives to see whether we could make life more affordable for Canadians while also tackling climate change.

● (1800)

I thought it was a very reasonable plan. It would have had lower emissions. By making sure that programs like a free heat pump program are easily accessible and free, we would actually find homes reducing their emissions.

Conservatives always comment on how this is a bad solution because it is going to get too cold in Canada and, at the same time, they say that the solution to the climate crisis is "technology". Those two things cannot necessarily be true if heat pumps are, in fact, the leading technology in this country and one that is improving in quality, affordability and efficiency, in terms of dealing with Canadian climate.

These are true facts of these technologies that are important for Canadians to partake in and important for us to continue to invest in. They reduce our emissions while also reducing Canadians' reliance on extensive high-carbon-emitting fuels. It is a good thing for Canadians.

We wanted to ensure that we could pay for that kind of program, in addition to ensuring that we remove GST from all home heating,

including electric heating, which would save all Canadians everywhere and put money right in their pockets.

The last point of that motion was to ensure that we could actually pay for these things. It is important that, in a climate crisis context, we take into consideration the culprits of the crisis, those who have profited off those industries that are high-carbon-emitting.

They have gotten away with it in large part without having to pay their fair share, in relation to the direct impact they have had on our environment, on our lands, on our planet. It is now time that they play an incredible role and an important role in financing, so that we can see the outcomes we want to see across our country and meet our goals, both domestic and abroad, to ensure that we reduce our carbon emissions.

It is the responsible thing to do.

It was unfortunate to see the Liberals and the Conservatives join together to defeat our motion. It is unfortunate but not all that surprising. They are both parties that we have seen continuously dole out billions of dollars to oil and gas without ever having the courage to attempt to roll some of the profits back, in order to help Canadians.

We have seen other governments, for example, do this. In the United Kingdom, we have seen Conservatives bring in a windfall tax on oil and gas there. There is a Conservative government in place there. I was happy to see that they have seen the good reason and logic. They understand that when oil, as a commodity, is at the highest price it has been in a long time, it is not by chance that those oil companies have done that. The market is largely doing that due to its fluctuating nature, to ensure that parts of that windfall could be absorbed by the government in order to stabilize prices, but also to ensure that the government could finance its programs and services.

Our plan looked at using the finances from a windfall tax like that here in Canada to directly finance the solutions that would result in lower emissions, like getting free heat pumps across Canada, a leading technology in both its efficiency and affordability.

This report is evidence, clearly, of the government's lack of courage and also its lack of attention to detail in actually attempting to do the things it says. I do not discredit Canadians for that.

It is okay to be critical of a government, to call them out for important and very obviously credible things that this report highlights, including a lack of detail in a strategy dealing with the greening of the government and not understanding the risks of not achieving that plan.

When dealing with the climate crisis, we have to know those things full well and if we do not, we should endeavour to understand them.

I think that it is incumbent upon us to take this report and the tabling and the recommendations found in it to be our canary in the coal mine, to suggest that our government is not taking climate change seriously. It is time and it is important now to remedy those things with real solutions, to lower our emissions while also tackling the affordability crisis Canadians are facing right now.

We can do that if we work together. I am certain that, with the opportunity that was present earlier today, if we had worked together then, we could have made life different for so many Canadians, for the better.

• (1805)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings on the motion at this time.

[Translation]

Accordingly, the debate on the motion will be rescheduled for another sitting.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1810)

[English]

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM ACT

The House resumed from May 3 consideration of the motion that Bill C-316, An Act to amend the Department of Canadian Heritage Act (Court Challenges Program), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise to debate Bill C-316, an act to amend the Department of Canadian Heritage Act, regarding the Court Challenges Program.

You will recall, Madam Speaker, that I actually began this speech on Wednesday, May 3. I am sure that all members have been patiently waiting these last six months to hear the conclusion of my comments on this bill.

I last spoke about the Conservative legacy when it comes to human rights, particularly that of the late, great John George Diefenbaker. He was a one-man court challenges program. Indeed, it was John Diefenbaker who said, at the beginning of the debate on the Canadian Bill of Rights in 1960:

Here for the first time this bulwark of freedom will be embodied in a declaration by parliament that is in existence and cannot be violated. Furthermore, if any of these several rights should be violated under legislation now existing in the courts in interpreting the particular laws or statutes which have been passed will hereafter ... be required to interpret those statutes of today in the light of the fact that wherever there is a violation of any of these declarations or freedoms the statute in question is to that extent non-operative and was never intended to be so operative.

The bill at hand, as has been mentioned, would require that the minister's power include that of the Court Challenges Program. In fact, this is already within the powers of the minister. This program has been in existence since 1978, in different forms and fashions.

Furthermore, the provisions for how the minister can fund the Court Challenges Program already exist in the same statute, at section 7.1. It further talks about requiring a report. As members

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would know, reports are already presented by the Minister of Canadian Heritage; the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages; the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities; the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth; and the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity. They provide annual reports through the departmental results report, departmental plans and departmental evaluation plan.

We must look at the record of the Liberal government when it comes to the rights of Canadians. Let us start with language rights. Members would recall, and I was on the official languages committee at the time, when the Liberal government tried to appoint Madeleine Meilleur as the official languages commissioner. She was a former Liberal cabinet minister who also donated to the Prime Minister's campaign.

I was also on the Canadian heritage committee at a time when it was revealed that the department gave \$133,000 to a well-known anti-Semite with a long history of directing hate towards Jewish people. The government did this through an anti-racism action program.

[Translation]

We recently learned that Radio-Canada used a Paris-based recording studio, rather than a Quebec-based studio, to record a podcast in order to avoid the Quebec accent.

[English]

That is indeed shameful. We should be proud of the language of Quebec and the accent that we hear from our Quebec colleagues across the country. We should be protecting that indeed.

As I wrap up my speech, I wish to say how proud I am as a Conservative to stand on the human rights record that all Conservatives have stood on from the time of John Diefenbaker to the present day. I am very proud of that legacy.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for pointing out, at the end of his speech, an unacceptable thing that happened. I am talking about a situation where Radio-Canada used a Paris-based company to record a podcast because people in France do not like the Quebec accent. That is very important.

The Quebec accent is what makes us who we are in Quebec. The Quebec accent developed through 400 years of living in this country of ice, snow, forests, cold, fall, summer and heat. It developed through contact with the indigenous peoples, who were here before we arrived, and through contact with the English, who defeated us in 1759. Since that time, we have been intermingling with all the people who have come here over the past 100 years. They came from all over, and we have been enriched by that. It has made us who we are in Quebec right now. That is what makes our language unique, and that is what enriches our way of speaking and our culture, which we are bringing to the rest of the world.

