



HOUSE OF COMMONS
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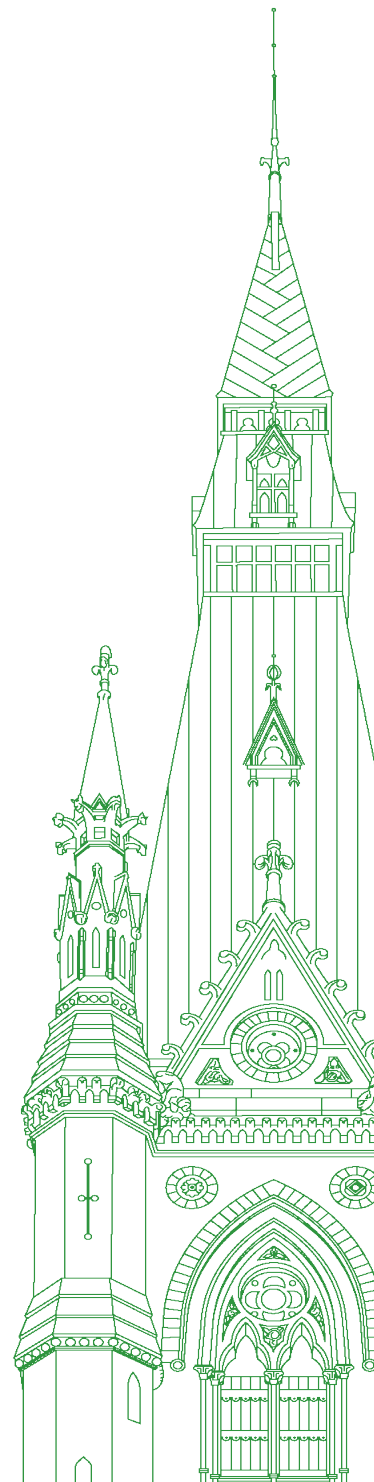
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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, December 15, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

● (1000)

[Translation]

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The Speaker: Colleagues, I rise to make a statement in response to the tabling of the report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs yesterday.

I would like to thank my colleagues for their work and consideration of the serious matter before them.

[English]

I made a serious mistake. I should never have recorded that video, not in the Speaker's uniform, not in the Speaker's office and not for a friend who is an active politician. I am deeply sorry. I want to reassure members that nothing like this will ever happen again.

My office is putting in place a more rigorous communication protocol to protect the neutral role of the Speaker. I will ensure that requests are subject to intense scrutiny and considered in consultation with the House administration under the leadership of the Clerk to ensure the utmost impartiality. I will continue to rely on the sage advice and counsel of former Speakers and parliamentary experts in Canada and in other Westminster parliaments.

To those members who have generously extended me a second chance to serve as Speaker, I thank them from the bottom of my heart. To those members who are opposed to this second chance, let me say that I can understand their point of view and I will spare no effort to regain their trust.

To all members, my door is open. I want to hear from them so we can work together in collaboration. I ask them to please reach out.

It is essential that the Speaker be impartial and non-partisan in every act, every gesture and every appearance.

[Translation]

I know that this issue has become a distraction at a time of year when members' agendas are full and we have a busy legislative program. Allow me to reiterate how honoured I am to be your Speaker.

[English]

I accept full responsibility for my actions. I pledge to fulfill every measure that was recommended by the committee's report.

I thank members for their attention.

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● (1005)

[English]

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Hon. Gудie Hutchings (for the Minister of Foreign Affairs) moved that Bill S-9, An Act to amend the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud today to rise to speak in this House on Bill S-9, an act that would amend the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act, and the important efforts to eliminate the use of chemical weapons globally.

I need to say the government was deeply disturbed and disappointed in how not once but twice the Conservative opposition has blocked the debate on this bill. I am glad we are finally here today.

On the eve of the Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare, the Conservatives blocked debate on the bill, a bill to modernize the very act that would help those victims, the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act. It also includes novichok, a deadly nerve agent implicated in multiple poisonings likely conducted by Russia.

Conservatives also did this just days before Remembrance Day, when we commemorate the thousands of brave Canadians who have fallen in defence of our freedoms, some of whom were among the first to fall victims of the horror of chemical warfare in Ypres in 1915.

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More than century ago, during the second battle of Ypres, Canadian soldiers were among the very first in human history to fall victim to the horrors of chemical warfare when 160 tonnes of chlorine gas were released toward Canadian lines. By the end of the battle, 6,035 young Canadians, more than one in three, were killed or wounded by the new and terrifying weapon. By the end of the conflict, more than a million people suffered the effects of this new kind of warfare: chemical warfare.

Today, as we see the devastating images of the victims of war and conflict like never before from Khartoum to Kyiv to Khan Younis, it is incumbent on all of us to do what we can to promote peace and to work vigorously toward a world free of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The use of chemical weapons to injure or kill is a vile act of barbarism and regrettably one that, despite our best efforts, has not yet been confined to the annals of history.

While the use of chemicals in war has a long history dating back to ancient times, advances in science and technology, with the possibility of creating so much good for so many people, have also been harnessed on an industrial scale to cause death and destruction. Thankfully, at the conclusion of the conflict, the Geneva Protocol was launched, which prohibited the use in war of either of these categories of weapons of mass destruction.

The way in which the consequences of chemical weapons on the battlefield left no one untouched demonstrated the sheer inhumanity of these types of weapons. However, the protocol did not prohibit their development or production. Consequently, for decades to follow, countries continued to develop massive chemical weapons stockpiles.

After more than two decades of effort, on September 3, 1992, the text of a Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction was sent to the General Assembly of the United Nations by the UN Conference on Disarmament.

Canada signed it on the very first day, January 13, 1993, and proceeded to fully ratify it. The Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force on April 29, 1997. That same year, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, OPCW, was formed to oversee the convention's implementation, supervise destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles and inspect the world's chemical industries to help ensure chemical weapons would never return.

Thirty years later, the Chemical Weapons Convention remains a key pillar of the rules-based international system. More than 190 states are party to it, making it the most widely adopted treaty on non-proliferation and disarmament. The convention's prohibitions are clear and comprehensive. No country party to the convention may develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, retain or use chemical weapons. They may not transfer chemical weapons to another party or otherwise enable another country or non-state actor to develop them. It affirms the right for all parties to engage in the free trade of chemicals and technology for peaceful purposes and that the prohibition on chemical weapons should not hamper unnecessarily the growth of the chemical industry and progress in chemical research. We need that as human beings. On that latter point, the OPCW em-

ploys numerous programs to promote chemical science and chemical industry, all for peaceful purposes, around the globe.

As of July 2023, the OPCW supervised and verified the destruction of 100% of the world's declared chemical weapons.

● (1010)

Unfortunately, the legal prohibition has not yet fully eliminated the risk of chemical weapon use. Since the CWC entered into force, chemical weapons have been used in multiple instances, even by countries that are party to the convention.

Competent international bodies, including the OPCW-UN joint investigation mechanism and the OPCW investigation and identification team have concluded that the Syrian Arab Republic used both the chemical warfare agent sarin and the toxic industrial chemical chlorine as weapons against opposition forces on no fewer than nine occasions and likely more.

The terrorist group Daesh used mustard gas in both Syria and Iraq. Kim Jong-nam, half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, was assassinated with the nerve agent venomous agent X, or VX, in the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in February 2017, an act widely believed to have been orchestrated by the North Korean state.

In March 2018, a more complicated development occurred. Sergei Skripal, a former Russian military intelligence officer living in the United Kingdom, and his daughter, were found to have been poisoned by novichok, an extremely toxic nerve agent developed by the Soviet Union. The attempt at assassination left both Skripals and police detective Nick Bailey in the hospital for several months.

The novichok was believed to have been administered to the front door of Mr. Skripal's house using a perfume bottle, subsequently discarded in a public bin, which, when discovered by a local, believing it to be perfume, resulted in two further hospitalizations and the death of Dawn Sturgess. When the police recovered the bottle from Ms. Sturgess's home in nearby Amesbury, they assessed it to contain sufficient novichok to kill thousands of people. Eight locations had to be decontaminated to remove any trace of novichok, taking several months and costing millions of pounds.

Canada and its allies concluded that the state agencies of the Russian Federation were highly likely responsible for that attack. The British government identified and indicted, *in absentia*, three Russian intelligence agents.

Canada condemned the attack. The Prime Minister and then-foreign affairs minister issued statements. Four Russian diplomats were expelled from the Russian embassy in Ottawa and the consulate general in Montreal as part of an unprecedented collective response.

In total, 153 Russian diplomats were expelled from 29 countries, including some accredited to the NATO headquarters in Brussels.

The Chemical Weapons Convention contains an annex on chemicals, a list covering most chemical warfare agents and their precursors across three schedules.

Schedule 1 chemicals have only one use: to injure, to kill. They cannot be used in industry and so are prohibited from all purposes except for research and training for protection and defence against themselves, against chemical weapons.

Schedules 2 and 3 chemicals have increasing use in industry and so are subject to fewer controls, with the goal of preventing chemical weapons proliferation while avoiding unnecessarily hampering industry and trade and the benefit of humanity.

At the time of the Salisbury attack, novichoks were not on the annex on chemicals, thus not subject to declaration and verification requirements. It must be made clear that a novichok, as a weapon, indeed, any toxic chemical as a weapon, has always been a violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, in accordance with the broad definition of a chemical weapon in article II.

Still, Canada and our close allies quickly took the position that the world would be much safer if novichoks were subject to OPCW monitoring like any other chemical warfare agent.

On November 29, 2019, as the result of tremendous leadership by Canada, the United States and the Netherlands, the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention took the unprecedented decision to add four new categories of toxic chemicals to schedule 1.

This included the novichok used in the attempted assassination of Sergei Skripal. As a result of this amendment, states handling novichoks for defensive purposes such as research, development and testing of new protective gear or medical countermeasures or training police or armed forces in responding to their use must declare their activities to the OPCW and be subject to verification.

This amendment is also symbolic. The toxic chemical used as a weapon in Salisbury is now included in the same list of chemical weapons as sarin, mustard and VX.

● (1015)

The additions to the CWC's "Annex on Chemicals" came into force on June 7, 2020. The Chemical Weapons Convention requires that all states parties put in place domestic legislation to apply the convention's prohibitions to their citizens and all people on their territory. That is what Bill S-9 is about.

In Canada, this is done through the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act, which makes it illegal for anyone in Canada, as well as Canadian citizens abroad, to develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, retain, transfer, use, prepare to use or assist in the use of chemical weapons.

It also prohibits Canadians from producing, possessing or using schedule 1 chemicals without explicit government authorization. Since June 7, 2020, this has included the four recently added categories. The CWCIA still contains a copy of the convention's original annex on chemicals, which has been out of date since 2020.

While subsection 2(3) states unambiguously that the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention take precedence should there

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be disagreement with the act, it is important for us to fix this discrepancy and show leadership on this important issue in this place. To this end, Bill S-9 seeks to repeal the schedule from the act, and repeal or amend two subsections that reference it. These changes would not just realign Canadian legislation with our international obligations but also future-proof it in case of further amendments in the future.

This bill is something all parties should agree to easily and expedite immediately. It has already passed through the other place without objection, so I hope that can happen in this place as well.

This legislation alone does not eliminate the risk of foreign states, such as Russia; non-signatories; or non-state actors, such as terrorist groups, using chemical weapons for nefarious purposes. It does, however, underscore Canada's steadfast support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and for other key agreements that form an essential part of the rules-based system that keep Canada, all Canadians and our allies safe.

As the foreign minister outlined the other week, our system, as well as our world, is cracking. The international rules-based order is under attack, and the world is increasingly marked by geopolitical turbulence, unpredictability and uncertainty. We must, therefore, continue to show leadership on the international stage, as we have in the past.

Canada can be proud of our leadership on these important issues, which also includes former foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy's landmark work on the Ottawa treaty to ban land mines; the launch of the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, which occurred when former prime minister Chrétien hosted the world leaders in Kananaskis in 2002; and work to spearhead the international convention prohibiting cluster munitions. These are all important, critical parts of keeping our world safe.

Another critical tool is diplomacy, which cannot help but strengthen our ability to maintain the safety and security of Canada and Canadians. We must work with allies and our partners to keep our world safe through a world security infrastructure. That is why we increased our footprint in the world. Diplomacy leads to better activity, which leads to a lesser degree of peace in our world being threatened. That is why we continue to do all that work.

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We have missions around the world; our diplomats regularly coordinate with our allies and partners, as well as engaging host governments on the importance of buttressing our work on this convention. It was through concerted advocacy around the world that we were able to adapt the convention to the modern realities of today's world. It is through diplomacy that we continue to build peace. It is a trying challenge. It is something that we need to commit to every day in this place. It means we continue to monitor the situation, adapt and take legislation we have in this House, this place and this government, and adapt it to modern realities.

Our words need to be backed by meaningful actions, notably through funding the weapons threat reduction program housed within Global Affairs Canada. It represents Canada's flagship contribution to the G7-led Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, hosted by former prime minister Jean Chrétien in Kananaskis, Alberta, in 2002.

• (1020)

Canada has contributed more than \$1.6 billion towards threat reduction activities worldwide, including destroying chemical weapons and combatting their spread. This includes supporting the destruction of declared chemical weapons in Russia, Syria, Iraq and Libya.

Through the weapons threat reduction program, Canada is the single largest donor country to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which was set up to implement the CWC. It was honoured with the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize for its effort to supervise the destruction of more than 98% of declared global stocks of chemical weapons. With our \$10 million commitment, Canada is the top individual donor to the OPCW's new Centre for Chemistry and Technology in The Hague, which opened this past May. The centre will strengthen and bolster the organization's investigative capacities and capabilities and support innovative efforts to keep pace with the ever-evolving chemical weapons landscape.

Canada has also provided defensive equipment, including masks and filters, to the Ukrainian military, given the threat of chemical weapons use by Russian forces. Let us be very clear: This bill is also about the defence of Ukraine against the illegal invasion of Russia into its territory. To counter Russian efforts to undermine the global norm against chemical weapons use, Canada has worked in close concert with allies to demand that Russia fully declare its novichok program.

Our government will continue to be a leader on the global stage and ensure that Russia is held accountable for its aggressions against Ukraine. This may be through providing defensive equipment or through Bill C-57, the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, which Conservatives have voted against multiple times, to support the rebuilding of Ukraine when we win.

In August 2020, when Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): If members have questions they should wait for questions and comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, I look forward to the questions.

In August 2020, when Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny was poisoned by a novichok agent, one that was sufficiently different from the novichok agent used against Sergei Skripal that it is not covered by the amended “Annex on Chemicals,” Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs strongly condemned the assassination attempt. Moreover, Canada joined our G7 partners and NATO allies, which made similar statements.

We have continued the close coordination of advocacy and, as recently as August, announced sanctions against senior officials of the Russian government, judiciary and investigative committee, as well as federally funded courts. This includes the notorious Basmanny District Court, which has been directly involved in human rights abuses against Russian opposition leaders, including Alexei Navalny, Vladimir Kara-Murza and other Russian citizens.

Even now, as President Putin continues his war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine, Canada is working hand in hand with allies to counter blatant disinformation on chemical weapons by Russia. Moreover, it is preparing to hold Russia to account should it choose to use chemical weapons in Ukraine. This would be a bad decision on Russia's part.

Canada has joined its G7 partners in demanding information from Russia regarding allegations, supported by reports from Russian state-controlled media, that the Russian military has dropped grenades filled with a riot-control agent from drones in occupied Ukrainian territory. This would be another blatant violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The threat of a resurgence in chemical weapons use is real. Canada will play a key role in upholding the tools of the rules-based international order that keep us safe, including the Chemical Weapons Convention. We will also continue in our fight against flagrant violations of international law and global norms. This legislation will bring us in line. It will signal to the world that we are serious about keeping up with the convention and that we will continue to move in pace as industry changes, as technologies emerge and as people continue to be unsafe.