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We no longer have to talk about how Quebec is representing itself on the international stage. Denis Villeneuve is at the Oscars almost every year. He was not born in Ontario. He was born in Quebec. Xavier Dolan is at Cannes almost every year. He was not born in British Columbia. He was born in Quebec.

We often hear about Canadian culture outside Canada, and 90% of the time people are talking about Quebec culture. Robert Lepage directs plays all over the world, in Paris, Brussels and Tokyo. He was not born in Manitoba; he was born in Quebec. Cirque du Soleil was not created in Ontario; it came from Quebec. If Canadian culture is talked about internationally, it is thanks to Quebec. People should be on their knees in gratitude. If Canada is talked about around the world, it is because Quebecers have risen to the top.

I am a bit obsessed with this issue. This is somewhat due to a certain constraint, this particular relationship that we have, because for the past 200 years, we have often been told that we are an insignificant people and we should resign ourselves to a life of poverty. We have developed a kind of "System D" in all areas, whether economic or cultural. This constant confrontation, this dominant-dominated relationship, drives us to stand out as fighters. We are doing it now, we have done it in the past and we will continue to do so in the future. People should buckle up and get ready for a bumpy ride, because when Quebec becomes independent, we will be winning Oscars in Los Angeles and Palmes d'Or in Cannes in our own name. We will win Goncourt Prizes in our own name. The award will not say "Canada"; it will say "Québec".

The rest of Canada will be happy anyway, because it will have participated to some extent. It will be time to say bye-bye when we are in Hollywood or Cannes or on other major international stages. We will say hello to the gang back in Canada, but Quebec will win the Oscar.

That was my first argument on culture. My colleague started me off on that. Obviously, I had no intention of talking about it. I never want to talk about Quebec. I never want to talk about Quebec's language or culture. I never go there at all. It is not a subject that interests me in the least. I never want to talk about that when the opportunity arises. My Conservative Party colleague started me off on the subject. He passed me the puck. It was too easy and I felt like talking about it.

This has a connection with what we are talking about now: Bill C-316, on the court challenges program. The court challenges program is exhausting, it must be said. It directly concerns language and our ability to protect our language and culture in this country.

The court challenges program was launched in 1978. The timing is no coincidence, because the Parti Québécois and René Lévesque, a major Quebec figure, came to power in 1976. The timing is no accident. In 1977, the Lévesque government introduced one of its first and most important bills. I want to talk about this because it is important.

• (1815)

I would say that, of all the laws that could have been created in Quebec or even in Canada, this is a big one. It is a meaningful, masterful law that changed the course of history. It is really not ev-

ery day that the course of history is changed through the creation of laws, but that is what happened in 1977. There is a reason why the father of Bill 101 is Camille Laurin, a psychoanalyst and psychiatrist. He knew that we needed to make a strong and powerful mark when it comes to the relationship that we have with ourselves.

That is what we did with Bill 101. What was the crux of Bill 101? It stipulated that, from that point on, there would be only one official language in Quebec, and that was French. We would have only one national language, and that was French. From that point on, we would speak French in our courts, schools, stores and restaurants. Public signage would be in French. Everything in Quebec would be done entirely in our language. That way we would no longer be afraid to be who we are. We were going to make a powerful statement. From that point on, things were going to change.

I would like to remind the House of an important fact. Before 1977, 90% of immigrants who settled in Quebec went to English schools. The children went to elementary school, secondary school, CEGEP and university in English and then they worked in English. Everything was happening in English. The school system itself was anglicizing Quebec. We were anglicizing ourselves, and we were paying for that.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: We are still paying.

Mr. Denis Trudel: Yes, Madam Speaker, we are still paying.

In order for French to survive, we need something fundamental that was set out in Bill 101. It set out that, from then on, people who arrived in Quebec—people we need and who enrich Quebec with all of their cultures, colours and flavours—would have one thing in common, and that was the French language. That is the fundamental element that was set out in Bill 101. It changed everything about the relationship that we have with ourselves and our relationship with history. That bill was implemented by the first Lévesque government in 1977.

In 1978, the court challenges program was established. This allowed Quebec anglophones to use federal government money to challenge this key legislation, this fundamental law. Groups of Quebec anglophones were encouraged to challenge this fundamental law using our taxes. Language of signage has often been challenged, particularly after the Charter in 1982. Let us not forget that Bill 101 clearly established that, from that point on, commercial signage in Quebec was to be entirely in French. That was overturned. A hundred or so amendments have been made since 1982, largely through the court challenges program.

Even back then, there was no accountability in this program. Decisions could be made by cabinet. In the evening, behind closed doors, money could be sent to groups in Quebec without telling anyone, without disclosing the amount, without saying what causes would be defended with these funds, which was our money. These were discretionary funds sent to Quebec's English-speaking community to beat back one of the most fundamental and important laws Quebec has ever signed. That is really something. That is what the court challenges program is all about.

Today, the government wants to enshrine it in law. We are not fundamentally opposed to that, because it is important for francophones outside Quebec, and they are our brothers. If the Official Languages Act of this country says that there are really two official languages, then francophones in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and St. John's, Newfoundland must have the same kinds of rights as anglophones in Quebec, something they would dare not dream of.

• (1820)

When push comes to shove, we will probably support this bill. However, we want it to be sent to committee because we intend to propose some major amendments. My friend, the member for La Pointe-de-l'Île, will be there, in committee, to fight for the Bloc Québécois's amendments.

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of Bill C-316 at second reading. This is a bill that would amend the Department of Canadian Heritage Act to require the minister of heritage to maintain the court challenges program. In other words, it would simply take an existing program and entrench it in legislation.

Why do we have to have something to entrench an existing program in legislation? It is because the Conservatives, twice before, have eliminated the court challenges program. I do not necessarily believe there will be a future Conservative government, but the fear is that a future government would be able, in the absence of this legislation, to simply eliminate this program without coming back to Parliament. Therefore, this is an important change.

As always, the Liberals have done the minimum here. There are some other things we could have done to support the court challenges program. As a Parliament, we could expand its mandate because, right now, it is severely limited to only minority language rights and equality rights under section 15. There have been many calls from the legal community to expand the mandate of this program so it could apply to other cases where, frankly, the government has not taken leadership in protecting rights but where people lack the resources to bring these cases themselves. Court challenges can take years. They can cost literally hundreds of thousands of dollars.

What this program does is level the legal playing field for those who want to defend their rights against the government or against abuse by others in Canadian society. This program has been in existence, off and on, for 30 years, but it has played a very important role in helping defend women's rights, indigenous rights and the rights of other marginalized Canadians, so it is important that we make sure this program endures.

The program was created in 1978 on the issue of minority language rights. When the Charter was adopted, it was expanded just a tiny bit to add equality rights. The program was cancelled by the Conservatives in 1992 before being brought back by the Liberals in 1994, only to be cut again by the Conservatives in 2006. Then we had a big gap. In 2015, both the Liberals and the New Democrats campaigned to restore the program. The justice committee, in 2017, recommended not only that this be entrenched in law, but also that the mandate be expanded. That part is missing from this bill, but in 2018, the program was restarted.

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Let me give some examples of kinds of things this program has done. It financed the case that resulted in ending discrimination related to access to what we used to call "maternity benefits" under what was then the UI act. It helped establish what is now known as the rape shield law, which prevents the accused from using the sexual history of a sexual assault complainant as a defence.

The program funded the cases that resulted in restricting access to victims' personal records, such as counselling records, in sexual assault cases. Again, this ruling would not have happened otherwise because women who have been the victims of sexual assault do not have the resources to bring forward this kind of case and fight it through court. Therefore, the Women's Legal Education & Action Fund, LEAF, applied to the program and received funding, which resulted in this very important decision.

One more example is that sex-based discrimination under the Employment Insurance Act for part-time employees who are women was ended as a result of the case. Again, it was brought by LEAF with funding from the court challenges program. We have a very strong history of defence of women's rights.

There are a couple more cases I could provide, but a favourite of mine, as a gay man, is *Egan v. Canada* in 1995, where two gay men who had been in an intimate relationship for 30 years were denied old age security benefits because they did not fit the definition of a spouse. There was a case, this time by the Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto, taken to court to say that this was unfair because they had been a couple and Egan had paid into these benefits, including to old age security, Canada pension and things like that. This established equal spousal rights in the time before equal marriage.

In one last case, *Daniels v. Canada* in 2016, it was established that the status of Métis and non-status Indians under the Indian Act were protected. This was brought by the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, who, again, did not have great resources to spend literally hundreds of thousands of dollars on lawyers.

What is really clear is that there is broad support in the legal community for this program, including and especially in the advocacy of the Canadian Bar Association. There are certain precedents, as I mentioned, about the mandate not being broad enough. Cindy Blackstock and certain disability advocates have demonstrated why we need to expand that mandate so that cases of people with disabilities and of aboriginal women could more easily get into court.

Private Members' Business

• (1825)

I am going to take a minute to talk about recent events, which I think point to upcoming challenges to the rights of the 2SLGBTQI+ community and particularly to those of transgender and gender-diverse Canadians, who are among the most marginalized Canadians and those with the fewest resources.

Hate crimes against what I like to call the queer community, in reclaiming language, are up. They are up shockingly high. The official figures of those reported to the police show a 64% increase in one year in hate crimes directed against the community. Hate crime data from the police does not actually separate out crimes against trans folks, but a sampling that has been done by academics found that, first of all, hate crimes against the queer community, and particularly the trans community, are more likely to be violent. In the case of gender-diverse people, 80% of hate crimes involve violence. This is where government policies, particularly of certain provincial governments, are fuelling the hate, which has direct results of violence in the community.

I want to talk about the anti-trans school policies in Saskatchewan and New Brunswick for just a minute, because I think the trans and gender-diverse communities are going to want to make sure there is a court challenge to these policies. Without a program like the court challenges program, this would not happen. In August, Saskatchewan announced policy changes requiring parental consent for trans students under the age of 16 to be called by their chosen name and pronoun at school. We do not ask parents whether “William” can be “Billy”, but somehow when it comes to trans kids and their identity, we are creating in Saskatchewan a special bar to using names and pronouns that reinforce the student's identity. The policy was quickly challenged by the University of Regina's pride centre. After a hearing, an injunction was granted that paused the implementation of the policy. The same day, Premier Scott Moe announced he would invoke the notwithstanding clause, and he called an emergency session of the Saskatchewan legislature to enact Bill 137, which amends the education act and includes the notwithstanding clause.

A government used what was really the nuclear option in law to take away rights from kids. It falls into the category of what I would call the spillover of American rhetoric into Canadian politics. It talks about parental rights instead of what we have in Canadian law of parental responsibilities and children's rights. Parents have a responsibility to nurture their kids and to affirm their kids. We know that school peers who use their chosen name and pronouns experienced 71% fewer signs of severe depression, a 34% decrease in reported thoughts of suicide and a 65% decrease in suicide attempts. Therefore, this is a policy that causes great harm. The government could do more to provide leadership in fighting this rising tide of hate, in particular by implementing the 29 recommendations in the white paper on trans rights tabled last June. In fact, e-petition 4666 went up today, asking it to do just that.

In conclusion, New Democrats support Bill C-316, even though we would like to see more from the government to support the court challenges program. It is still important to entrench the program in law in order to make it harder for any future government to eliminate the program. As I said, the court challenges program could use an expanded mandate to be able to fund cases beyond mi-

nority language rights and section 15. The program could use increased funding to ensure that it can fulfill its purpose in levelling the playing field on rights in the courts, so that not just those who are already rich and privileged can defend their rights and seek fairness in the courts. Even in the absence of these further improvements, we hope to see expeditious passage of the bill through all its remaining stages.

• (1830)

Mr. Paul Chiang (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today on a matter of great importance touching on the fundamental rights and freedoms of all people in Canada. I speak of the court challenges program and the legislation before us, Bill C-316, an act to amend the Department of Canadian Heritage Act.

Since its creation in 1978, the court challenges program has come to be seen as a unique feature of our constitutional democracy, helping people in Canada to bring forward legal cases when they believe their most cherished rights have been infringed upon, regardless of their means. It enables individuals and organizations to challenge laws and policies that run counter to Canada's fundamental rights and freedoms. It is a true testament to our country's unwavering commitment to justice, equality and social inclusion.

The modernized court challenges program, reinstated in 2017, has been instrumental in ensuring unfettered access to justice and equality for every Canadian. Over the years, it has funded hundreds of challenges of national interest, adapting to the evolving needs of our society by helping to articulate a broader range of civil and social rights. This progression is crucial as our society continues to evolve and embrace a more diverse and inclusive perspective.