Canada will stand on the right side. I ask all member of the House to support this bill, so we can get it done and bring it home.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be giving some remarks shortly on this; not to pre-empt them, but we support the bill.

I listened to the member's speech, and he saw fit to blame the opposition for this bill not having passed sooner. It should have been passed in the 43rd Parliament, not brought up on the last day before Christmas. Could he maybe take this opportunity to explain to Canadians why Liberals prorogued the House with this on the Order Paper in 2020 and why they called a snap election in 2021?

The member went there in his speech. Could he apologize for blaming Conservatives for the government's mismanagement of its calendar and for twice failing to get this bill approved?

• (1025)

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, the government does not live in the past. We live in the present.

We are very much looking at the future as we engage in this legislation. This is an important bill, which has been part of the antics of the opposition in this session of Parliament. Our government House leader called the Conservatives on it yesterday to remind them that perhaps they need a time out. Perhaps, when it comes to the eve of the day of remembrance for victims of chemical warfare, it is absolutely abhorrent to stop the piece of legislation by moving motions that are irrelevant in our House and doing the same activity.

Let us get over the antics. Let us get the work of this House done. Let us work on the international rules-based order. Let us move on and be grownups.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, order. The hon. members have had an opportunity to ask their questions. If they have more questions, they should wait.

It is not good to be throwing insults at members as they speak. I want to remind members to be respectful.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am hoping you will find unanimous consent for this motion, that for the sole purpose of disposing of—

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is no consent.

I am sure the hon. official opposition House leader knows that, if he is looking for unanimous consent, it is best to talk to the other House leaders to obtain it. If it is not obtained, then he knows it is not going to be accepted in the House.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Saint-Jean.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to pick up on the question asked by my colleague from Calgary Rocky Ridge. This bill has been debated several times at the Senate. It was supposed to be debated here in the House since Parliament opened, but it has been deferred several times.

This bill has garnered fairly broad consensus. It was passed quickly in the Senate because it is relatively simple. We are talking about harmonizing the provisions of the international Chemical Weapons Convention with domestic law. There is no issue with the substance of the bill.

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The government says that it is the Conservatives' fault that this bill has not really been debated in the House. However, it could have been debated much sooner if Parliament had not prorogued in 2021, since the bill had already been introduced in 2020.

I would just like to know if the government can take even a small share of the blame for the fact that this bill has still not been passed.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, I think that certainly bears repeating. We are now here, in the present. It is an opportunity for all members of the House to share their thoughts on the bill. We will have the opportunity to do something else in the new year.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's intervention on this important issue.

My question goes to the heart of an issue that many of my constituents of North Island—Powell River have. We know that there are currently 93 signatory countries to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, including Mexico, New Zealand and Brazil. We know that Canada, shockingly, refuses to join the treaty.

Could the member explain to my constituents why that is?

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, that is an important question.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons continues to be a huge scourge on humanity. The Government of Canada has chosen to work with our allies through a variety of means. We continue to do that. We monitor that treaty very closely. We talk to our allies that are signatories to it.

At the present time, we will continue to find the best ways forward on this under the conventions that we have already signed and will continue to work for a world free of nuclear weapons.

• (1030)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am very grateful to the member for North Island—Powell River for raising the issue I had planned to raise here. I want to thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his thoughtful remarks on the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act and getting it on the record.

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Clearly, Green Party MPs will vote for this. However, the ultimate weapons of mass destruction are the nuclear weapons arsenals around the world. With the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway and the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona, I attended the second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the United Nations in New York. I want to stress that other NATO countries sent an observer group to that session. Canada did not even send observers.

As parliamentarians from the NDP and Greens, and one independent senator, we were there, wishing our government was there with us. Could the hon. parliamentary secretary explain why Canada has chosen not to even send an official delegation of observers to this all-important convention for the prohibition of nuclear weapons?

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, I would be very happy to sit down with the three members of this House and the independent senator who attended those meetings at the UN in New York and get a briefing from them, because obviously their wisdom on this issue and their experience at that meeting would be very helpful for us. The government will always be happy to listen to them with their suggestions.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I found it interesting when Conservative members said that the legislation is not being passed because of the government. When we brought forward the legislation, one of the first initiatives the Conservatives took was to move a concurrence motion in order to prevent debate of it. It seems to me that every member of the House is supporting the legislation, and the desire of the government is to see the legislation pass.

Could my colleague provide his thoughts on that? Would it not be nice if the Conservatives allowed the legislation to pass and made a suggestion that there is unanimous support for it? Let us see if we can get it passed and allow the debate to collapse. Would he see that as a good, positive thing before Christmas break?

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, if we could end this debate quickly and move on, we could get to the other important work this House wants to do. This piece of legislation would amend something that we are all in agreement with. The faster we can get it done, the better, and then we can move on to other work.

This legislation is the kind of thing that Canada, when we speak on the world stage, should speak to with one voice, to be strong and to be heard. Let us get it done.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to ask the parliamentary secretary about another bill from the House that is currently in the Senate, Bill C-281, the international human rights act. That bill was passed by this House. I believe it was unanimous in the end.

It is another important bill that deals with international human rights issues, and as far as I know, it has not moved forward in the Senate. Is the government trying to stop the bill? Are members making phone calls to senators? Does the government want to allow this bill to move forward?

Important human rights legislation, wherever it comes from, should get the support of the House. We would like to see Bill C-281, which was passed unanimously by the House, be brought into law. Can the parliamentary secretary update us on what is or is not happening on this important legislation in terms of the government's conversations with the senators it has appointed?

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, I have been in this place long enough to know it is not wise to comment on legislation that is in the other place. I will allow the other place to do its work and will be respectful as senators do their deliberations on all legislation that comes before them.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, Russia developed the novichok nerve agent to circumvent the Chemical Weapons Convention, as it is more difficult to detect.

Can the hon. parliamentary secretary illustrate how Russia is still using this agent?

[English]

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, I am not an expert on chemical weapons, particularly novichok. What I do know is that this convention will allow us to do further research.

There are several different kinds of novichok. They masquerade. They hide behind each other. I hope this bill will allow us to do the right research into them to prevent them and then continue to find ways to eliminate them.

● (1035)

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is likely this will be the last time I rise this year, so I wish you a Merry Christmas, as well as all other members of this place and those who support the work we do here, including the parliamentary pages, the desk officers, the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Parliamentary Protective Service and everyone else who helps us do our work on behalf of Canadians. All the best to everyone.

We are on the last day of this session, and the government has called Bill S-9, an act to amend the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act. As I said earlier in debate, I support the bill, as I understand all of my Conservative colleagues do. It is a very important bill and one that needs to get done.

I must take a moment and register my disappointment that the government chooses to accuse the Conservatives of delay anytime we debate a bill. The parliamentary secretary delivered his remarks, and I am going to deliver mine. There may be other members of the House who want to deliver remarks on the bill. That is the process of debate and that is what we are elected here to do.

Debating a bill is not obstructing a bill, particularly when it is one that members have not yet had an opportunity to weigh in on. I agree that the bill is important and should pass expeditiously, but I will not be told by members of the government and its parliamentary secretaries not to speak because it is our job or duty to just let every bill collapse and go straight to a vote without debate. We are going to have debate on the bill, and I hope that all members will in fact support the bill, as I do.

Bill S-9 would ensure that Canadian law becomes properly aligned with the Chemical Weapons Convention. The convention was the world's first multilateral disarmament agreement to eliminate weapons of mass destruction such as toxic chemicals, poison and biological weapons. The convention was open for signature in Paris on January 13, 1993. Under the Mulroney government, Canada was among the first countries to sign it, and it came into effect on April 29, 1997. Canada's Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act is a Chrétien-era law that implements Canada's obligations under this convention as one of its original signatories.

Bill S-9 is identical in purpose to two bills introduced in the previous Parliament. It was introduced originally as Bill C-9 by the former minister of foreign affairs in the first session of the 43rd Parliament, and was reintroduced as Bill S-2 by Senator Marc Gold in the second session of the 43rd Parliament. Neither of these bills made it through the 43rd Parliament, and to be clear, it was not because of Conservative opposition to them or any procedural wrangling of the Conservative caucus. Bill C-9 was a casualty of the current government's decision to prorogue the House in the summer of 2020 amid the WE Charity scandal. Bill S-2 was a casualty of the current government's decision to call a snap election in the summer of 2021. Now here we are today on the third attempt to get this legislation through Parliament to update Canadian law and ensure that Canadian law aligns with the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Bill S-9 was introduced in the Senate by the government's representative in the Senate, Marc Gold. I thank him for introducing the bill. He did so on June 2, 2022, about a year and a half ago. The bill would make several amendments to the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act to ensure that the act is consistent with the convention.

● (1040)

Currently, the schedule of the Canadian act does not reflect the Chemical Weapons Convention's latest listing of chemical weapons, which came into effect in June 2020, three and a half years ago. The latest listing of the convention includes additional toxic chemicals under schedule 1, which now includes novichok-style agents. Novichok is a comprehensive label. It encompasses various groups of nerve agents that originated during the Cold War era in the Soviet Union as a part of its chemical weapons program. Future listings of chemicals under the Chemical Weapons Convention are expected to take place from time to time as technology evolves and toxic chemicals and their precursors change and require the list in the convention to be updated.

That is why this bill is important. It is going to ensure that future legislation is not required to update the list of chemicals regulated in Canada under the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act. This bill would delete the schedule in the Canadian act

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and replace it with reference to the Chemical Weapons Convention, so that for items listed in the Chemical Weapons Convention, Canadian law will automatically align with changes that are expected to happen from time to time under the convention. To be more precise, Bill S-9 states:

This enactment amends the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act by deleting the schedule to that Act and the references to that schedule in that Act, in order to avoid potential discrepancies between the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, as amended from time to time, and the portions of that Convention that are reproduced in that schedule.

The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act are very important, and here is why. Eight years ago, in 2015, Emilian Gebrev was poisoned in Bulgaria by novichok, which, again, is a Soviet era military-grade nerve agent. Five years ago, in 2018, a former Russian spy, Sergei Skripal, and his daughter were poisoned in the United Kingdom using a novichok nerve agent. That was by foreign agents working for the Russian Federation who carried out those attempted assassinations on foreign soil.

As the parliamentary secretary mentioned in his remarks, there is significant danger not only to the victims of Russia's security operations but to random victims as well, because these agents remain in place and any handling of them can result in serious illness or death, as we have seen in the case of the attempts on Sergei Skripal and his daughter's lives. Also, in 2017, Kim Jong Nam, the half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, was assassinated with a different nerve agent, but nevertheless an item now covered under the new convention, at the Kuala Lumpur airport in Malaysia. Recently, Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was poisoned and placed into an induced coma. Fortunately, he survived.

These events are ongoing, and it is important that Canadian law give us the proper tools to deal with and deter this kind of activity.

Chemical weapons are being used today, and they threaten citizens around the world, including in western countries. The Russian Federation is using novichok. It appears to be one of its weapons of choice for assassinations on foreign soil. It is a lethal nerve agent that even in the smallest quantities can potentially kill thousands of people. It is a threat to the safety and security of western citizens, including Canadians. That is why we must have all tools available to stop the proliferation and use of chemical weapons, including by ensuring that the convention and Canadian law are kept up to date.

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● (1045)

Just this year, on July 7, the United States announced that it had in fact destroyed the last of its chemical weapons. This is an important milestone and a testament to the success of the convention. There were 72,304 metric tons of declared chemical weapons destroyed worldwide. However, Russia, having completely destroyed its declared stockpile of chemical weapons, obviously has undeclared stockpiles as well, including novichok, which it uses to target people in western democracies.

Last month, we observed Remembrance Day. Canadians in communities all over Canada joined war veterans to commemorate the sacrifices of members of the Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Navy and the Royal Canadian Air Force. Remembrance Day was originally called Armistice Day, to commemorate the first anniversary of the armistice. It was commemorated for the first time on that day in 1919 across the British Commonwealth, including in Canada. It marked the agreement that brought an end to the First World War. The occasion of Remembrance Day is an opportunity to reflect on the history of chemical weapons and their use. The First World War has now passed out of living memory, as no one is still alive with a living memory of that time. However, we do remember, and it is important that we do every year, and we recall, as we are debating this update to Canadian law, that during World War I, chemical warfare was employed by all belligerents, including Canada. Germany introduced chlorine gas into the battlefield for the first time during the Second Battle of Ypres. It targeted not only French and Algerian troops but also Canadian troops.

Initially, chemical weapons required very specialized troops for their handling, and relied on things like wind conditions to disperse them across the battlefield. Over time, new delivery systems, including artillery shells and gas projectors, were developed. Unlike chlorine gas, which had a distinctive colour and odour, subsequent gases became colourless and odourless, making their detection much more challenging. In response to these toxic agents, protective measures like gas masks and defensive tools were devised, and by the end of the war, the use of gas had become commonplace, with soldiers routinely donning masks before entering combat. Chemical weapons were used by all belligerents, particularly in the final 100 days of the war. In total, chemical weapons then injured 1.2 million individuals and resulted in 90,000 fatal casualties.

In the lead-up to the Second World War, there was widespread international concern regarding the potential extensive use of chemical weapons. Italy had deployed lethal gas against Abyssinia, and Japan deployed chemical and biological weapons in its invasion of China in 1937 and onward. It is worth noting that in the cases of both the Abyssinian War and the invasion of China, there was a disparity of access to these weapons. Only one side had access to gas, so gas was used by these belligerents.

In the Second World War, both sides possessed chemical weapons but refrained from using them, I guess one could say on an early application of the mutually assured destruction theory; both felt that they had to build up stockpiles, if for no other reason than deterrence. While chemical warfare was not ultimately used during that conflict, the threat of its use on a massive scale remained.

During the 1980s, we saw that Iraq used chemical weapons against Iran and also against its own Kurdish population. Chemical weapons have been used by the Assad regime in Syria, targeting civilians and deliberately killing hundreds of them. We have also seen that Daesh has used chemical weapons in both Syria and Iraq.

● (1050)

There is a long history of failure to ban and control the production and deployment of chemical weapons. Among the earliest examples of attempts to regulate chemical weapons was the Hague convention of 1899, which enacted prohibitions against the use of poisons in warfare and deployment of projectile weapons designed solely for the dissemination of asphyxiating gas. The powers that had ratified the convention then eventually amassed substantial stockpiles of chemical warfare agents and proceeded to use them indiscriminately during the First World War. The Hague convention of 1899 was not effective in preventing their use.

Following the war, the Geneva Protocol of 1925 prohibited the use of chemical weapons, and Canada ratified the protocol but nevertheless actively engaged in research and production of chemical and biological weapons. While there was not widespread use of chemical weapons in the Second World War that followed, the protocol itself did not prevent even countries like Canada that signed it from researching and developing their own chemical weapons capability.

That leads us to the Chemical Weapons Convention that is in force today. The convention includes a verification regime that is administered by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which is based in The Hague. It is important that we keep this convention current and that Canada keep its laws current. The convention has been successful. It does lack in some aspects; it is not perfect, and there have been uses since it came into force. For the most part, the convention does not ban, in its schedules, chemicals that act on the central nervous system; there is currently only one such chemical listed. Biological toxins, which are chemicals produced by animals and nature, and bio-regulators, which are chemicals produced by the human body, are not included in the schedules. These chemicals could be fabricated or exploited for military purposes, so this is something worth exploring during the next review of the convention.

As technology evolves and as new chemicals and chemical weapons emerge, the convention must rely on amendments to capture and prohibit new chemical weapons developments. Bill S-9 represents an opportunity for us to maintain Canada's unwavering commitment to limiting the harm of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear arms and biological weapons. Canada has made significant contributions to the convention by being among its first signatories. Our ongoing involvement is evident as Canada remains a dedicated member of the executive council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, underscoring our ongoing commitment to this vital cause.

I would again like to thank Senator Gold for introducing the bill. My Conservative colleagues and I will support Bill S-9. I do urge its swift adoption in order to fulfill Canada's international obligations. I urge the House to ensure that Canada's own laws remain up to date and consistent not only with those of our allies but also with those among the broader community of nations that strives to suppress the use, proliferation, research and development of chemical weapons.

Since the horrors of the First World War, there has been a near-universal consensus that mass deployment of chemical weapons is barbarically inhumane, even in war. A combination of calculated self-interest over the past several decades, including this agreement, has mostly prevented nations from using them, and the world has not seen the mass-scale deployment of chemical weapons since the First World War. However, we have, sadly, seen numerous smaller-scale examples of the use of chemical weapons, and Russia continues to use them for political assassination in foreign countries. Therefore, modernizing the agreement by deleting the existing schedule of prohibited agents and merely adding reference to the convention itself would ensure that Canada's laws comply with our obligations and that we possess the most current tools for the deterrence and proliferation of chemical weapons.

• (1055)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member says he is recommending swift adoption, yet the childish behaviour we have witnessed from the Conservative Party, which comes from the Conservative House leadership, is truly amazing. Think about it: The last time we attempted to bring Bill S-9 to debate, the Conservatives moved a motion of concurrence in order to prevent members from debating it. They moved that motion in order to filibuster the legislation.

At the beginning of his comments, the member said that they want to debate the legislation, yet he prevents the debate from occurring, and now he says that he would like swift passage of the legislation. It is totally amazing and mind-blowing how the Conservative Party wants to play childish games. If the member supports the legislation, as he says he does, when will the Conservative Party stop playing these childish games and allow legislation to pass into committee?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Conservatives believe the House should sit on Monday, December 18 to pass Bill C-234, which would take the carbon tax off farmers and lower food prices for Canadians. I wonder whether you would find there is unanimous consent to do that.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): If members are looking for unanimous consent, they need to talk to the House leaders of the other parties to see whether they are willing to do that. Otherwise, these motions will not be accepted in the House.

The hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge has the floor.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Madam Speaker, in response to the question from the member for Winnipeg North, I do not even know what to say. His government killed the bill not once but twice in the previous

Parliament. We are three and a half years late getting the bill done because of the government's failure to approve it in the past.

We do, indeed, from time to time introduce concurrence motions in the House so we may debate important work that comes out of committee and get recorded votes on them. We are debating the bill now. I support it. I hope the government will not kill it again.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, it was on April 22, 1915, that completely untried Canadian troops were hit with the first mass gas attack, and the Canadians held the line. We have a lot at stake in this treaty.

Given the fact that we see Putin has used chemical weapons for support in Syria, and that Rumsfeld supported Saddam Hussein in the fight against Iran in using chemical weapons, we need good international players that can actually deal with these serious issues in a time of a destabilized international global reality. Does the member think Canada could play that role, with the kind of resources that could be brought to bear, given our history with chemical weapons and given our role as a middle power?

Mr. Pat Kelly: Madam Speaker, it is not often that the member gives me an opportunity to agree with him and to affirm, as I am sure he does, based on the question, that Canada does have an important responsibility to be a leader in the world in the suppression of weapons of mass destruction. He is right; Russia is a threat to world security in its ongoing use of chemical weapons as a tool of assassination. We do not know what its undeclared stockpiles are, so I do agree with the member on the importance of the agreement and on the importance of Canadian leadership in this matter.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1100)

[English]

HURON HEIGHTS WARRIORS

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Madam Speaker, achievement is defined in the dictionary as a thing done successfully, typically by effort, courage or skill. All are defining characteristics of both the senior and junior Huron Heights Warriors.

These Newmarket football teams are champions, having made history with both teams winning the provincial titles in the same year, and they are only the second program in Ontario high school football to have met that challenge.

Statements by Members

Football is, in many ways, the ultimate game. It takes a complete team effort with everyone executing at the highest level to achieve victory on the field. To coach Heath Weir, his fellow coaches and the support staff, I send my congratulations. What they have achieved with the Warriors program is remarkable. It is remarkable for what has been accomplished this year, and even more remarkable for the longevity of its success. Their program has emerged as a true dynasty in the world of high school football.

* * *

CHRISTMAS

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Madam Speaker, in 1973, Audrey Martin knew her neighbour was an unemployed, single mother who had recently lost a child. Her neighbour had very little in her cupboards and nothing under the tree for her three-year-old son.

On Christmas Eve, Audrey Martin showed up at her neighbour's door with a Christmas miracle. Her small act of kindness has never been forgotten, and my mother and I will be eternally grateful for the donations of food and gifts she had collected from our neighbours to put under our tree.

Mother Teresa said, "The good news is that God still loves the world through each one of you. You are God's good news, you are God's love in action." For my mother and I, Audrey Martin was God's good news and God's love in action.

There is more good news, and it is the good news of a small child named Jesus who was born in a manger. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." That is the reason we celebrate Christmas. I want to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

* * *

CAPE BRETON—CANSO

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as we bring 2023 to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to wish my colleagues, constituents and, indeed, all Canadians a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Looking back on how we have been finishing the year, I am delighted to share that, in the last two months alone, our government has invested over \$155 million in my riding of Cape Breton—Canso. This federal funding is going toward causes that truly matter for people in my riding, such as airport infrastructure, public transit and green energy.

By making these investments, our government is helping Cape Breton and northeastern Nova Scotia grow. With green energy in particular, we are helping our communities tap into an entirely new economy, which could have generational impacts, not just in my riding, but throughout the province.

To all my constituents who are listening, there is more to come in 2024, and I cannot wait to share it with them.

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives voted against it and the Liberals voted against it because they said a national dental care program could not be done, but the NDP is proving them wrong.

Under the NDP's national dental care program, millions of Canadians will be able to visit the dentist for the first time. This includes seniors, people with disabilities and young people. It is the biggest expansion of public health care in this country in over 60 years.

What do people in Northwest B.C. say about this program? Allan from Smithers calls it a "Massive improvement". Sarah from Terrace says, "This is a game changer for many families!" Kathleen from Prince Rupert says, "this is life-saving for people".

Right across Canada, people who access the program will save over \$1,300 per year. That is money they can spend on groceries, heat and other necessities. We are stronger when we take care of each other, and national dental care is going to make Canada stronger. I am so proud to be a part of this massive improvement.

* * *

[Translation]

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Madam Speaker, another year has come and gone, and the holiday season is now upon us. I would like to wish a merry Christmas to all members, assistants, pages, support staff, civil servants, and all Canadians.

The Christmas spirit is very much alive in Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. Homes are decorated with Christmas lights. Our values of sharing, generosity and friendship have spread far and wide in every one of our towns. I have gotten some good news from Santa Claus: The children in our region have been good this year, and he will have plenty of houses to visit.

I would also like to thank the donors, volunteers and businesses who donated their money, food and time to support our local food banks. Christmas is all about community. It is the perfect time to share our joy and kindness with our neighbours, friends and family.

I wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

* * *

● (1105)

[English]

CHRISTMAS

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker,

'Twas the week before Christmas after eight years, the Grinch,
Snuggled warm in his mansion, wondering who next to pinch.

Was it farmers or families or perhaps the first nations?
He needed more money for his friends and vacations.

"If they protest, I'll punish! They have unacceptable views. I'll force on them lockdowns; they'll watch CBC news."

As Canadians suffer, "Should we eat; should we heat?"
Their cries did not bother the Grinch's elite.

But up from the opposition benches did appear
A common sense leader with no glasses this year!

"No more scandals, mismanagement, no ethical lapses;
I'll build you more homes and axe carbon taxes."

Canadians know that our country's not lost,
It's just that these Liberals are not worth the cost.

We have great people, resources and land.
Canadians have culture—our future's not bland.

As he turned and he waved, said, "Canada's best days are a cinch.
It's time to say bye to the tired, mean, old Grinch.

Merry Christmas to Canada—reverse going broke.
Let's hope that next year is a year without "woke"!

* * *

CHRISTMAS IN VAUGHAN—WOODBIDGE

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are 10 days away from Christmas, and the festive spirit is in full swing in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge. From the Woodbridge Christmas in the Village events to seniors Christmas luncheons and donations to the Vaughan Food Bank, Vaughan residents continue to exemplify the meaning behind it all.

Beyond the twinkling lights and the festive cheer, the true meaning of Christmas is the spirit of giving. We know that Jesus is the reason for the season. He reminds us that joy is the net through which we build community. Let us allow Christ's joy to fill our hearts and spread to everyone we encounter. In the face of global conflicts, we can shine the beacon of hope that is Christmas rather than create more darkness.

It is easy to be angry and shout, but it takes real effort to show up for our neighbours when they need us most. Through the holidays and all year round, we will always be there for Canadians.

I wish my constituents in Vaughan—Woodbridge and all Canadians *buon Natale e felice anno nuovo*. Merry Christmas and happy new year to everyone.

* * *

MISSISSAUGA—LAKESHORE

Mr. Charles Sousa (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was fortunate to be elected the member of Parliament for Mississauga—Lakeshore this time last year, and I wish to share some of our community's many accomplishments.

Our neighbours enjoyed our "Paint the Town Red" Canada Day, the Southside Shuffle Blues and Jazz Festival, Carassauga celebrations, Halloween in the village, Cabinfest and many other cultural festivals throughout the city welcoming tens of thousands of visitors.

As Christmas approaches, generous donors and volunteers are wrapping up the 15th annual 'Twas the Bite Before Christmas

Statements by Members

turkey drive, which provides essential meals to the Mississauga food banks. We also saw critical investments to build new, affordable homes and to support employers. There was the hiring of Canada summer jobs and the expansion of the Trans Canada Trail along the Jim Tovey Lakeview Conservation Area to enhance our precious waterfront. I am so proud of our community, and I am privileged to represent it in the House.

Merry Christmas and best wishes for a prosperous and healthy new year to everyone.

* * *

HOUSING

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, from my community of Kelowna—Lake Country, a mom told me recently that she believes her daughters will never own their own home. Now, it takes over 25 years to save for a down payment on a mortgage for the average home. This means that a young adult fresh out of college will be in their fifties before they will be able to buy a home.

It was not like this a generation ago. In 1972, Canada's population was 22 million, and we built around 230,000 homes. In 2022, Canada's population was 39 million, and we built around 220,000 homes. We built fewer homes last year than we did 50 years ago.

Inflation has hit record highs going back 40 years. Inflationary deficit spending policies of the NDP-Liberal government have caused high inflation, which caused higher interest rates. I spoke to someone yesterday whose home mortgage upon renewal last month went up over \$2,000 a month. After eight years, the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

* * *

● (1110)

CHRISTMAS IN YUKON

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Yukon may seem cold and remote, but Yukoners are warmly connected to people and events in all parts of the globe. We know that in these hard times there are many Canadians, and so many around the world, who will not have the luxury of celebrating with loved ones.

[Translation]

As we celebrate Christmas and other traditions, may we keep those who are dealing with violence and poverty in our hearts and minds.

[English]

Let us, as parliamentarians, rest, reconnect and come back ready to work for Canadians and for Canada's place in the world. Neither justice nor peace should face boundaries.

Statements by Members

In *The Spell of the Yukon*, Robert Service describes how, despite the gold, Yukon's true value lies elsewhere:

It's the great, big, broad land 'way up yonder,
It's the forests where silence has lease;
It's the beauty that thrills me with wonder,
It's the stillness that fills me with peace.

That is the Yukon I cannot wait to return to and enjoy with my family. I wish for everyone in the House and for all my constituents at home to have a joyful and peaceful holiday.

* * *

CARBON TAX

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Madam Speaker, Saskatchewan has always been the breadbasket of the world, but after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, it is getting more difficult for Saskatchewan farmers to provide the food the world needs to eat.

Every year, the carbon tax on farmers goes up, and every year those additional costs get passed on to consumers. Sooner or later, farmers are going to have to decide if they will continue to pass on those rising costs to consumers or cut back production and let the world become dependent on food from foreign countries, which is often produced with a much higher carbon footprint.

Fortunately, Conservatives have the solution. Conservative Bill C-234 would remove the carbon tax on fuels used for grain drying, allowing those savings to be passed on to consumers. Will the Prime Minister pass Bill C-234 or show once again that he is just not worth the cost?

* * *

CARBON TAX

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, do members know what the Prime Minister and the grinch have in common? They are both trying to steal Christmas.

After eight years of inflationary spending, the price of everything necessary for a happy holiday has gone up. For those who are not now looking to a food bank for their Christmas dinner, a recent report from Dalhousie University shows that the cost of the average Christmas dinner is up significantly.

As we approach Christmas, the Liberals' gift to all of us is making our food more expensive. They harassed senators into gutting Conservative Bill C-234, which would have reduced the price of groceries by giving farmers a carbon tax carve-out. In fact, they plan to quadruple that carbon tax. Jack, a grain farmer from southern Manitoba, paid \$6,000 in carbon taxes on his most recent bill, which will soon increase to \$24,000 in a single month.

When will the Prime Minister axe the tax, help our farmers and allow Canadians to have a merry Christmas?

* * *

GOVERNMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Milton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, thinking back a few short months ago, we arrived back in the

House of Commons to continue supporting our neighbours with ambitions to support housing affordability and the rising cost of living and to make key improvements to health care delivery in Canada.

Last summer was also the worst year on record for wildfires and extreme weather, so our obligation to address climate change was never more acutely in focus. Despite Conservatives' attempts to filibuster, obstruct and mislead, we have come through for Canadians with a plan and some real progress in key areas.

This fall, we forced the grocery CEOs to stabilize prices while we work on the Competition Act within the grocery sector and introduce a corporate grocery code of conduct. We have removed the HST on new rental housing construction. We have removed the GST on counselling and psychotherapy services. We have introduced a dental care program for nine million uninsured Canadians who have had no access to existing dental coverage. We have introduced legislation to ban replacement workers to support unions and workers. We are the first country in the world to commit to both a cap on oil and gas emissions and reductions in methane, with a plan to protect more nature in 2024.

The work does not end there, as 2024 presents more opportunities to support our neighbours.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, New Democrats are committed to challenging all forms of discrimination that prevent full participation in our economy. Although updates to the Employment Equity Act are long overdue, they still will not be under the tree this year.

On Monday, the Employment Equity Act review task force released its recommendations to include Black Canadians and 2SLGBTQI+ Canadians in the federal Employment Equity Act as listed groups. The task force notes that, while Canada has shown leadership on other 2SLGBTQI+ issues, we are lagging behind other parts of the world on employment equity. It also notes that transpeople are particularly at risk of employment discrimination and resulting poverty.

The White Paper on the Status of Trans and Gender Diverse People, which has the support of the Canadian Labour Congress, also recommends this addition to the Employment Equity Act. All it would take would be to add eight words to include both of these groups.

After over a year of consultations, the labour minister needs to table legislation to get this done.

• (1115)

[Translation]

HÉLÈNE LADOUCEUR

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, 50 years or a whole lifetime of volunteering is an incredible accomplishment. That is why I am rising today to pay tribute to an equally incredible woman, Hélène Ladouceur.

Hélène is a Royal Military College Saint-Jean icon, especially since she was recently inducted into the institution's hall of fame. She first became involved with the college shortly after she moved to the area in 1973 through the Ex-Cadet Foundation, where she still coordinates social events.

Over the years, she has worked with no less than 17 of the college's 25 commanding officers and she has also always looked after all the officer cadets who came and went, never hesitating to welcome many of them into her home during school breaks. She will always be remembered for her warm presence, listening ear and love for this second family.