In sustaining and protecting this program further through Bill C-316, we would be solidifying its proven effectiveness in safeguarding rights and promoting equality before the law. This legislative initiative aims to complement the important reforms enacted by the modernization of the Official Languages Act through Bill C-13, which received royal assent on June 20, 2023. Bill C-13 acknowledges the important role of the court challenges program by incorporating its official language rights component into the Official Languages Act and its human rights component into the Department of Canadian Heritage Act, thereby underscoring the government's unwavering commitment to this iconic program.

The court challenges program plays an indispensable role in supporting official language minority communities in all regions of the country. By challenging laws and policies that could erode their linguistic rights, it helps preserve the vitality of these communities while ensuring that linguistic duality and diversity remain a proud part of Canada's social and cultural fabric. Furthermore, this program has consistently been at the forefront of protecting the human rights of all people in Canada. It has empowered vulnerable and marginalized communities, has helped defend minority rights and has consistently helped advance the principles of justice and equity.

One such example is the funding granted by the court challenges program in 2019 and 2020 for an intervention in a class-action lawsuit on the issue of the forced sterilization of indigenous women. This intervention seeks to ensure health equity for indigenous women and to address systemic discrimination against indigenous people, while providing a national perspective on behalf of affected indigenous women and girls. Thanks to the program's funding, the issues of gender equity, rights recognition and reconciliation will be deliberated in court through a more inclusive approach to participation in the proceedings.

The program's annual reports reads like a catalogue of the defining social and civil rights issues of our times. Its essential role in helping to advance our democratic principles and ensure that our rights framework reflects the evolution of Canadian society has been amply demonstrated. Through the deliberate and purposeful act of enshrining this program in law by means of Bill C-316, as a strong complement to what has been achieved in Bill C-13, we are affirming our commitment to its long-term viability and are recognizing its proven effectiveness in asserting, clarifying and protecting the rights and freedoms of all people in Canada.

• (1835)

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

Before I begin, I want to pass on my condolences and recognize the life of Eugene Dery from my riding. He leaves behind a son, who is approximately 20 years old, Dax, and his wife Kim Galloway, whom I met through my sister. I grew up knowing them and have known them throughout the years. I extend my deepest condolences to the family. May perpetual light shine upon him.

On a more positive note, I want to recognize Ethan Katzberg from my riding. Mr. Katzberg took home gold in the hammer throw. Good for him. We are obviously very proud of him. He is the one to beat, following in the line of Dylan Armstrong. We look forward to seeing Ethan at the Olympics doing his best to represent not only Canada but also Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

We are here today to discuss Bill C-316, an act to amend the court challenges program. This is an interesting act when we think about it. In my research to prepare for my speech, I saw that the court challenges program has existed for a great deal of time. I knew that it existed, but I was not sure exactly how it had operated in the past.

One of the things that struck me is that this bill would enshrine the court challenges program into law. I know that my colleague

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from Lethbridge did an excellent job in her speech on this issue, but I will be addressing some of the points she made and perhaps some of the points that the sponsor of the bill made. I have some concerns.

The reality is that with this legislation, in my respectful view, we would be legislating an undermining of Parliament in a certain way. Parliament passes laws and the courts interpret them; there is no issue there, and frequently the courts will engage in a dialogue. I raised this with Justice Moreau of the Supreme Court of Canada, although I am not sure if she has been sworn in. She is the chief justice for Alberta for the time being if she has not been.

I asked her about the dialogue between Parliament and the courts. Parliament speaks through its legislation, the courts interpret the law and then Parliament speaks again if it needs to. This bill would essentially fund people to go to court to, in my view, look at ways that Parliament got it wrong. That is not to say the courts need any help. Frequently, the courts strike down legislation passed by Parliament, or they uphold it as constitutional, but those things happen irrespective of a third party like this.

From what I can see, this program costs \$5 million at this time. It could be substantially more. By my estimation, about 30% of that alone is bureaucratic costs. We have been talking a lot about heating oil and things like that. How many heat pumps is the government going to buy for people? How many heat pumps would \$5 million buy? Sometimes we lose sight of the fact that we often talk here in the billions of dollars.

A senior contacted my office not long ago saying they had to choose between putting food on the table and buying shoes. To them, \$5 million sounds like a lot of money. I know it certainly was when my family came from Italy. They did not really have two pennies to rub together. Sometimes we lose sight of this.

Not only that, we would create a bureaucratic entity beyond asking people to challenge our laws. There is no issue with the idea that people disagree with what Parliament passes. It happens all the time. That is why the courts will make various decisions. However, this is done routinely when somebody brings an action to the court.

I am going to underscore as well that when we pass legislation here, it goes through second reading debate. Sometimes bills pass with unanimous consent, but very rarely will a significant bill pass that way. I think I have seen it twice so far.

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● (1840)

Bills go through second reading debate and then go to committee. Who do we hear from at committee? We hear from witnesses. On the justice file, who are those witnesses? Invariably, they are lawyers, experts who will tell us what is wrong with the bill: "Your bill has this constitutional frailty in this spot and this spot." Then someone else will come in and say, "Yes, I agree, but I don't think the frailty is here and here, I think it might be over here." What do we do? We take that and go back, potentially through an amendment. At third reading, we have more debate, and then it goes to the Senate. What happens at the Senate? There is more debate. Then, eventually, we will have royal assent after it has gone through the machinations in the Senate and then it goes to the courts. There is this idea that Parliament does not have ample opportunity to get it right and to hear from the very lawyers who will be making these courts challenges.

However, these challenges are made supplementary to the actual challenge. What I mean by that is, for example, somebody who believes that they are aggrieved by the statute on charter grounds will say, "This offends my section 7 right to life, liberty and security of person", and they will challenge the law on constitutional grounds. Frequently, I presume, this program will fund somebody to intervene. Well, somebody is already making that challenge in a lot of instances from what I can see, and so I question the efficacy of that.

The other issue I have is that this issue is run through a university. I used to teach at Thompson Rivers University and I will give a shout-out to them, but this is done through the University of Ottawa. Now, we will obviously have in a university faculty, particularly one like law, divides. Some people are going to have one view of the law and some people will have another view of the law. In here, we have Liberals, Conservatives, New Democrats, Greens and the Bloc. They are going to have different perspectives on how the world works, which is fine; actually, it is more than fine, it is central to a thriving democracy. However, the people who administer this program are going to be, through their perspective, deciding who gets these programs. Invariably, there will be winners and losers, and it does not seem to me that we know exactly how that is going to be administered, especially when it is being administered right now through a third party. That, in my view, does raise some issues.

The importance of people who are writing academically cannot be underscored. It is, in my view, central to anybody who is a professor, particularly a professor of law or political science. We do frequently receive feedback. We, as members of Parliament, are expected to take feedback on our laws. In my view, that is the correct mechanism by which we should be addressing these laws and not funding people who would not otherwise be in court on a matter of their own in doing so.

One of the issues that we have seen about this dialogue is that, in my view, this Liberal government has not necessarily acted well on that dialogue. For example, Bill S-12, the issue of the sex offence registry, was taken literally right down to the last day. It is how the courts work. The courts act and Parliament reacts. Parliament legislates, the courts interpret and it is up to Parliament to react. It took us literally months. We could not actually get this right. That is how things are supposed to be working. We can also look at this when it

comes to that extreme intoxication case that we had to legislate on very quickly. However, sometimes, and this is one failing of the Liberal government of many on the justice bill, this Liberal government does not always react.

If we want to look at places where we should be devoting our resources, the courts have said that it is unconstitutional to have back-to-back first degree murder convictions and for parole ineligibility to be served consecutively.

I am out of time and so I will wrap it up there.

● (1845)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, to put the court challenges program into context, I will start by providing a bit of history of the linguistic dynamic in Canada and Quebec because a people unaware of its history is like an individual having amnesia. We become easily manipulated. If we do not know our history, if we have amnesia and we are cheated, we can be cheated again. We never remember what happened.

There are politicians who exploit that. For example, Jean Chrétien said that it was thanks to Canada that we still speak French. In reality, from the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which turned New France into the Province of Quebec, to the British North America Act, 1867, and a good part of the 20th century, the British and Canadian governments have openly used military repression, anglophone immigration, bans on French schools and various other assimilation measures to make francophones the minority; they went from 99% to 29% in 1951. Since then, the numbers have dropped both outside Quebec and more recently in Quebec. It is very worrisome.

There were language laws everywhere, in all the predominantly English-speaking provinces today, that completely banned French-language schools and even teaching French in schools. In Quebec, access to French-language schools was limited in regions like Pontiac. French-language schools and colleges were underfunded, as were French-language health care facilities. Even in Quebec, francophones truly experienced economic discrimination.

In the 1960s, André Laurendeau, a French-Canadian nationalist and federalist who wrote editorials in *Le Devoir*, wrote a column saying that the crumbs given to francophones were enough; what they had been given at the time were bilingual stamps and cheques, things like that. He proposed that a commission of inquiry be formed, and Lester B. Pearson did just that. The Laurendeau-Dunton commission made a powerful observation of the inequality between francophones and anglophones, even in Quebec. For example, out of 14 linguistic groups in Quebec, the average income of francophones ranked 12th.

In the meantime, André Laurendeau passed away. Pierre Elliott Trudeau took over from Lester B. Pearson as Prime Minister. André Laurendeau had championed a territorial model similar to Switzerland or Belgium because he felt that, as the home of Canada's francophone community, the number one priority was granting special status to and strengthening French in Quebec. Instead of granting special status to Quebec, Pierre Elliott Trudeau joined forces with proponents of English in Quebec. He decided that the federal language law, rather than protecting French in Quebec, was intended to support and protect linguistic minorities by province. As luck would have it, in Quebec, it was English that was to be protected and the English-speaking community promoted.

This supposed equivalency or symmetry between anglophones in Quebec and francophone and Acadian communities was absurd from the start. As we have seen, anglophones were already part of the dominant Canadian majority in Quebec up to that point. Anglophones in Quebec are part of the Canadian majority that controls the federal government with its paramount legislative power and its spending power in areas within Quebec's jurisdiction. We saw that, for example, with the 1982 Constitution, which weakened the Charter of the French Language even though education was supposed to be under provincial jurisdiction. The 1982 Constitution was imposed against the wishes of the Government of Quebec. No government of Quebec has ever signed the 1982 Constitution. Even the UN Human Rights Committee ruled that Quebec anglophones, as part of Canada's majority, cannot invoke minority rights.

● (1855)

It even added that a majority in a province could invoke minority rights if it was a minority in the country. The government of the Canadian majority decided to support its language in Quebec. The Official Languages Act has been funding English in Quebec almost exclusively ever since. We often hear the Prime Minister say that his party protects minorities in Canada. As far as I know, Quebec is not a majority in Canada. Quebecers are a linguistic minority, a minority nation that is not protected by Canada. The court challenges program is the perfect example of that.

The court challenges program appeared in 1978. Coincidentally, Bill 101, the Charter of the French Language, was established in 1977. René Lévesque wanted to make French the only official language of the state of Quebec, the common language of Quebec society. It is in that context that Ottawa brought in its court challenges program. At first it even considered using its power of disallowance to invalidate Robert Bourassa's Bill 22 and then the Charter of the French Language. After the election of the Parti Québécois, Pierre Elliott Trudeau thought this option would cause a legitimacy crisis that would benefit the Lévesque government. He was cunning and dismantled Bill 101 while avoiding creating a direct confrontation between the two levels of government. Rather than have this direct confrontation with Quebec, the federal government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau instead funded, structured and supported anglophone lobby groups in Quebec. Then he paid their legal fees to challenge the Charter of the French Language using the court challenges program.

Between 1978 and 1985, the court challenges program did not produce annual reports. Of the six bills that were challenged, four had to do with the Charter of the French Language in Quebec.

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Right from the beginning, we have seen that it was the official character of French, the fact that it is the language of justice, that was struck down. So it has continued and, as a result, today the Charter of the French Language has been weakened in all areas of application.

The Government of Quebec recently tried to partially strengthen this legislation. Now the government is announcing that it is going to double the court challenges program. I think it is obvious that this will be used to challenge Bill 101. The sad thing is that there have been problems from the outset. The government was clearly in a conflict of interest. The same officials approved funding for legal proceedings and worked for the Attorney General of Canada, who was often an intervenor in those proceedings. Between 1982 and 1985, Ottawa was aware of the alleged conflicts of interest and tried to create an advisory committee. Brian Mulroney then gradually added equality rights, the promotion of multiculturalism and gender equality to the language rights that could be promoted by the court challenges program. Administration of the program was entrusted to the Canadian Council on Social Development.

● (1855)

In closing, we support the bill, but it needs to be improved. The bill needs to be transparent. The first bill talked about publishing a list of supported cases. Now it talks about an overview. We will be proposing amendments—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Unfortunately, I must interrupt the hon. member. His time is up.

[English]

The hon. member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam has his right of reply.

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to start by thanking everyone who has participated in this debate. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is critically important to the good of our democracy and of our country.