To Hélène, the mother of the Royal Military College Saint-Jean, today all those children are joining their voices with mine to say thank you.

* * *

[English]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadian farmers feed our communities and the world. They are the great innovators and the stewards of the land.

The farmers of Sturgeon River—Parkland are no exception. From seed potatoes to grains, cattle, chicken and dairy, our region is the french-fry basket of the world. However, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, it is getting harder for farmers to make a living. Farmers in my community are sending me their carbon tax bills to heat their barns and dry their grain. It is tens of thousands of dollars each month, and the NDP-Liberal coalition is planning to quadruple that tax.

Canadian farmers are struggling to compete with American farmers who do not pay the carbon tax. The NDP-Liberal government would rather sacrifice our food sovereignty to foreign corporate farms that do not pay carbon taxes rather than supporting our hard-working farm families here at home.

Families, farmers and first nations know that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. They are looking forward to a Conservative government that will bring back powerful paycheques and axe the tax.

* * *

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Conservative MPs have been relentless in their attempt to shut down Parliament.

Oral Questions

Their tactics have included a 30-hour voting marathon temper tantrum, filibustering the sustainable jobs bill by moving over 20,000 amendments, filibustering the Métis self-government bill, blocking the debate on the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement multiple times and moving procedural motions to block debate in this House on one out of every three days this fall session.

Despite these childish games, the government has still been able to deliver for Canadians. We have expanded dental care to seniors, passed the Affordable Housing and Groceries Act, and adopted a national framework for a school food program.

I am hopeful that after the Leader of the Opposition has a time out over the holidays, he will come back and actually get ready to work for Canadians.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, while Canadians go cold and hungry this Christmas, this Prime Minister is counting down the hours to another taxpayer-funded beach vacation. He and his MPs are taking a six-week holiday for voting time and time again to quadruple the carbon tax and defeat Bill C-234, as they pressured senators to gut the bill that this House already passed.

If they will not axe the tax today, why will they not come to work on Monday and finally take the tax off farmers, so that Canadians can eat this Christmas?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by wishing all members in the House happy holidays. I think everybody will be enjoying time with their families over the holidays and we look forward to seeing everyone back here in February.

I think it is important to make sure that the facts are right. It was actually Conservative senators who were bullying independent senators. In fact, the Conservative leader in the Senate was actually sanctioned by the other place for his terrible behaviour.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, we all know that the biggest bully in this House is the Prime Minister. He is squashing any hope that Canadians had for getting relief this holiday season.

Oral Questions

They are doubling down, once again, on their plan to quadruple the tax on gas, on groceries, on home heating and on everything else. There is hardly enough money for food, let alone Christmas presents.

As two million people are eating in a food bank, families are left to skip meals and children write Santa asking for warm boots rather than toys. Why do these Liberals insist on making Santa deliver the basic necessities instead of toys this Christmas?

• (1120)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to wish everybody in this House a merry Christmas, a happy Hanukkah, happy holidays and a happy new year.

I also hope that the Conservatives come back willing to work in the new year.

Conservatives continue to take farmers for granted. Not only do they vote against Canadian farmers, they have also abandoned Ukrainian farmers. Ukraine is the breadbasket of the world. Time and time again, they have been given the opportunity to vote for the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement and, disappointingly, they have voted against it every single time.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are ready to fight for Canadians every single day in this House, despite them not wanting to.

It turns out that Santa is not the only one flying around the world this Christmas. He has got some serious competition from the environment minister, except the minister does not fly a sleigh. He flies on a private jet. From Beijing to Dubai, he burns fuel and taxpayer dollars just to rub elbows with dictators and pop stars. He emits more carbon with one flight than most Canadians do in a whole year, while telling Canadians to pay more carbon taxes. The more he flies around, the higher the tax goes.

Will he park the hypocrisy and finally axe the tax before Christmas?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, speaking of hypocrisy, we know what the Conservatives wanted to give Canadians for Christmas and that is cuts to the vital programs and services that they care about.

In fact, just last week, they voted against \$10-a-day child care. They voted against dental care for seniors and for children. They voted against Operation Unifier, which is an important NATO mission to Ukraine. In fact, when they refer to Ukraine as a foreign land, they forget that the country that is invading it is Russia, which is a border of Canada as well. We want to protect our sovereignty here at home. That is what they would give to Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, Christmas is just around the corner and a lot of families are worried about whether they can have their traditional holiday meal. Prices are just too high. Parents are having to choose between feeding their children

or putting gifts under the tree. There is nothing funny about it. That is the result of eight years of the policies of this government, aided by its Bloc allies who want to drastically increase the carbon tax.

Will the Prime Minister listen to our demands to end inflationary taxes so that Quebeckers can have a stress-free Christmas?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, while the Conservative Party wants to see our planet burn, we intend to protect our communities. While the member for Kelowna—Lake Country wanted to see our planet burn, there were homes in her community gutted by forest fires.

If the Conservatives really want us to help with affordability, we have to protect communities from natural disasters. The Conservatives still want to see all that. We, however, want to protect communities.

* * *

FINANCE

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question was about children and Christmas.

The folks at Moisson Kamouraska in La Pocatière are doing a great job, but they are facing growing demand, which is up 37% since 2019. Some 25% of their clients have low-paying jobs.

After eight years, we cannot count on this Prime Minister or his Bloc allies to give them a break. It is costly to vote for the Bloc Québécois.

Will the Prime Minister follow our common-sense plan and eliminate inflationary spending so that Quebeckers can have a proper Christmas dinner?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to hear about Moisson Kamouraska.

I would like to know what the folks at Moisson Kamouraska think of the Conservatives, who oppose the Canada child benefit, which reduces child poverty by 40% every month in every riding, including my opposition colleague's riding.

What do the folks at Moisson Kamouraska think of the Conservatives opposing affordable, quality child care that reduces gender inequality and gives more money to middle-class families?

• (1125)

DENTAL CARE

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, the federal government is trying to pick a fight on dental care for no reason. Quebec agrees with expanding coverage, and Ottawa knows that. The difference is that Quebec wanted to expand coverage through the RAMQ public plan.

Instead, the Liberals and the NDP decided to favour a private company, Sun Life Insurance, over the public plan. We no longer have the left-leaning parties we once did. A simple agreement with Quebec would have led to better public dental care coverage in Quebec.

Why did the Liberals and the NDP choose to favour the private sector on health?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is clear that the Bloc Québécois is the one trying to pick a fight. Our party, the government, is the one trying to come up with solutions.

We are having discussions with Minister Dubé—

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am going to have the hon. minister restart. We cannot hear him.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I know you all love his jacket and it looks great on him. He is going out this year in style. It is lovely, but I just want to remind members that we need to hear what the hon. minister has to say.

The hon. minister.

[Translation]

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I wish you happy holidays and a merry Christmas.

It is clear that the Bloc Québécois is the one looking for a fight. Our government is the one looking for solutions to ensure that everyone, everywhere in the country, can have access to dental care.

I have had good conversations with Quebec's health minister, Minister Dubé, and I am confident that we can find productive solutions to ensure that dental care is available everywhere.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are not trying to pick a fight. We are trying to protect our jurisdictions. Protecting our jurisdictions means protecting our ability, as a nation, to make different choices.

Quebec wanted better dental coverage through the public plan, but thanks to the Liberals and the NDP, what we are going to end up with is more private coverage through an insurance company, and not just any insurance company. Sun Life fled Quebec sometime around 1978 when we asked it to operate in French under Bill 101.

Instead, why not respect the will of Quebec, sign an agreement and enhance our public plan?

Oral Questions

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is good news. Dental care will be accessible to everyone across the country, Quebecers and Canadians alike.

That is good news, and I am wondering why the Bloc Québécois is angry about it. It really is good news for everyone. Of course, there are some details to iron out, and we are going to talk to Quebec to make sure that we get the right results, but our goal is to improve the quality of health care across the country.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, we all know Canadians are better off when New Democrats are fighting for them in Ottawa. Here is what we succeeded in fighting for in this session: anti-scab legislation to empower workers to fight for better wages and working conditions; for indigenous, by indigenous housing to build suitable, affordable homes for first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples; national child care and dental care, putting thousands of dollars back in the pockets of Canadians.

While the Conservatives vote to gut and cut these services, New Democrats are delivering results and we will keep fighting in the new year, but why does the government always wait for the NDP to force them to deliver?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are very proud of the record we have in delivering \$10-a-day child care for families across this country, delivering dental care for low- and moderate-income children and seniors throughout this country and delivering a sustainable future for Canadians across this country.

This government is here every day fighting for Canadians, and we are happy to work with any party in this House that wants to support Canadian families, Canadian workers and the future of this country.

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, thanks to the NDP, Quebecers and Canadians are seeing concrete results, namely, funding for social housing, anti-scab legislation, dental care for millions of Canadians and Quebecers, and consumer protection. In Quebec alone, nearly 50% of the population will benefit from the NDP dental insurance. While the Conservatives aim to cut services for people, the NDP is delivering results. If we do not force the Liberals to act, we know they will drag their feet.

Why are the Liberals always waiting on the NDP in order to deliver the help people need?

Oral Questions

● (1130)

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that is why it is so important to work together. There is no point in simply criticizing, raising a fuss or creating problems. I really like it when other parties come up with solutions, because times are tough right now, all over the world. It is time to work together, to find solutions like dental care and the other results this government has delivered for all Canadians.

* * *

FINANCE

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, Moisson Québec reports that the face of poverty has changed. Roughly 30% of the people using food banks in the greater Quebec City area have a job. A growing number of students, newcomers and seniors are using food banks. That is the legacy of the Liberal government and its Bloc Québécois allies who want to radically increase the carbon tax, which is increasing the price of everything.

Will the Prime Minister listen to reason and axe his inflationary taxes once and for all?

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we know that many Canadians are struggling to put food on the table these days, so it was especially disappointing, last Friday, to watch the Conservatives vote against measures such as the strategy to bring in a food school program. We know that students learn better on a full stomach, and we are working on that. However, last week, the Conservatives showed us their true colours when they voted against that measure.

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would love to know what my colleague thinks about food banks that are overwhelmed by the demand. For example, La Bouchée généreuse in Quebec City is preparing twice as many hampers as it did two years ago. Its staff perform small miracles every day, but they are wondering, and rightly so, how they are going to cope. That is the result of the Bloc-Liberal coalition. It is costly to vote for the Bloc Québécois.

Will the Prime Minister listen to us and scrap his inflationary taxes and deficits so that Quebec families can have enough to eat, especially at Christmas?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for asking this question and for mentioning La Bouchée généreuse in Quebec City, which I know very well. I am sure the folks there are also wondering how the Conservatives can oppose the Canada child benefit, which reduces poverty in the Quebec City region by 40% every month, lifting more than 400,000 children across the country out of poverty every month.

How, in 2023, can the Conservatives claim to care about poverty and then oppose what La Bouchée généreuse, Moisson Kamouraska, Moisson Québec and Moisson Bellechasse do every day, namely reduce child poverty?

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, yesterday, Empire Foods, one of Canada's largest grocers, stated that its suppliers were still passing along price increases above the rate of inflation. As costs go up for Canadian farmers and food processors, they have a choice to make: increase prices or go out of business.

After eight years, Canadians have a bad taste of what is in store. When we tax the farmer more and tax the trucker more, Canadians pay more.

When will the Prime Minister pull his head out of the sand and acknowledge this carbon tax is the root of food inflation in Canada?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that is quite the statement from the member opposite, who in the past has voted to not go ahead with tax cuts for the middle class and who has voted against the Canada child benefit. Just a few days ago, the Conservatives voted against more homes being built. They voted against, in fact, shelter spaces for women and children who are trying to escape domestic violence.

It is true, of course, that Canadians are going through a difficult time and we need to continue to be there for them with supports. The Canada child benefit, which I mentioned; the Canada dental benefit; day care; and support services are all there, and we will continue that support.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, we voted 134 times last week to show the government that it had a lack of confidence from the Canadian people.

Canadians are responding to food inflation in two ways: buying less-nutritious food and lining up for food banks. Reliance on food banks is at all-time highs. Worse to come, the NDP-Liberal coalition is committed to quadrupling the carbon tax on Canadian farmers—

● (1135)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry. A lot of individuals seem to want to contribute and it is not time to contribute, so I am going to get the hon. member to repeat his question.

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, we voted 134 times last week to throw the government out through confidence measures.

Canadians are responding to food inflation in two ways: buying less-nutritious food or lining up at food banks. Reliance on food banks is at record highs. Worse to come, the NDP-Liberal coalition is committed to quadrupling the carbon tax on Canadian farmers. That means those who can afford it the least will be punished the most. It is obvious the Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

There are two options here. Will the government exempt Canadian farmers from the carbon tax or should Canada import more non-taxed foreign food?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to point out that the stunt, the overnight filibuster, the member pointed out cost taxpayers \$2 million, so as he preaches about fiscal responsibility, it is a bit tough to stomach.

The food report he references said explicitly that it is misleading to suggest that carbon-pricing policies are affecting food prices. Moreover, Trevor Tombe said last week, “If we got rid of the carbon tax and the rebate, then this would harm a much larger fraction of lower- and middle-income households than it would higher-income households.”

The Conservatives are making it very clear who they are standing for: It is big oil executives and the wealthiest Canadians.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker,

'Twas the night before Christmas when the members across,
Doubled down on their plan to keep raising costs.
They set out to do it by taxing the carbon,
On the hard-working people who do all the farming.
This dastardly plan to make our farmers poor,
Was almost disrupted by Bill C-234.
However, the time is coming for a bigger course correction,
When Conservatives bring home the carbon tax election.
After eight years we have gone from feasting to scraps,
So for Christmas will they finally axe the tax?

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the member. Bravo on the great performance. However, I am going to remind him that every time grain farmers come to Ottawa they ask for new markets.

The Conservatives had a choice last week. They had a choice to support grain farmers, support the agricultural bureau in Manila and support the Indo-Pacific strategy. They had a choice and they voted against this. On this side of the House, we not only walk the walk but support our farmers.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker,

Farmers do not like their carbon tax plan,
They do not like their pipeline ban.
They do not like it here or there,
They do not think it is just or fair.
It taxes the food the farmer grows,
It taxes the tractor when he mows.
It taxes the food as it gets trucked,
It taxes the people as they get squeezed.
Liberal policies are breaking our backs,
So when will they finally axe the tax?

Oral Questions

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think what Dr. Seuss is concerned about is food security. Food security is relevant to the member and the people he represents in Alberta, because the good Ukrainian Canadians in Alberta know that Ukraine represents the breadbasket of the world.

It is not just Ukrainian Canadians who are disappointed in the member and his caucus. It is Polish Canadians, it is Baltic Canadians and it is every eastern European person who stands against the authoritarianism of Vladimir Putin. The member has been noted for combatting Communist authoritarianism. Where was he last week when we voted on that?

* * *

[Translation]

NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, we now know what the breakdown of Google's royalty payments is going to look like. Of the \$100 million specified in the agreement, \$30 million is earmarked for electronic media, \$7 million for CBC/Radio-Canada and the rest for print media. This amount of money will not fix the media crisis for newspapers, television stations or radio, by any stretch, but \$7 million for the CBC? Seriously?

Since every dollar counts and every dollar can help save a local newspaper or a regional radio station, will the Minister of Canadian Heritage ask the CBC to keep its hands off this tiny little pot?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Last month, we announced a historic agreement with Google to compensate local journalists for their important work. This agreement will enable newsrooms to keep producing local content for their communities. We know that all media outlets are in crisis. We are doing our part to ensure that they can continue delivering the news to Canadians across the country.

● (1140)

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, if the government can guarantee that the \$7 million from Google will prevent the dismissal of 600 CBC/Radio-Canada employees, we might reconsider our position.