It exists to ensure that the rights and freedoms of minorities are respected and protected in our laws and by our governments. However, it is not and cannot be merely a static document. We must be able to call upon it at need, to weigh and measure the laws that we enact in this place, to ensure that these laws and government actions do, in fact, respect and protect those rights and freedoms.

Doing so cannot be the sole purview of those who are financially well off and who can personally afford to engage the legal process. There must also be recourse for ordinary people to challenge laws that they believe are unjust or that unreasonably infringe upon their rights and freedoms, to test those laws against the fundamentals of the charter. That is the court challenges program.

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The court challenges program, however, has been on and off again over the years, and this is problematic. The purpose of this bill, Bill C-316, is to provide an enduring mechanism wired into legislation, administered by arm's-length, independent experts, to support the examination of nonfrivolous, nonvexatious questions that are significant to the public good. This will enable these important questions to be brought forward, irrespective of the financial means of the proponents, to be answered properly in a court of law.

In doing so, we strengthen the charter itself and bolster this critical foundation of our democracy. I urge all members to support this bill. Let us get it to committee.

• (1900)

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

[Translation]

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

[English]

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, November 22, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I am back again tonight, this being my last opportunity to continue pressing on the need to extend a critical loan deadline for small businesses before we expect the fall economic statement later this month.

Here is what has brought us to this point. In the pandemic, small businesses did what we asked of them by closing their doors to slow the spread of COVID-19. The federal government then rolled out a really important program to help them, the Canada emergency business account loans, or CEBA loans for short. These were interest-free loans of up to \$40,000 for small businesses and non-profits. It was later increased to \$60,000.

The most important part though is that up to 33% of the loan was forgivable, meaning it was a grant, if the small business paid the rest back by December 31 of this year.

Here is what small businesses in my community had to say about how critical the program was. Graeme Kobayashi, from Counterpoint Brewing Company, said, "We were operating very successfully prior to the pandemic, however, we're also a very new business

and were able to amass only a small amount of savings when COVID arrived and the lasting conditions of COVID lockdowns ate away at them relatively quickly. The CEBA loan was a lifeline for our business." He said that, without it, they would not be here today.

Ian McMullan from McMullan's Canadian Pub & Pizzeria said that the CEBA loan was a significant source of help for his business to get through the pandemic. Without it, it would have been in the red on multiple occasions. The CEBA loan was absolutely essential to its survival as a business.

These are small businesses that were operating profitably before the pandemic, did the right thing by closing during the pandemic, unlike big box stores, and now they are disproportionately experiencing lasting impacts of longer-than-expected pandemic lockdowns.

It is why this past summer more than 250 local and provincial chambers of commerce, including the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, and national business organizations including the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Better Way Alliance and Restaurants Canada called for an extension on the time small businesses would have to pay back the full loan and still qualify for the grant portion.

I met with small businesses in my community this past summer. I heard their concerns, wrote to both of the ministers responsible and met with the Minister of Small Business this past summer to convey these concerns. All of which is why I was so disappointed in September when the Prime Minister announced a mere 18-day extension to repay without having the grant portion of this program turn into another loan.

I then brought it up in question period during Small Business Week, and I do not feel like I received a real answer to the question. It is why I am back here again this evening.

Here is what CFIB has found about the changes the Prime Minister announced in September. It found that the majority of business owners, or 82%, did not find the changes to the CEBA repayment schedule helpful, and more than half of them question whether they will be able to stay in business if they lose the forgivable portion. It is obvious the federal government has not listened to small businesses after small businesses. They stepped up for us, and businesses in my community are frustrated.

Sam Nabi, from Full Circle Foods, says, "As independent business owners trying to do the right thing, we often take on a lot of personal responsibility. And yet, I can't help but feel frustrated at federal grants given to massively profitable national grocery chains with no strings attached, while independent small businesses in our neighbourhood have to shut their doors."

Carolann Mackie from the Frugal Decorator is saying that she is frankly very worried about the expectation to pay back the CEBA loan. The nearing date continues to leave her in a very difficult financial position.

My question to the parliamentary secretary is whether he is going to—

● (1905)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I need to give the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business the opportunity to answer.

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business and to the Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am happy to respond to the comments made by the hon. member for Kitchener Centre regarding supports for small businesses and the Canada emergency business account payment deadline and loan forgiveness.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has been there to provide unprecedented support to Canada's small businesses across the country. That is why, at the onset of the pandemic, we launched the Canada emergency business account program. This is in addition to critical and much-needed supports like the rent and wage subsidies, which were put in place to assist small businesses. CEBA provided \$49 billion in support to nearly 900,000 businesses across the country. The program offered interest-free partial forgivable loans up to \$60,000 to eligible small businesses. It kept their lights on and helped workers remain employed.

Early last year, to help business owners as they continue to recover from the pandemic, the government announced that the CEBA repayment deadline for partial forgiveness would be extended by one year. The government understands that the current global economic environment is having a major impact on entrepreneurs and Canadians. We recently announced several changes to the CEBA program aimed at supporting economic recovery. Recognizing the challenges that small businesses continue to face in the current economic context, we have yet again extended the deadline for partial forgiveness to January 2024 and have extended the CEBA term loans by one year, to December 31, 2026, to offer businesses more time for their loan repayments.

Small businesses asked for more flexibility and the government listened. It is also supporting small businesses by cutting credit card transaction fees and reducing the small business tax rate from 11% to 9%. We have enhanced the Canada small business financing program by increasing annual financing to small businesses by an estimated \$560 million annually through the introduction of a working line of capital to help businesses access liquidity for start-up costs and intangible assets. For businesses looking to bring their offerings to the digital marketplace, the Canada digital adoption program has supported enterprises of all sizes to digitize and reach more markets.

Moreover, we are ensuring that all entrepreneurs have the opportunities they deserve. That is why we launched the historic women entrepreneurship strategy, the Black entrepreneurship program, the

2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurship program and targeted supports for indigenous entrepreneurs.

The government is focusing on growing our economy and building a stronger, more resilient Canada for everyone. We will continue to support Canadian businesses throughout this recovery process, because, quite frankly, that is common sense.

● (1910)

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary and I agree on one very relevant aspect of his comments, which is that the CEBA loan program was critical and small businesses are deeply grateful for it. However, the reality is that today over half of these same small businesses are trying to tell the government that if it does not step up, they might not make it at all. They are trying to tell the government that 18 days is not going to cut it.

My question to the parliamentary secretary is this. Does he understand what small businesses are trying to convey? If he does, is he advocating for a proper extension to December 31, 2024, to be in the fall economic statement, which we are expecting in a matter of weeks?

Mr. Bryan May: Madam Speaker, the government has heard loud and clear that small businesses needed additional flexibility and options in these difficult times and we are taking action. This includes an extension of the CEBA loan repayment deadline, more flexibility on refinancing and more time to access loan forgiveness. Through these measures, we are giving small businesses additional breathing room.

The government will continue to support small businesses across the country while we grow our economy, fight climate change and create an economy that works for all Canadians.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, the climate crisis is here. Thousands of Canadians were evacuated from their homes in the worst wildfire season on record. Hundreds died in heat domes. Extreme weather is only getting more frequent and more severe.

If we want to have any hope of meeting our climate targets, we must implement a strong emissions cap on the oil and gas industry. In Canada, despite accounting for just 5% of Canada's economy, oil and gas is responsible for over a quarter of Canada's emissions, more than any other sector.

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Despite the greenwashing that we hear from industry lobbyists, from their friends in the Liberal Party and from corporate-controlled Conservatives, oil and gas emissions are increasing year after year. The oil and gas sector's expansion has gone unchecked in Canada, and there have been no limits on how much pollution they are allowed to create.

A strong cap on emissions would be that limit. The Liberals promised to deliver a cap on emissions but, instead, they continue to delay and disappoint. It is time to hold the oil and gas sector accountable for the fact that they are fuelling the climate crisis. It is not like they cannot afford it. Oil executives are raking in record profits, while everyday Canadians are struggling to make ends meet.

If the Liberals wanted to stop pretending to be a climate leader and instead take real climate action, they would stop listening to oil and gas CEOs and implement a hard cap on emissions, one without the loopholes and delays that the oil and gas lobbyists are pushing for.

A hard cap would be aligned with the Paris Agreement of keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius. It needs to be enforceable, and a hard cap on absolute levels of emissions; no loopholes and relief valves that let companies off the hook. This means emissions reductions would need to happen within the sector, not through purchasing offsets for reductions elsewhere. Companies should only receive credit for proven reductions, not hypothetical reductions based on speculative technologies.

A strong emissions cap needs to include strong enforcement measures. Penalties and fines have to be significant enough that they actually deter or change behaviour rather than simply allowing companies to internalize small fines as the cost of doing business and continuing with business as usual.

We need to look at compliance mechanisms that are not financial, things like mandated production cuts or the use of the criminal powers under CEPA. It also must uphold indigenous rights. We need to ensure that the rights affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples continue to be upheld within the emissions cap, including securing indigenous peoples' free, prior and informed consent for energy development in their territory.

The Liberal government needs to get serious about prioritizing our health and our future over the profits of rich CEOs. We cannot afford a weak emissions cap that does not hold the oil and gas industry accountable.

My question to the member is this. When will the government stop delaying and start keeping some of its climate promises? When will we see a cap on emissions?

• (1915)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when it comes to the environment, we have a government that has clearly demonstrated, since coming to office in 2015, a genuine and sincere commitment to Canada's environment. In fact, the total greenhouse emissions that have been taken away are somewhere in the neighbourhood of 53 million tonnes since 2015. That

is the equivalent of 11 million gas vehicles. Looking at it from a world perspective, of all the G20 countries, Canada is the only one that has actually eliminated fossil fuel subsidies. We even did that in advance of the dates by which we said we would do it. We have a government that has made the commitment to put a cap on emissions from the oil and gas sector.

If we contrast the messaging that I hear tonight from the member across the aisle to the way in which she actually voted the other day on the Conservative opposition motion, there are a number of progressive people who are who are looking at the NDP and are getting a confused message. Part of what we talk about is how people can actually convert from oil heating to heat pumps, and I think the NDP might have been manipulated into supporting the Conservative motion in regard to the policy that the government put into place. That policy is to get people throughout Canada to take advantage of conversion from oil heating to heat pumps, which are much better for the environment and more affordable for Canadians.

Games were played. In the House, the majority of the political entities, including the Greens, the Bloc members and obviously the Liberals, saw what the Conservatives were doing. The NDP, on the other hand, voted with the Conservatives. It sends a very mixed message when the member stands up and talks about emissions and then votes for a motion that goes against a price on pollution, remembering that with the price on pollution there are also the rebates that complement it. It also goes against the idea of sound policy that would ensure that more people convert to heat pumps from oil heating.

I would suggest that is a good thing, and the government has a good track record already on that. The greener homes program, again, is about tens of thousands of homes, in all regions of the country combined, that have actually made a conversion and are now using heat pumps, recognizing that heat pumps are far better for our environment. This is a program, as an example, which the government has brought forward.

Whether it is budgetary measures or legislative measures, we have been found to be a very progressive government in dealing with the environment and emissions.

• (1920)

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, if the member wants an example of saying one thing but doing another, he just needs to look in the mirror, because today the NDP put forward a motion with respect to heat pumps, and the Liberals voted with the Conservatives. The motion included an excess profit tax on oil and gas companies. It is a measure that would hold rich CEOs accountable. Unfortunately, the current Liberal government does not have the courage to stand up to oil and gas lobbies. In fact, the Liberals invited them into crafting their climate policies.

I am concerned that the member does not understand the urgency of the crisis we are facing and the urgency of ensuring that the oil and gas sector reduce its emissions. We needed an emissions cap years ago. I did not hear a date. When will the government get serious about holding the oil and gas giants accountable, and implement a cap on emissions?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member makes reference to a vote that took place today on, again, a bad NDP policy. Let us think about it. What the New Democrats want to do is to completely get rid of the GST on fossil fuels, whether that is natural gas or oil. The GST provides a very significant rebate. That is what makes it popular.

The people who would benefit the most by the policy that the NDP was advocating are Canada's 1% wealthiest people. Those are the ones who actually would benefit the most because there is a rebate section to the GST. That is not to mention the many other inequities in that particular policy. That is why I suggest that the New Democrats need to think through their policies in regard to what is coming to the floor related to the price on pollution or to the GST, because the New Democrats' actions do not support a healthier environment.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise today to follow up on a question that I asked on Monday regarding the horrors we are witnessing in Gaza and to demand that the Canadian government call for a ceasefire, which is something this government continues to actively fight against. Even today in the House, Liberals refused to support our motion calling for a ceasefire.

Many in my community of London—Fanshawe are in an incredible amount of pain. There are Canadians across this country who are in an incredible amount of pain. They are grieving for their families, their friends, their loved ones and for what they are seeing unfolding in Palestine and Israel.