Seven million dollars out of \$1.5 billion is a drop in the bucket for public television, but it is a huge amount for the small weekly newspapers in our towns and regions. I have an idea. If we were to cancel the Christmas bonuses for Ms. Tait's inner circle and cancel one or two trips to Australia or the other side of the world, voilà, that would make up the \$7 million.

Can we get assurances that CBC/Radio-Canada will not dip into that fund?

Oral Questions

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we know that the Conservatives do not value the work of journalists, but we do. Over 500 newsrooms have closed in the past 10 years. That is why we passed the Online News Act, to level the playing field for journalists against the web giants.

The publication of our final regulations is the final step in the process for Bill C-18.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Speaker, after eight years, the NDP-Liberal government has driven up the cost of food for everyone. Canadians know that when we slap a carbon tax on a farmer and then a trucker, these added costs are going to be paid by consumers.

Anthony, a dairy farmer in Saskatoon, is currently paying \$55,000 every year in carbon tax. It is clear for dairy farmers that the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

Does the Prime Minister want Anthony to raise prices on consumers or does he want him to cut production so Canadians are forced to buy dairy from polluting foreign countries?

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is the Christmas season and I want to thank all farmers who are providing food for Canadians.

What the hon. member is not telling his constituents and dairy farmers is that last week he had a choice. He had a choice to support dairy farmers and all supply-managed sectors and he voted against dairy farmers, he voted against the poultry sector and he voted against the turkey sector. The Conservatives love to talk, but when it comes to supporting dairy farmers in the supply-managed sector, they are nowhere to be found.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadians do not have confidence in the government, and I am proud to say that our party voted non-confidence in the government 135 times.

It gets worse. Instead of supporting Bill C-234 to reduce the cost of food by removing the carbon tax on farmers, the NDP-Liberal government is going to quadruple the carbon tax. This will balloon Anthony's carbon tax bill from \$55,000 to \$220,000 every year. This is guaranteed to increase the price of dairy for Canadian consumers.

What does the Prime Minister want Anthony to do, raise prices or cut production and force Canadians to import dairy from polluting foreign farms?

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I see the enthusiasm they have for a particular bill on the other side. I do not hear them being as loud in supporting Bill C-282, a bill we unani-

mously supported on this side of the House that supports supply management.

Where is the member and the other side of the House's support for Bill C-282, which the supply-managed sector, dairy farmers, turkey farmers, egg farmers and chicken farmers are all asking us to support? Where is the member and that party's caucus support for Bill C-282?

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister's carbon tax is taking direct aim at Canadian farmers and hitting our grocery prices. The Liberal government does not know Jack, a grain farmer from southern Manitoba who paid \$6,000 in carbon taxes on his most recent bill. When the Liberal government quadruples its punishing carbon tax, he will be paying \$24,000 in a single month.

How will the Prime Minister advise that Jack pay that \$24,000? Will he be raising prices on Canadians? Should Jack cut back on production or should Canadians be forced to import more polluted foreign food from foreign farms?

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member for Portage—Lisgar should be embarrassed, and he should be ashamed of himself.

Last weekend, during the temper tantrum, he voted against PrairiesCan, an organization that has invested millions of dollars in Portage—Lisgar.

He voted against the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Canada's only major national museum in western Canada.

He voted against Ukrainian immigrant settlement services in Manitoba.

The member should be ashamed.

● (1145)

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am so proud, and my constituents are extremely happy, that I voted non-confidence in the government 135 times last week.

It has become clear, after eight years, that this Prime Minister is simply not worth the cost, certainly not to Jim in my riding, who is paying \$5,000 a month to heat his poultry barn. The NDP-Liberal coalition is planning to quadruple that to \$20,000 a month.

How does the government expect Jim to pay that \$20,000 a month? Is he going to cut back on production, raise prices for Canadians or are we going to be forced to import food from more polluting foreign farms?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as members of Parliament, we are representatives of the constituents in our ridings. They send us to Ottawa with one very important job, and that is to vote on government policies and programs.

Last week, the Conservatives voted on over 120 items that Canadians depend on. That member and all the members of the Conservative Party voted against farmers. They voted against supporting supply-managed sectors, like poultry, dairy, egg and turkey. The Conservatives need to stand accountable for the fact that they stand against farmers, and they stand against our agricultural sector.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, everyone deserves to know that they will make it home safely at the end of the day. Weather stations in North Island—Powell River are vital to this. However, poor upkeep and underfunding by both Liberal and Conservative governments have left our weather stations in ruins. We need real action now to fix this problem.

Will the government make sure these weather stations are working, or continue to neglect the maintenance of infrastructure that people rely on for safety?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the advocacy from the member opposite, who I know recognizes that in modern times, the incidence of extreme weather events happens more frequently because of climate change.

We have an obligation to ensure that the data and reporting from those weather stations is up to date and fully functional. That has a direct impact on the safety of our neighbours, particularly during the winter months and particularly when folks are travelling.

I sincerely appreciate the question from the member, and I would be happy to touch base with the member after question period to discuss how we could make sure that Canadians stay safe over the holidays.

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HEALTH

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, in 2019, I put forward a motion for a national suicide prevention strategy, and it received all-party support.

Since that time, the Liberals have broken their promise to deliver the Canada mental health transfer to the provinces. I am really concerned that this past week the Conservative Party voted against the national suicide prevention hotline, as well as voted against clean water on reserves. That would have a huge impact in my region. We know now the Conservative leader would break any promise on mental health.

Will the Liberals finally commit to implementing the full national suicide prevention strategy, so that people are not playing politi-

cal games on such important issues as mental health and suicide prevention?

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I totally agree with the member.

[Translation]

We continued this strategy by implementing the 988 suicide prevention line on November 30. That line has been very successful so far. It was receiving calls within the first few hours. Staff are well trained and ready to respond to help Canadians in these most difficult situations.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government is unwavering in our support for Ukraine, but there are troubling signs internationally and in this House.

This week President Zelenskyy urged American politicians not to succumb to far-right, MAGA-inspired plans to abandon Ukraine. Unfortunately, we are fighting the same fight here in Canada with Conservatives voting against the free trade agreement, voting against Operation Unifier and voting against military aid for Ukraine. This week Vladimir Putin said that western support for Ukraine is waning and that he will win the war. The situation is dire for all of us.

Can the parliamentary secretary share with Canadians what we are doing to support the Ukrainian people in their fight for their own survival, for global security and for Canada's security?

● (1150)

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Etobicoke Centre for his tireless advocacy. Earlier this week, President Biden urged Republicans not to give Vladimir Putin an early Christmas gift and abandon Ukraine. It looks like Christmas came early for the MAGA-inspired Conservatives right here in Canada. While they are busy voting against trade and against Ukraine, we will not waver. At the international trade committee, we heard directly from industry groups, the UCC and the ambassador of Ukraine, who supports this modernized trade agreement.

I hope our colleagues across the way will take some time over the holidays to reflect, come to their senses and support this trade agreement with Ukraine.

*Oral Questions***CARBON PRICING**

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Rocky Ridge Turkey Farm in Langley just received its heating bill. It was \$3,000 and shockingly, a quarter of it is the carbon tax. When it quadruples, farmer Steve's heating bill is going to be 60% carbon tax. It is ridiculous. After eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, it is clear that the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

What is his advice to farmer Steve? Is it to raise prices on Canadians or cut production so that Canadians are forced to import food from polluting foreign farms?

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is Christmas and I want to thank the turkey farmers for doing an amazing job providing turkeys for all of us during Christmas.

The one thing that the entire supply-managed sector is asking of us is to support Bill C-282. I know that caucus is split, but our caucus is unified in terms of supporting our dairy farmers, our turkey farmers, our egg farmers and our chicken farmers.

Where is that member's support and where is that caucus's support for Bill C-282 in the other chamber?

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, where is the support from the Liberals for our common-sense bill, Bill C-234, which they rejected? It is a common-sense solution to tackling food inflation.

Why did the Prime Minister reject supporting Canadian farmers and the citizens who rely on them for a good, safe, affordable food supply?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what I want for Christmas is for that member of the justice committee and his colleagues to end their antics and stop playing with people's lives. I am talking about David and Joyce Milgaard's law. That is a law that would change the way we address wrongful convictions and end systemic discrimination.

Reversing a wrongful conviction should never be a partisan matter, but filibusters by that member and his colleagues at the committee have made it exactly that. These delays mean that potentially wrongfully convicted people, like indigenous people and Black people languishing in our prisons, will just languish a little longer. That is reprehensible behaviour and that needs to be corrected immediately.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, places of worship in Edmonton have always helped with food hampers for those in need, regardless of their faith. After eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, they are seeing record increases of those seeking help. What is the government's solution? More carbon taxes. One church alone in my riding is facing a bill of \$30,000 in carbon taxes this year alone. The government is probably not aware, but they cannot pass those costs on to their congregants.

When will the government axe the tax so places of faith can have more to give to families in need?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think it is essential that we be straight with people who are going through difficult times. Those difficult times are felt all over the world. The fact that Canada is doing better than just about any other country in the world is cold comfort to people who are suffering.

What they need are solutions, like dental care so that seniors can get the dental care they need and one million children can get the dental care they need. Of course, the Conservatives voted against that. Not taking action on the climate and cutting support for vulnerable people is really what this is about.

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[Translation]

FINANCE

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, after eight years, the costly Bloc-Liberal coalition wants to radically increase the carbon tax, driving up the price of all food. They are so out of touch with reality. It is costly to vote for the Bloc Québécois.

The food bank in my region is receiving roughly 12,500 user requests a month. According to Marie Champagne of Moisson Beauce, that is an 82% increase compared to a few years ago. More than a third of these requests are for children.

Will the Prime Minister follow our common-sense plan and eliminate inflationary taxes and deficits so that Canadians can have enough to eat at Christmas?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives keep talking about the price on pollution. There are some very clear facts.

First, pollution exists. Second, climate change exists. Third, the price on pollution will help reduce emissions by one-third over the next few years. Fourth, we know that the Conservatives are no longer welcome in the Magdalen Islands. We know they will not be visiting the Plains of Abraham in the next few weeks because they voted against the Plains of Abraham project. We know they will not want to go to the St-Tite western festival. Maybe they could go to Baie-Saint-Paul where, a few months ago, there was catastrophic flooding that destroyed hundreds of homes and businesses.

Would the member for Beauce agree to invite his climate-change-denying leader to Baie-Saint-Paul so he can understand that climate change exists?

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● (1155)

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, the federal government has one last chance before the holidays to prevent a wave of SME bankruptcies. It has to extend the January 18 loan forgiveness repayment deadline for the emergency business account.

As inflation chips away at families' budgets this Christmas, the customer base for restaurants shrinks by 20% and bankruptcies increase by 81% compared to last year, the life is draining out of our main streets, and the survival of our small local businesses hangs in the balance.

Will the federal government finally extend the deadline and let our SMEs get through the winter?

[English]

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, the CEBA program provided unprecedented support to nearly 900,000 small businesses and helped keep their doors open and their lights on. Last year, our government extended the forgiveness qualification deadline by one year, to the end of this year. We know that times are still tough and that is why our government has extended the full loan for another year.

We are going to continue to listen to small businesses throughout this time and we are going to continue to have their backs.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, it seems holiday magic is not meant for everyone.

According to Statistics Canada, more than 98,000 companies are unsure whether they have the liquidity or access to credit available to repay their CEBA loans.

With 98,000 businesses in limbo, SMEs are not the only ones in need of reassurance before the holidays. Hundreds of thousands of workers need some too. The January 18 deadline is a sword hanging over all these peoples' heads.

Will the government extend the deadline so they can rest assured that their jobs will still be waiting for them after the holidays?

[English]

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, we are offering additional flexibilities for small businesses to repay their CEBA loans. This includes a full one-year extension on the term loan repayment deadline, more flexibility on refinancing and more time to access the loan forgiveness, which is a balanced and fiscally responsible approach.

We know that times are tough, which is why our government will also be cutting taxes for growing small businesses and lowering their credit card fees by up to a quarter.

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INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals' billion-dollar green slush fund is mired in corruption. Tens of millions of taxpayers' dollars have been funnelled to companies that board members have an interest in and yesterday, at the industry committee, the former chair dismissed

Oral Questions

this corruption as the normal course of business. In other words, it is business as usual.

After eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, can the minister explain why corruption and self-dealing are business as usual?

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us be clear. As soon as we found out about these alleged allegations, the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development acted quickly. The Minister of Innovation has already accepted the resignation of the CEO Annette Verschuren. We take these allegations extremely seriously, which is why we are following proper due diligence.

Our government is committed to ensure that organizations that receive federal funding adhere to the highest standards of governance. We are committed to getting to the bottom of these allegations.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, according to the whistle-blower, more than \$150 million has been misappropriated by Liberal insiders at the green slush fund and yet, incredibly, the minister continues to stand behind the board, a board that has engaged in self-dealing to the tune of tens of millions of dollars.

This is scandalous. It begs the question: What does the minister know, when did he know about it and who is he protecting?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite knows that this agency was created 20 years ago and operates at arm's length. I am not sure what the member is saying. Is he saying that if the Conservatives were in government, he would be interfering and managing the organization or is he saying that if he saw malfeasance, he would do what we did, which is to immediately call people in to review what has occurred?

What this is really about is the Conservatives being against taking action on climate change and being beholden to a base that has MAGA values.

An hon. member: It's tens of millions of dollars of corruption.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member knows full well that if he has other questions, he can ask for a late show to expand on his question today.

The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Oral Questions

● (1200)

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, after eight long years of the NDP-Liberal government, we know that it is just not worth the cost. We have the government's billion-dollar green slush fund and what do we have following that? Over \$150 million appears to have been criminally misappropriated. Rather than word-salad explanations that they are investigating, we can say that there is an Auditor General investigation and an ethics investigation, times two.

Why will the government not just call in the RCMP?

Hon. Terry Beech (Minister of Citizens' Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as we go away, we know that Canadians have had a hard year. We know that we have suffered with global inflation. We have had troubles with war in Ukraine and elsewhere. We have had, of course, the after-effects of the pandemic and climate change.

Despite that, I think Canadians can feel good about the fact that we still have the lowest net-debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7 and that we have lifted millions of Canadians out of poverty. We have done that by investing in programs like health care, dental care, the CCB, \$10-a-day child care, retirement security, and investments in communities like the Jewish Community Centre of Greater Vancouver, all investments—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Egmont.

* * *

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Atlantic Canada has had its fair share of challenges over the past three years. A deadly hurricane, natural disasters and a global pandemic have left Atlantic Canadians wondering what the future holds.

Can the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency outline for the people in my Egmont riding what the government is doing to help Atlantic Canada recover, rebuild and thrive?

Hon. Gudie Hutchings (Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Egmont is a strong voice for P.E.I. and for Atlantic Canada.

Down east, we have a saying, "Tory times are tough times", and last week, the Conservatives reminded us why, because they voted against funding to help us rebuild from hurricane Fiona. They voted against funding for small businesses to grow and create good jobs. They voted against support for our manufacturers and our farmers. They voted against funding so support Marine Atlantic, which is a vital ferry service between Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.

'Tis the season of colourful lights, but last week the Conservatives showed us their true colours. Just like when Harper was in charge, they continue to treat Atlantic Canada as—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Calgary Heritage.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Madam Speaker, after eight years, Beijing-backed raiding of Canadian resources is at an all-time high. First, it got the Prime Minister to fast-track the sale of Neo Lithium. Now, it is working on a deal to buy critical minerals in the Northwest Territories through acquiring vital minerals. Yesterday, the industry committee passed a motion calling on the minister to invoke the Investment Canada Act to protect this critical Canadian resource.

Will the minister listen to the committee and review this deal today?