This past month has devastated many of us, and my constituents are as alarmed as I am by the increase in hate, including anti-Palestinian racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. I have spoken with many Londoners who are still reeling from the horrific murder of members of our London family. Many Londoners do not feel safe sending their children to school, and some are scared to wear their Stars of David or their yarmulkes. I know of sons who have been so scared that they have asked their mothers not to wear their hijabs for fear of harassment and potential violence.

Hundreds of Canadians and their families are still unable to leave Gaza, including some of my constituents. They are surviving the worst conditions and are under constant threat of bombardment, and they do not know when they might find safety. Global Affairs Canada has had no answers for them.

I have been working with family members who are desperate. They fear every phone call that comes in. Their bodies can no longer handle the stress and they are being hospitalized for fear of what they will be told about those family members. They have cried in meetings with me and asked why they are seen as second-class citizens.

Adjournment Proceedings

Since October 11, the NDP has been asking the Liberals to stand on the right side of history and demand a ceasefire. Yesterday, polling by Mainstreet Research showed that over 71% of Canadians support the call for a ceasefire. Canadian aid agencies, including CARE, Development and Peace, Islamic Relief, Oxfam, Médecins du Monde and Save the Children are urging the Government of Canada to take a strong and resolute stance and demand a ceasefire in order to prevent further loss of civilian life.

Eighteen leading global agencies, including UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs are urging a ceasefire, saying that enough is enough. Many of the families of the hostages are calling for a ceasefire, saying that the bombardment puts their loved ones at risk.

This is the worst humanitarian crisis we have seen in our lifetimes, and Gaza children are starving to death. Pregnant women are miscarrying from stress or having C-sections without anaesthetic in hospital rooms that are damaged from bombing and infested with insects. There is no water. There is no medicine. There is no safe place. The United Nations Secretary-General has said that "Gaza is becoming a graveyard for children."

However, what we do not hear from the government is what we need to hear. Why is Canada refusing to support international investigations into war crimes? Why is it that Canada cannot condemn those violations of international humanitarian law? In other conflicts, the government does that, but it does not do that in this one. This is an outrageous failure of leadership by the Prime Minister and the government.

Canadians want a ceasefire. They want to see the hostages released. They want their fellow Canadians home. They want their family members home. However, the Liberals are failing at this moment. It is time to find their courage. I beg them to find their courage and call for a ceasefire before more Palestinian children are killed in this horrendous war.

● (1925)

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for bringing this issue back to the House this evening. As she knows, I grew up in London, Ontario. I appreciate her efforts in bringing the concerns of her constituents to the House. We know that communities are grieving, and we are all concerned by the rise of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism in our communities right across Canada. I join the hon. member in calling for us to condemn hate in all its forms.

Adjournment Proceedings

The horrific attacks by Hamas against Israel shocked us all. Canada unequivocally condemns these brutal attacks against innocent civilians. The victims and all of those impacted are at the front of our minds. Hamas must unconditionally and immediately release all hostages, regardless of nationality, who were kidnapped during its attacks. We must also immediately and unequivocally call for unimpeded humanitarian aid, including food, fuel, water and medicine, to be allowed into Gaza.

Every measure must be taken to protect civilians in Gaza. This means that Canadians, permanent residents and their immediate families must be able to leave. That is why we continue to call for humanitarian pauses.

What is unfolding in Gaza is a human tragedy. As the Prime Minister has said, “the price of justice cannot be the continued suffering of all Palestinian civilians.” Canada’s long-standing position is that civilians must be protected in all conflicts always. I repeat that everything must be done to protect all civilians, and international law must be respected.

I want to reassure all Canadians that we are in regular and close contact with our allies and partners in the region. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs continue to speak with their counterparts in Israel, Gaza and Qatar. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has been to the region twice. She has just arrived back from the G7. We continue to work hard to support Canadians and get them to safety. We are actively working to get Canadian citizens, permanent residents and their family members to safety.

I want to take this time to thank our missions in the region, in Israel, Ramallah, Egypt and Jordan, and those in Canada at Global Affairs Canada. Today, I visited the emergency watch and response centre and saw first-hand the staff’s dedication. I heard about the good work they are doing. They have been working non-stop to help Canadians, and their tremendous efforts continue as they work around the clock to ensure that Canadians are brought to safety.

The first Canadians have now departed Gaza through the Rafah border crossing. Canadian officials are on the Egyptian side of the border ready to help with the support and care they need and to get them to Cairo. We remain in contact with those still in Gaza and will continue to work every day to bring them home.

Canada was the first G7 country to announce additional humanitarian assistance to address the crisis. To date, Canada’s contribution stands at \$60 million to respond to the alarming conditions of those affected by the crisis. Our funding will help provide food, water, emergency medical assistance and protection services in Gaza. It is essential that humanitarian access can reach those in need.

We will continue to call for the immediate release of all hostages and demand that they be treated in accordance with international

law. We will keep working with our diplomatic channels. We have also sent a team of experts to the region.

Canada is committed to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. This means the creation of a Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel. All Israelis and Palestinians have the right to live in peace and security. It is essential that this conflict not spread. Canada continues to engage with our partners in the region and around the world to reinforce the need to avoid further escalations.

● (1930)

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Madam Speaker, once again, I am deeply disappointed that the hon. member could not even talk about the word “ceasefire”. She did mention a humanitarian pause, but the scale of the current humanitarian catastrophe cannot be reversed with temporary and localized influxes of aid. This is about starvation. This is about dehydration. This is about mass killings.

Four thousand Palestinian children are dead. People are living in fear. More than 120,000 Canadians have written to MPs demanding a ceasefire. I am heartbroken that the Liberals do not have the courage to do what is right and call for the release of the hostages, call for international justice and call for a ceasefire.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, all Canadians are worried about what is happening in Gaza. Communities across the country are hurting, and we need to continue to work to ensure that all civilians are protected. International law, including humanitarian and human rights laws, must be respected, and civilians, journalists, humanitarian workers and medical personnel must be protected.

The loss of civilian life is deeply disturbing, and our heartfelt condolences are with all those whose families and communities have been affected. Canadians and people around the world must be steadfast in our support for the protection of all civilians. Humanitarian assistance must get into Gaza. Canadians and all foreign nationals must get out of Gaza. All hostages must be released.

We will continue to support diplomatic discussions on humanitarian pauses. We remain committed to a two-state solution, with a Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel. Canada stands firmly with the Israeli and Palestinian peoples in their right to live in peace, in security, with dignity and without fear.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The motion to adjourn the House is now 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 7:33 p.m.)

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