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government has been clear. We will always welcome foreign investment and trade that encourages economic growth, innovation and employment opportunities in Canada. We know that economic security is national security. The bill, which would amend the ICA, brings forward improvements so the government could act more quickly when required.

We will continue to ensure Canada's prosperity while acting decisively to protect our national and economic security.

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Madam Speaker, they can act today. They need to act today. We can really see where the Prime Minister's heart lies with that non-answer: not with Canadian resources, not with Canadians, but with his love for Beijing's basic dictatorship, the same love that put three other Canadian lithium companies at risk of CCP takeover, and is now putting at risk our only rare earth mining company.

Will the minister do the right thing, put Canadians first and invoke the Investment Canada Act today?

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Investment Canada Act provides for review of the most significant investments by non-Canadians to ensure their likely net benefit to the Canadian economy. All investments, no matter their value, are subject to a national security review under the Investment Canada Act. Therefore, the acquisitions of a Canadian company by a foreign company would be subject to a review under the ICA.

Due to the confidentiality provisions of the act, we cannot comment further about the specific concern of the member.

* * *

• (1205)

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, after eight years, Canadians know that higher food prices are the NDP-Liberal coalition's official policy. Bob and Pat in Douglas just paid \$170 in carbon taxes on their propane bill to dry their corn. Bob and Pat cannot pass the carbon tax to customers; they have to take the market rate. Bob and Pat absorb all of the taxes.

Will the Prime Minister tell Bob and Pat by how much they have to cut food production in order to stay alive?

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on behalf of military families across Canada whose loved ones deployed as part of Operation Unifier to help strengthen Ukraine, I am ashamed that the member opposite from Pembroke, along with every Conservative across the way, actually voted against funding for Op Unifier and military families. Our children and our families deployed overseas to support Ukraine, and not one of them supported it.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the world has experienced its warmest year ever, with Canadians facing devastating and deadly wildfires.

At COP28, Canada advocated to secure ambitious outcomes to keep the Paris Agreement goal of limiting warming to 1.5°C within reach. With the support of a strong and diverse Canadian delegation, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change was proud to represent Canada at this important conference.

Can the parliamentary secretary inform the House about the work Canada has done?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. and hard-working colleague for his commitment to climate action.

COP28 was a remarkable meeting, where the world came together to commit to lowering our reliance on fossil fuels drastically, in fact, to phasing them out, and to commit to tripling renewable energy.

At the same time, our government committed to an oil and gas emissions cap and lowering our oil and gas emissions by 75%. We also committed to bringing forth legislation for nature protection in 2024.

Canadians can continue to rely on Liberals to be champions for the environment and climate change here in Canada and abroad.

Oral Questions

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, the Liberals are putting our coasts and indigenous communities at risk. After spending \$31 billion on the TMX pipeline, they are pushing almost 900,000 barrels of oil through the unceded territorial waters of the Pacheedaht First Nation. Now, they have stopped any discussions with the Pacheedaht First Nation about creating a marine safety centre nearby.

Why does the minister have no issue handing billions to oil and gas, but cannot spend on basic protections for indigenous communities?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, reconciliation is always at the centre of the work that we do, and we take it very seriously; I want to make sure that we can underline that fact. When it comes to protecting our lands and including the voices of indigenous peoples, we take that very seriously, and it is at the centre of the work that we do.

I thank the member opposite for raising her concerns, but we will always stand for a viable and strong natural resources sector that includes all voices as we move forward.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before we go to points of order, and before everybody leaves, I want to wish everybody a very merry Christmas and safe travels.

I want to thank the clerks, the pages and everyone who helps us here on the Hill to make sure that it functions well and that we are able to do our work.

Of course, I want to thank the good people of Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing.

I also became a grandma this morning, so it will be a great Christmas.

The hon. member for North Island—Powell River is rising on a point of order.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, congratulations on becoming a grandmother. It is a beautiful thing.

There have been consultations, and I hope that, if you seek it, you will find consent for the following motion: that, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, the remainder of the debate pursuant to Standing Order 66 on Motion No. 45 to concur in the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Finance will be deemed to have taken place, the question be deemed put and a recorded division be deemed requested and deferred, pursuant to Standing Order 66(2).

Oral Questions

Some hon. members: No.

• (1210)

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Recently at the human resources committee, we heard testimony from the CEO of the Central Okanagan Food Bank, who stated that it is expecting an additional 100% increase in food bank usage over the next three to four months—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is the hon. member trying to table documents, or is she looking for a motion?

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, if you seek it, I am sure you will find unanimous consent to—

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, with respect to unanimous consent motions, I just want to remind members that they really need to have had conversations with each party's House leader. We could then maybe be able to move these motions along, as long as we have unanimous consent.

The hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is rising on a point of order.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, we just received news that the Calgary Food Bank has doubled the number of veterans who are coming in for help with food. I request that I could table this very important report—

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Yesterday at committee, the environment minister admitted to bullying six senators, trying to gut Bill C-234. Can people imagine that?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is this a motion? It is not? Then it is a point of debate. The hon. member can raise it during debate.

The hon. member for King—Vaughan is rising on a point of order.

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, congratulations on becoming a grandmother. You will be able to spoil that beautiful little baby.

If you seek it, I hope you will find unanimous consent for the following motion—

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just mentioned about the unanimous consent motions. Obviously, there have not been consultations with the other parties, or the hon. member has already been told that she would not get unanimous consent. This needs to happen, and it has not happened.

The hon. member Cariboo—Prince George is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, congratulations.

I rise with respect to the newly elected premier from Northwest Territories, R.J. Simpson, who has asked for a carve-out from the government's penalizing—

Some hon. members: No.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I just wanted to point out that I was in the committee meeting that the member opposite referred to when he stood. What he said was, in fact, factually incorrect—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): As a Speaker, I cannot really weigh in on what is happening at committee. This is a point of debate.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, as you know, immediately after question period, we can rise on a point of order on what was said during question period.

During question period, it was mentioned that Moisson Québec has seen a 27% increase in demand, which is truly shocking—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is a point of debate.

What is the point of order?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, I would like to seek leave to table the documents from Moisson Québec.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is no unanimous consent.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Branden Leslie: Madam Speaker, congratulations on the birth of your recent grandchild. I would also like to wish my hon. colleague across the way, the House leader, a good next month as she heads into her birth. As somebody who is having a child in early January, with a very similar due date, I commend her for the work she is doing in the House at eight months pregnant.

I rise today on a fairly urgent matter, as it has come to light very recently that Canadian families will be paying \$700 more on groceries next year. I would seek unanimous consent to table—

Some hon. members: No.

• (1215)

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Coming out of question period, 133 Ontario chiefs have taken the federal government to court over what they are calling a discriminatory carbon tax. I would like unanimous consent to table these documents.

Some hon. members: No.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, it is the season of hope. Despite past experience, I am hopeful that there will be agreement to table the results of the vote—

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is no agreement.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay also has a point of order. I hope this is a real point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, absolutely, and I am sure there will be all-party unanimous support.

I thank you, Madam Speaker, for your excellent work this morning and for the people on the table. I certainly think we all support—

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

[Translation]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that it has passed the following bill: Bill C-60, An Act for granting to His Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 11 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC) moved:

That this House resolve that it no longer has confidence in its Speaker, and direct that: (a) the office be deemed vacant effective immediately before the hour of meeting on the second sitting day following the adoption of this resolution; and (b) as the first order of business, at that second sitting day, an election of the Speaker be held, pursuant to Standing Order 2(2)

He said: Madam Speaker, this has been a difficult few weeks for the House and for the office of the Speaker. A lot has been said. We have had a debate on a privilege motion here in the House, and we have had extensive meetings at the procedure and House affairs committee to study the blatant displays of partisanship that the current Speaker has engaged in and the fact that all members of the House have—

Hon. Terry Beech: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am tabling the government's responses to Questions Nos. 1957 to 1967.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, we have discussed this matter at some length, both in a privilege motion here in the House and at extensive meetings at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. Therefore, I will just do a very quick recap of how we came to be here.

The current Speaker comes into the chair after a history of hyper-partisanship, including roles at the executive level of the Liberal Party, as youth party president and as parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister. He was often engaged in partisan filibusters at committee, blocking investigations into corruption at the highest levels of the current government.

We all remember that he was one of the first to rise to speak when a member of the NDP was physically assaulted in this chamber by the Prime Minister. He actually accused that NDP MP of exaggerating her injuries, which is something that took all of us by surprise here in this House and was what I believe to be a very shameful display of defence of a Prime Minister who had clearly broken one of the most fundamental rules of decency, which is not to physically assault each other in this chamber.

After his election, members of the official opposition were willing to respect the decision of the House and to give him the benefit of the doubt. However, a few days ago we saw a video of the Speaker in his robes, which was filmed in his office, congratulating a sitting Liberal member of provincial parliament, praising that individual and participating in a Liberal election convention.

If that was not bad enough, just a few days ago, news came to light that the Speaker attended a Liberal *cocktail militant*, which I believe translates as a volunteer or an activist cocktail in English, a partisan networking or fundraising event. We have reports from people who were at that event, including the provincial member of Parliament, who indicated that funds were collected for the Liberal campaign war chest, which is a clear partisan activity.

It is for all those reasons that the official opposition believes the Speaker cannot continue in this role. Thus, he must do the right thing and put the integrity and impartiality of the House first and foremost.

That is what we are seeking to do with this motion. We believe it is best for the House and for the Speaker to resolve this very quickly. We believe the Speaker's chair should be vacated and that the current Speaker should step down. If he will not do that, as he has clearly indicated, this motion brings effect to that. It effectively orders the chair to be deemed vacant and a new election for Speaker to be held.

Routine Proceedings

The reason this is important, why Canadians should care about this, is that there are different kinds of checks and balances on the Prime Minister's personal authority in our system. The checks include the Standing Orders of this House, the rules of precedence and the office of the Speaker working to ensure that, even though one particular political party may have a majority of the votes or an effective coalition government with another party, the other opposition parties still have a way to scrutinize; to delay in order to allow more debate, more transparency and accountability; and to propose alternatives. When the Speaker cannot acquit him or herself of the Speaker's responsibilities in an impartial way, that helps erode the check on the power the government has.

I will quickly roll through some of the reasons the Speaker's apology was not sufficient. He claimed that the video for the convention was all a miscommunication. We will park that for a moment.

Even if we were to not consider the Liberal convention he participated in, on the afternoon of December 1, he undertook an interview with Laura Stone of *The Globe and Mail*.

He paid tribute to outgoing Ontario Liberal Party interim leader John Fraser in glowing terms. He referred to Mr. Fraser's work on behalf of "our party." He was calm, cool and collected; he took an interview request with a reporter from a national newspaper and offered opinions and comments on an active member of the provincial legislature.

• (1220)

He referred to that party as "our party", clearly displaying partisan affiliation. We know that there is a discrepancy between the versions of events that the Speaker put forward and that came out of the Ontario Liberal Party, as to the nature of the event, and the apology is just not sufficient.

While the House was seized with this very issue, the Speaker went to Washington, D.C., during a sitting week. This, in and of itself, is a very unusual thing for a Speaker to do. He went on a pre-planned trip that he had booked while he was still a parliamentary secretary. Rather than delay that event or have an official delegation from our Parliament, which is the normal practice for Speakers, to take delegations to other Parliaments and other Legislatures to build on that parliamentary diplomacy, he just transferred the trip from his members of Parliament budget to his Speaker budget and went ahead with the trip anyway. Again, on that trip, he relived his glory days as a young Liberal activist. While the House was sitting, members on all sides of the House had to watch the Speaker talking up the Liberal Party of Canada.

There is a reason Speakers avoid all partisan links when they take the Chair. It is to give comfort to members of Parliament from other parties by showing that they truly have put aside their partisan affiliation. The current Speaker has not been doing that from the time he took the Chair, and he continues to display grave errors of judgment.

We can be partisan. We are all elected to this place under a partisan banner. Many of us have long histories of activism in a movement. Even when we come here, some people choose to pour their efforts into the types of things, whether at committee or in the

House, that absolutely defend their party and defend their team. There is nothing wrong with that, but those members of Parliament tend not to put themselves forward for Speaker, and, certainly, they tend not to be elected Speaker.

Here we have a current Speaker with that past, but he has not respected the impartiality of the Chair; instead, he has continued to put his partisan affiliation before the House on several occasions now. For those reasons, I am moving the motion today. I would really urge members of Parliament from all parties to reflect on this situation. I understand that there will be many Liberal members of Parliament who will have a knee-jerk reaction to defend their Liberal Speaker.

I know there has clearly been some kind of deal offered with the NDP, as we have seen so often before. They put aside the interests of the members of their party and activists within their movement who want real change; they trade that away, and it is hard to tell what they get back. I look forward to hopefully being able to play poker with the NDP House leader or even the Leader of the NDP one day, because I have a feeling it would be a pretty good round for me. It is unclear what New Democrats get out of all the water they carry for the Liberal government and all the defence they play for the government.

While Canadians are hurting and seeking real change, the NDP has decided to prop up the Liberal government in almost every way, almost every day. The current situation with the Speaker has clearly shown that they are not actually interested in and do not believe the things they say about the integrity of the office of the Speaker and the importance of Parliament. That is as phony as everything we hear from the Liberals.

I am asking them to park that for a moment and just think about the damage that can be done in a short period of time by a Speaker who does not respect impartiality and the important role that he plays in the House. For the good of the institution, I ask them to allow this motion to come to a vote and to vote in favour of it. Thus, the House could have a new election, a fresh start with a Speaker that could make the determination between the roles and responsibilities of a member of Parliament, once they put on the uniform and sit in that chair, and a hyperpartisan MP. The hyperpartisan MP has the right to do what they would like to always defend their party and attack their opponents, but they should do that from a position within the government benches.

• (1225)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle's intervention today and his insight into this matter; and asking us to genuinely consider this. I would like to learn a bit from the member. He has had that opportunity to be both Speaker and non-Speaker and he understands, probably better than most, the relationship and the dynamic between the two.

I know that yesterday the member tweeted out an explanation as to why it was okay for him to attend a political campaign fundraiser in his own riding and suggested that it is okay to do it in one's own riding but not outside one's own riding. I am wondering if the member can just expand a bit on that and inform us why it would be okay in their own riding if they are the Speaker, but not another riding outside their riding.

• (1230)

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, that is a great question. I appreciate the friendly question from the member from Kingston because there is a very important difference and it really does change the nature of it.

Speakers have always had to run under party banners. Until the day comes when parties have a convention or agreement that we will not run candidates against the Speaker, the Speaker has to go into an election and has to have signs and pamphlets and organize volunteer meetings. There has never been an expectation that a Speaker would cease partisan activities in that nature for their own re-election. Previous Speakers have done that for decades. In fact, the previous Speaker, the member for Nipissing—Timiskaming, made a government announcement in his riding for government funding. Nobody objected to that because it was clear that he was communicating to his own constituents. He was talking about the work that he does as a member of Parliament and informing his constituents as to a government decision in his riding. We were aware that the former Speaker had made that announcement, but that did not offend members of Parliament because it was in his own riding. The same is true for partisan fundraising activity.

The Speaker going to another riding's EDA and raising money for a political party is an offence to the other parties who will one day run candidates in that riding.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member and I agree on some things and we disagree on others; we certainly agreed in referring this to the procedure and House affairs committee. The procedure and House affairs committee made a decision and brought it back to the House. Now it seems that Conservatives are saying they wanted the procedure and House affairs committee to examine this, but now they are just going to disregard the findings of that committee. I find that unfortunate. I also found the member's comments unnecessarily partisan, and this is unfortunate in this kind of debate.

The reality is that this motion falls to the bottom of the government Order Paper in an hour, so we have an hour of discussion and then it is right down to the bottom; in terms of priority, number 80 or 90. Certainly we have anti-scab legislation and we have a whole variety of important legislation to consider, so the member is aware of that. Given that we are going to have this debate for an hour and then it falls to the bottom of the government Order Paper, I want to cite to the member, saying that commenting "...on the character or actions of the Speaker—an allegation of bias, for example—could be taken by the House as breeches of privilege and punished accordingly." That was the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle as Speaker.

Once we finish this debate, and it is appropriate to raise concerns that the Conservatives may have, will they undertake to abide by

Routine Proceedings

the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle's own very clear direction to this House as Speaker and stop with the criticism of the Speaker, because that would be inappropriate, according to the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle?

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, first of all, I would say that it is not clear. We do not accept that this will just drop, to become a government order. That is going to be a determination for the Chair, and I will have more to say with respect to that in a few moments.

As to why we are moving this motion after PROC studied the case, it is quite simple and I am surprised that the member does not understand this aspect of it. The procedure and House affairs committee was to study the circumstances and recommend remedies. The House itself took a finding that the Speaker had undermined the impartiality of the Chair.

The difference between procedure and House affairs' recommending a remedy and everybody in this House's having a vote on it is this. Every member of Parliament gets a vote when a Speaker is elected. Only members of the procedure and House affairs committee had a say in that committee report. We believe that now that the study is done, all members of Parliament should have a vote on whether the Speaker should stay in the Chair. That is the reason we moved this motion. As to what happens next, of course Conservatives will always follow the rules of decorum and order in this House.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle's interventions because this is an area he knows well, having served both as the House leader for the opposition and as a Speaker.

When I heard of these unfortunate instances with respect to the fundraising and appearances at a provincial Liberal convention, I phoned someone who used to work for a Speaker at the provincial level to ask if he had any prior experience with this kind of thing. Essentially, he said that the one case he was reminded of was when he served for a Speaker who wanted to attend a dinner event alone for his or her party and asked the opposition to make sure that everyone was comfortable with that, what would be a partisan event even as an individual MLA.

I would ask the member if he knows of any parallels for that at the federal level.

• (1235)

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, that goes to show how Speakers should approach these types of questions. If there is any doubt, if there is any semblance of a partisan link, they should think about that and take steps to make sure that it does not look like they are favouring one political party. The example he used of a Speaker consulting with the members of other parties to find out how they might react is one way to do that and safeguard the impartiality of the Chair.

Points of Order

I know my predecessor Speaker Milliken would only go to his own Liberal Christmas party if he could also go to the Christmas parties of the other recognized parties so that there was no sense that he was favouring his side or engaging in what is often a partisan event. We get together, bring in volunteers, activists and fundraisers from around the country to come and celebrate the holidays with us, which is the type of thing that Speakers would not normally do.

In my home riding, when I got invitations from my provincial counterparts, it was the easiest thing in the world to just say no. When my provincial counterparts asked if I would come to their dinner or annual general meeting, I would tell them that I would love to support them, but because I was a Speaker I could be seen in public like that. I got to say no to a lot of events over four years. It was relatively simple.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's comments, because a reputation manager would tell us that there can be a crack in the foundation and we can fix that crack, but we are always going to look to where the crack was.

The question is especially for members of the opposition. Given the Speaker's background and affiliations, what will they be looking for? If the Speaker endures and continues on in the role, what signals will you be looking for that establish either a non-biased, non-partisan view or the contrary?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the member that he needs to address questions and comments through the Chair and not directly to the members.

The hon. official opposition House leader.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, we have made our position very clear. With the blatant displays of partisanship that we have seen over the last few weeks, it would be best for the House if the current Speaker went back to the government benches and to the partisan roles he has clearly had in the past that have clouded his judgment going forward.

I do not want to prejudge what will happen with this situation. Many members of Parliament have not expressed an opinion on this. I am not sure what the outcome of this vote will be when it finally comes to a vote, but it is our belief that, for the good of the institution, the Speaker himself and the office that he holds, he step down and ask someone else to take the position who would have the better idea of staying away from partisan activities.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to this motion. I thought this issue would have been put to rest given the fact that we have spent a considerable amount of time on it. Nonetheless, Conservatives have chosen to once again bring it before the House and I find that to be very unfortunate and I will tell members why.

For starters, Conservatives were never interested in asking the Speaker to resign until they saw it as a political opportunity. We know that because when the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle first came into this House about two weeks ago to rise on a question of privilege regarding the matter, he did not in his entire question of privilege ask for the Speaker to resign, not once.

As a matter of fact, it was not until the next party member spoke, a member of the Bloc, and called on the Speaker to resign that suddenly the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle came flying back into the room asking the same demand of the Speaker, to resign—

• (1240)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have a point of order.

The hon. official opposition House leader.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

REQUEST TO DESIGNATE MOTION AS PRIVILEGE MOTION

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Madam Speaker, I meant to do this at the end of my remarks, but because the House leader for the—

An hon. member: No.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, it is not a unanimous consent motion. It is a substantive argument on a point of order about how the House will treat this. It is not terribly lengthy.

I am rising on a point of order concerning the management of the debate on this motion of non-confidence in the Speaker. It is my view that this motion should be treated as a privilege motion, thereby taking priority over the orders of the day. Such motions are rare in the Canadian House of Commons, but we do have some precedence to guide us.

On May 28, 1956, Mr. Speaker Beaudoin in a ruling found at page 647 of the Journals said, with respect to motions of censure against Chair occupants, "We are talking about a very serious type of motion which is a preferred one, one which is of a privileged character, and that is to challenge the conduct of an officer of this House."

The following week on June 4, 1956, the leader of the opposition, George Drew, moved a censure motion concerning Mr. Speaker Beaudoin. The prime minister, Louis St-Laurent, moved a motion to adjourn the debate, which was carried. The next day, the House simply resumed debate on the censure motion, as is what naturally occurs with an adjourned privilege debate, a debate which continued day to day until the House voted on June 8, 1956.

In a subsequent case on March 18, 1964, the Ralliement Crétien brought a motion of censure against Deputy Speaker Lucien Lamoureux, which the House debated that day and simply resumed the next day until the House voted. Again, that is behaviour consistent with the management of a privilege motion.

Much more recently on March 15, 2000, Deputy Speaker Peter Milliken said at page 4706 of the Debates, in respect of a motion on notice concerning confidence in Mr. Speaker Parent, "Until we get to motions, however, this is only a notice of motion and the motion is not before the House. If it is put before the House, it will no doubt be a motion of great importance, with a certain priority over other matters we may discuss."

In that 2000 example, a review of the Debates for both March 15 and 16, 2000, and specifically concerning points of order related to government motions to proceed to the orders of the day, will reveal that all the parties appear to be operating under the presumption that such a no-confidence motion would be treated as a privilege motion.

For example, on March 16, 2000, a Thursday, government House leader Don Boudria spoke about his concerns about ensuring the opposition day scheduled for that sitting proceeded. To be clear, he was concerned about the day happening at all, not that it would be an abbreviated day starting after question period following the usual interruption of Routine Proceedings at 2 p.m.

For his part, the NDP House leader, Bill Blaikie, offered this contribution:

Rather than creating the impression that there is any anxiety about that debate, it would be better in terms of precedent, procedure, the relationship between the Chair and the House, the prerogatives of the House itself and finally the perception of the Chair itself, to deal with this at the earliest possible moment pursuant to the procedures that we have established for this, that is to allow us to go through Routine Proceedings. It will be inconvenient for all concerned, but democracy is sometimes inconvenient, as we found out to our sleep deprivation in the last few days.

As I said, we have few precedents to guide us. Standing Order 1, however, does oblige us to look elsewhere for guidance in such circumstances. The United Kingdom's Erskine May, at page 348 of the 18th edition, offers this insight: "The priority of a notice of motion, or order of the day relating to a matter of privilege, is not prejudiced by the fact that the day on which it is to be raised is a day on which, under an order of the House, government business has precedence."

Under our own Standing Orders, Government Orders, of course, has precedence at certain times of every single sitting day, and, as we know, privilege debates do take priority pursuant to Standing Order 48.

In the Australian Senate, an elected body, a motion of this nature would have priority according to *Odgers' Australian Senate Practice*, 14th Edition, at page 636, "While there are no special provisions in the Senate standing orders concerning censure motions, it is the usual practice for such motions to be accorded immediate precedence or for the debate to be adjourned to a later hour the same day."

That situation, where the Standing Orders make no special provision about motions to censure the Speaker, is analogous to our own House.

Finally, I would refer the Chair to the words of Josef Redlich and his famous treatise, *The Procedure of the House of Commons*, at page 146 of volume 2, about just what a rare event this type of motion is. It states:

The rules prescribe that due notice of motion must be given that on some future day a vote of censure upon the Speaker will be moved. It need hardly be said that such an event is abnormal and happens but rarely, and that such a motion would only be accorded to by the House if the circumstances fully justified it.

Something of this rarity, indeed something of this gravity, really ought to be a matter handled with priority, just as any privilege motion, because indeed it is. Therefore, I would respectfully submit that the debate of a non-confidence motion, if it does not come to a

Points of Order

vote today, must continue until the ordinary hour of adjournment, unless, of course, members are ready to proceed to the vote.

● (1245)

I implore members to err on the side of safety. Let us allow the debate to collapse today and have it come to a vote, and then the House can move on with a decision that all members of Parliament have had a say in.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think it is important to point out that what the opposition House leader is trying to do is anticipate the outcome of the order that the House gave to PROC. Unfortunately, we have not even had the opportunity to review that yet. This motion, in my opinion, should not fall under the same rules as a privilege motion based on that. We need to let the Chair properly rule, and I do not think you have the ability to do that in such a short time.

I would encourage you to proceed and treat this as we would a regular motion.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, this has to be treated as a regular motion. As I mentioned earlier, it would then fall to the bottom of the priority list in Government Orders. Why? It is because the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle chose this route. The question of privilege was raised in the House and it did have priority. The choice the Conservatives made was to raise it as a question of privilege and a referral to PROC. We prioritized that whole debate. We went all day on that debate because that is the direction the Conservatives proposed. I certainly agreed with it. All members ultimately agreed with it.

We referred that question of privilege to the procedure and House affairs committee, which was then given priority for resources so it could report back to the House. The fact is that the House ordered the procedure and House affairs committee to report back and the committee has reported back to the House. Ultimately, the House can now make a decision based on a concurrence motion around the PROC report. This means that, because the Conservatives set in stone that route, the House has to follow that process.

Now the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle is saying that we should throw all that out the window and that he is choosing another route. Procedurally, he knows he is wrong. Procedurally, he knows that if he believes he made an error in the original question of privilege, that is irrelevant at this point because the House has already pronounced on it and referred it to PROC, and PROC has referred it back to the House within the deadline.

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The reality is, as the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle is well aware, that as a result of his actions and what he proposed, we now have the opportunity as a House to consider the concurrence motion on the procedure and House affairs report that was mandated by this House. That certainly can be looked at in February, if a party chooses to move a concurrence motion on that committee report. He now says there is another priority, another question of privilege, but I am sorry; it is fair to say that would be indulging the House in repetition.

If the Conservatives do not like the report, that is certainly something they can comment on when the concurrence debate is triggered from the procedure and House affairs committee report. However, to say that we are going to set up a completely different approach is inappropriate, as I think Madam Speaker would agree, because the House has already voted on the question of privilege brought up by the Conservatives and has already directed the procedure and House affairs committee, and the committee has already reported back. The die is already cast.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois supports what the House leader of the official opposition, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, said about making this motion a priority, a parliamentary privilege motion. I would also like to add that new incidents have come to light in the media since we debated the question of parliamentary privilege to refer the matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

In our opinion, that is enough to justify not limiting ourselves to the work that was done on the question of privilege the first time. We need to maintain the question of privilege, especially since this is such an important and, I would also say, sensitive subject. It is about the House's confidence in the person who is supposed to lead our debates. Right now, rather than being the one who maintains decorum in the House and ensures that the debates run smoothly, he is the main cause of distraction.

If only for these reasons, I support the arguments of the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle regarding the importance of making this motion a question of parliamentary privilege.

• (1250)

[English]

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, I certainly agree with the comments of the Bloc member of Parliament who just had the floor. Absolutely new information came to light, both at the procedure and House affairs committee and even on the day the report was tabled in the House. After all the work was done, after the report was written and tabled, new information came to light.

If one were to listen to the arguments of the NDP House leader, which were devoid of any reference to previous practice, one would have to come to the conclusion that once the procedure and House affairs committee was seized with this, there could be no other motion moved regarding the Speaker. The fact of the matter is that this motion is in order; otherwise I would not have been able to move it today. This is a motion to censure the Speaker. Therefore, it rises to the level of a privilege motion according to the precedents that I just listed.

What happened before at PROC does not affect the admissibility of this motion. It does not make this motion out of order. If it is in order and is a motion to censure the Speaker, which it is, then it rises to the level of a privilege motion. The NDP House leader might not like that and might wish that it happened all at once or in a different way, but that does not touch at all upon the admissibility of this motion or the nature of it.

For those reasons, I urge the Deputy Speaker, who may ultimately do the ruling, to treat this as a privilege motion. If members prevent it from coming to a vote today by dragging out the debate, we can revisit it on the next sitting day. That is what we are asking for.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to thank all members for contributing to the debate on this motion. I certainly will take all of this under advisement. I plan to be back to the House shortly after my deliberation.

* * *

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will get back to where I was.

I could not think of a worse front person for this attack than the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. I will point out over the next 10 minutes or so that not only has this individual continually shown a lack of regard and respect for the rules of this place and Elections Canada, and just about everywhere he crosses someone's path, but he is extremely hypocritical and has committed the exact same offence that he is now, with the new information that he has provided, accusing the Speaker of committing.

I think it is important that we reflect on this a bit. Let us go over some of the things the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle has been involved in.

In 2012, the Speaker's riding shifted cash to a Tory campaign in the robocall probe, and it is worse than that. In the lead-up to that election, the member would have been Deputy Speaker, and as a Globe and Mail article notes:

Elections Canada records suggest this was the only Conservative riding association outside Guelph to transfer cash to Mr. Burke's campaign during the writ period.

[The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle] has served as Conservative MP for the Saskatchewan riding...since 2004. It was only after the 2011 ballot that he was elected Speaker of the House of Commons....

That is fair enough, but during this time, after he became Speaker, he presided repeatedly over “sharp exchanges in Question Period debates that have been dominated by the robo-calls affair.”

Let us think about this for a second. The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, who was in the only riding association outside of Guelph that put money into Guelph for the robocall scandal that we all know so well, became the Speaker and got to preside over debates. However, trust me, that is just the tip of the iceberg.

It was also revealed, in 2020, that the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle hired his sister while he was serving as Speaker. I could go on with the details of that, but we all know the story. The member for—

• (1255)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the allegation the member just made regarding the member's sister is completely and verifiably false. The member is misleading the House and should be called out accordingly. That was verifiably made up.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I must interrupt the hon. member because that is a point of debate.

The hon. deputy leader of the government.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, it was his sister-in-law. My apologies for that.

I will just jump right to the really good stuff. As we discovered recently, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle is known to have held, on Monday, June 29, 2015, while he was the Speaker, the Regina—Qu'Appelle Conservative Association's ninth annual skeet shoot and dinner. It was a fundraising event for his Conservative riding association in order to raise funds for the next election. He was the Speaker at the time.

What members are going to hear from the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle is that—

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, if you will indulge me briefly regarding Bill C-234, I hope that you will find unanimous consent for this: That at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment—

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I can already hear that the hon. member does not have the unanimous consent of the House.

The hon. deputy leader of the government may continue his speech.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, dragging out my time is only going to put more of me between the member and the NDP House leader, so he is going to have to decide whom he wants to hear from. However, I am going to jump to the good stuff.

In addition to the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle's fundraising event, he also sent out a very important Facebook message on July 21 of the same year, while he was still Speaker: “Just five hours

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left. We've received tremendous support today and we are over two-thirds of the way there, but we still need your support. Just a \$15 donation from our supporters on Facebook would put us over the top. Will you join us?” There are countless Facebook quotes like this, with the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle trying to raise money. He also had a scotch-tasting and cigar event in his riding.

The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle is going to say that this is different, because he was the Speaker and this all happened in his riding.

He agrees. I would assume that the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan would also agree that if he were to do that outside his riding, it would be inappropriate. Can I get a “Hear, hear!” for that? I do not hear it, do I?

Here is what the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle said yesterday in a tweet, while trying to defend his actions when it came to light that he had been involved in a fundraising activity in his riding: “The Speaker”, referring to the current one, “attended a Liberal partisan event billed as a ‘Cocktail militant’”, which we now understand to be a volunteer appreciation event, and I appreciate his explaining that to me, “for Liberal volunteers outside his own riding. Helping to drum up support for Liberals in other ridings is a major breach of impartiality.” Let us remember the words that say that helping to support others “is a major breach of impartiality.” It is totally unacceptable, he says.

He went on to say, “When I was the Speaker, the only fundraiser I attended was for my own riding. This is something all Speakers are allowed to do because they must run under a party banner, and other parties run candidates against them.” After seeing this tweet last night, I replied to it and encouraged the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle to delete it because he was probably going to regret it when it came to light that is not the case if he participated in those same activities.

Today, I thought that maybe the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle has a bit of a foggy memory and maybe wants to revisit the issue, so after he presented his motion today, I asked him whether he could please tell us again why it was okay for this to happen in his riding when he was Speaker, but not a riding outside it. Let us just consider what he is accusing the current Speaker of: going to the neighbouring riding and participating in a volunteer appreciation event, according to the member's own words, at the provincial level of government. That is all he was doing; he was taking part in a volunteer appreciation event. He was not donating or anything.

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I asked the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle why it is okay to do it in one's own riding but not in other ridings. In his reply to my question, he said, "That's a great question. I appreciate the friendly question from the member from Kingston because there's a very important difference, and it really does change the nature of it. Speakers have always had to run under party banners, until the day comes where parties have a convention or agreement that we will not run candidates against each other as Speaker. The Speaker has to go in an election, and has to have signs and pamphlets, and organize volunteer meetings. There's never been an expectation that the Speaker would cease partisan activities of that nature in their own re-election. Previous Speakers have done that for decades. In fact, the previous Speaker, the member for Nipissing—Timiskaming, did a government announcement in his riding for a government-funded announcement. Nobody objected to that because it was clear that he was communicating to his own constituents that he was talking about the work that he does as a member of Parliament and informing the constituents as to the government's decision in his riding. We were aware that the Speaker had made the announcement, but it did not offend members of Parliament because it was in his own riding. The same is true for partisan fundraising activity by the Speaker. Going to another riding's EDA and raising money for a political party is an offence to other parties who will one day run candidates there."

• (1300)

The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle has very clearly, in a tweet, in response to my question, articulated extremely well why it is so important that the Speaker only, according to him, participate in their own riding's events.

Members do know where this is going, do they not? Let us go back to May 7, 2015. The member for Regina—Wascana, who is now a sitting member of the House of Commons, had an event. The Regina—Wascana Conservative EDA were pleased to invite individuals to a private networking event with the hon. now opposition leader, the then member of Parliament for Nepean—Carleton, on Tuesday, May 19, at 6:30 p.m. This event took place in a member's home and therefore space was very limited. They truly expected the event to sell out and tickets were \$100. It was a hundred bucks to attend this event.

Are there any guesses as to who went to that event? I have a Facebook post of a picture. I really wish I could show this. Perhaps members would allow me to table this. It is a picture of three individuals who are sitting members of Parliament. One is the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. Can members believe that?

Next to him is the member for Regina—Wascana, who is clapping right now, and the member for Carleton, on May 21, 2015, while the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was still the Speaker. We have not entered the writ period, and he cannot claim that he was not the Speaker.

The member for Regina—Wascana posted the picture. I hope this does not come back to bite him, and I am sorry about that. He said that on that Tuesday evening, he was joined by the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle and the hon. member for Carleton at the wine and cheese event hosted by the Regina—Wascana Conservative

Party EDA. He said it was a great night of discussion and fellowship.

With member's indulgence, I would seek unanimous consent of the House to table this Facebook post.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, there was a no. That makes sense.

I just find it so incredible, the rich hypocrisy. The Conservatives could have picked their spokesperson on this from among 125 people, but for some reason, they chose to pick the most vulnerable person.

This did not take a lot of work to find this out. It has only just begun. I am sure that one can find countless other opportunities to show that the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle is by far one of the worst in not abiding by the rules, especially when he was Speaker, with his sudden requirements to be non-partisan.

I will say that, if the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle wants to continue this discussion in February, I will thank him for giving me a month and a half to dig up more information because it is undoubtedly all out there.

• (1305)

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for this trip down memory lane.

I was wondering if he would perhaps like to move, again, for unanimous consent to table the Facebook post that he referred to. I wonder if he would like to elaborate or comment on the fact that this particular photo was taken of the three of us standing on a public street. He is not in the Speaker's wardrobe or speaking at the Liberal Party convention.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, he should not have said anything. He was better off just being quiet.

His billed event said that the event would be taking place in a member's home and therefore space would be very limited. They fully expected this to sell out. In the background of the picture, one sees a bunch of homes. This is clearly outside of either his home or that of the constituent who is hosting this event for him.

He wants the people listening to this debate to decide whether the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was at the event or whether he just happened to be walking down the street and decided to take a picture with him and the member for Carleton, who came running out of the house to take that picture. There may even have been some thinking about it at the time, where they said, "I have an idea. If we go take this out on the street, they will not be able to use it against us."

It is very clear that the member who just got up and asked me that question said that, on that Tuesday evening, he was joined by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle and the member for Carleton at the wine and cheese hosted by the Regina—Wascana Conservative Party EDA. It is very clear that the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was at that event.

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[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I usually enjoy the speeches by my colleague from Kingston and the Islands, but this time I must admit to being particularly disappointed, because what I just heard was mud-slinging.

I do not even need to get to the substance of the matter, namely whether the actions of the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle were or were not legitimate. I do not need to go there, because what is happening right now is that people are trying to tell us that the best way to fix a broken leg is to break the other one. I find that especially deplorable in the discussion we are having. What I am seeing is a willingness to debase the office of the Speaker of the House and his obligation to be impartial.

My question for the member for Kingston and Islands is the following. I would like to know whether the numerous attacks he made in his speech against the former Speaker of the House, the current member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, helped restore the House's confidence in the current Speaker. That is precisely what is at issue here.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, what undermines the confidence in the Speaker is when members of the House continually get up and try to disparage the Speaker.

I come from a riding that has the longest-serving Speaker of the House of Commons. I am fully aware of the member's interventions, in terms of what he would do in our community, how he might go outside our community a little, into another neighbouring riding, to participate in an event. I am fully aware of it.

What I find extremely troubling is how the Bloc and the Conservatives seem to be on a hell-bent objective of getting rid of this particular Speaker of the House of Commons. I do not know why. They sent the matter to PROC, which dealt with the matter and referred it back to the House. We have not even had an opportunity to concur in the report yet.

The opposition House leader, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle teamed up with the Bloc Québécois and just does not seem to even want to respect the fact that we went through a process. Instead, he is saying there is new information, that the Speaker went to a volunteer appreciation event at a provincial political association to say hi to a couple of people. All I am saying, in pointing out what I have, is that the same individual who brought forward the motion did even worse; he went to the neighbouring riding of the federal association and paid 100 bucks to go there—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1310)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Questions and comments.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I would ask the hon. Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons to wait his turn.

The House leader for the New Democratic Party with a question.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are two concerns that most Canadians would share in seeing the Conservatives pushing this debate today with the Bloc.

There is a process that we agreed upon. All members of the House agreed to refer the matter to PROC. PROC did the examination and has reported back to the House. Obviously, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle does not agree with the report. However, that is not within his purview. The idea that he would just incessantly move motions and disrupt the House until, I do not know when, does not make any sense at all when we are talking about the institution of the Speakership and the importance of doing the work that PROC did, with the recommendations that the Speaker has accepted.

I have two questions for my colleague. First, why are members of the Bloc and the Conservative Party refusing to heed what was a very clear report from PROC, which the Speaker is now following to the letter? He did that with an apology this morning. Second, as I mentioned this earlier with respect to the ruling by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle when he was Speaker, the traditions in the House have been that commenting on the character or actions of the Speaker on, for example, an allegation of bias, could be taken by the House as breaches of privilege, and punished accordingly. That is how we work in the House. Those are the rules we have set as members of Parliament. I would like to ask my colleague, the member for Kingston and the Islands, whether he believes that members of the Conservative Party will respect the rulings and tradition of the House and, once we finish this debate in 20 minutes, stop openly questioning the Speaker.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I do not think they will, but I think they need to be held accountable based on the ruling that the House leader for the NDP quoted, from that very member, earlier on.

I just want to get back to something else that happened just moments ago. People watching may not have seen it. The member for Regina—Wascana stood up on the first question and implied to the House that the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was never at the event in question. After my intervention—

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The hon. member for Regina—Wascana on a point of order.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

Mr. Michael Kram: Mr. Speaker, that is just plain false. I did not imply that in the slightest. What I implied and what I said was that the photo was taken on public street. That is very different, and it is certainly different than recording a video and posting it for the whole world to see at the Liberal Party convention.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I must interrupt the hon. member as that is a point of debate.

The hon. deputy leader of the government may continue.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, why would he say it then? Why is it relevant? He was saying it because he was trying to give us the impression that he was not at the event. What people need to know is that moments ago he heckled me and said that no, he did not pay to get in, so he acknowledged he was there.

It is now on the record that the member for Regina—Wascana acknowledged that the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was at the event. That member is probably going to get pulled into the lobby in a second because, back there, they are trying to figure out how to handle this catastrophe.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question regarding the pattern we are seeing, as the member opposite mentioned. Not accepting the results of the procedures of the House seems to be a pattern the opposition is following. I wanted to refer back to what happened with Bill C-234 with the bullying of senators and the attempt to push something through, which had already followed proper procedure.

Here again we see the procedures of our House, which have always been used and have resulted in the will of this place, and the Conservatives once again are getting up and trying to override that. Can the member please give me his opinion on why this is happening and how it is relevant?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, they have no respect for the rules of this place. It is obvious. What are they doing today? What are they really doing today? They are just contributing to their non-stop attempts to shut down Parliament.

I said it in a statement earlier today that, one out of every three days this fall session, the Conservatives have used delay tactics like this one to prevent us from doing the work Canadians have sent us here to do. This is what they want. They want this place to be dysfunctional. They want to be able to go back to Canadians later on to say that they made it so dysfunctional that the Liberals could not do anything. I regret to inform them we were able to accomplish a lot this fall session, despite their childish temper tantrums, which we have seen repeatedly for the last three months.

• (1315)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the comments the member just made, the Liberals have made all sorts of claims about who wants to work and who does not want to work, so we put those claims to the test today. I repeatedly sought unanimous consent of the House to meet next

week to continue the important work that needs to be done on Bill C-234.

On Bill C-234, a majority of the House voted for the bill. A majority of the Senate was for it until the Prime Minister and the environment minister started personally calling so-called independent senators. If the member wants to get work done, is he prepared to work after hours today? Is he prepared to work next week to complete the consideration of Bill C-234?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I certainly am prepared. However, what I find really interesting is that this member has continually tried to raise points of order, as did other members, over the last few days trying to sweep the whole Canada-Ukraine free trade final vote under the carpet so they do not have to be held accountable to Canadians. They are going to be held accountable. I hope they have the opportunity over the next month and a half to reflect on their decisions, change their position and start supporting Ukraine.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, in real time, on the floor of the House, there has just been consultations among parties, so if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent that, at the ordinary—

Some hon. members: No.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I must interrupt the hon. member. I am already hearing noises.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Saint-Jean.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I cannot say I welcome the opportunity to take part in this discussion today. In light of what we have just heard, it is clear that this debate is unfortunately extremely important.

We suspected that we might end up debating the issue of confidence in the Speaker of the House on a question of impartiality. I will bring everyone back to when he was elected and quote our House leader, the member for La Prairie. The Speaker was known to be courteous, yes, but also unfortunately very partisan. I want to reiterate that we have nothing against him personally. He is a great guy, but we already knew he had a very partisan way of doing things. That is why, when recognizing his new position after he was elected, we still felt it appropriate to issue a bit of a warning. The member for La Prairie said the following:

Speaker's Ruling

All of the Speakers who came before you were faced with the challenge of moving from a sometimes very partisan role to one where they had to set aside partisanship and become impartial. I am sure that you will be able to fulfill this role and that you will maintain the impartiality required for our Parliament to do noble work for our fellow citizens. They expect nothing less from us.

We were cautiously hopeful that the new Speaker would fulfill that role with the utmost impartiality. As I mentioned, that should have served as a warning of sorts. Unfortunately, we were disappointed.

We then came to learn that it was not just one isolated incident that was calling into question the House's confidence in the Speaker, but a whole litany of events. Another small point that I would like to make is that the Speaker's role involves leading the prayer in the House at the beginning of each sitting. At that time, he asks God to strengthen us in our awareness of our duties and responsibilities and to grant us wisdom, knowledge and understanding to make good laws and wise decisions. This just seems like one more reason to do away with the prayer in the House. Unfortunately, it did not work and the Speaker's wish did not come true.

As I mentioned, when it comes to the reasons we unfortunately have to question whether the Speaker can remain in his position, because he no longer has the confidence of the House, there are many incidents that have come to light in the news recently. Unfortunately, he has made quite a number of bad decisions.

Members will recall that the first event was the incident in which the Speaker, in his Speaker's robes—and right in his office, at that—recorded a video for a Liberal party member. Beyond the fact that the video was recorded at all, we must also remember the first apology offered by the Speaker before he finally, under pressure, offered one that was perhaps considered more appropriate to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. The Speaker said that this video should never have been shown openly. It should never have been made available to the public. What we can deduce from that analysis is that it would have been okay had he not been caught. That alone allows us to question the judgment of the Speaker of the House in regard to his ability to perform his duties properly, with all the impartiality and neutrality that the position commands.

Then, as I mentioned, various mistakes ensued. Leaving the House of Commons during a parliamentary week to go to Washington right in the middle of all the turmoil was a highly questionable decision, to say the least. This was the second example of his lack of judgment.

Since the committee issued its report and since we decided to make this a question of parliamentary privilege, other incidents have come to light in the news. One example, which was mentioned earlier, is how the Speaker attended an activist cocktail event in the riding of Pontiac with provincial Liberals.

We expect a Speaker to be as neutral and as rigorous as possible. In fact, we expect the same from all MPs, not just those who sit in the chair. We have an obligation not to use House resources for hyper-partisan or fundraising purposes. We already have that obligation, but someone who is taking on these new responsibilities should be even more aware of and sensitive to that.

● (1320)

At the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, the clerks told us that they were not even consulted. That was another case of poor judgment on the Speaker's part. It should have been the first step he took. The Speaker tried to blame some of his mistakes on the fact that he was still learning the ropes, that he was new to his duties. In fact, this is all the more reason why he should have turned to people with a lot more experience and simply asked them if he should be doing what he did.

Unfortunately, the Speaker was unable to break free from his partisan ways, even though the Speaker's position demands it. A Speaker must not be partisan, even if it breaks his or her heart, because when all is said and done, we are all activists for our respective political organizations. The Speaker's role demands that partisanship be set aside, however unnatural it feels, in order to properly carry out the duties of the office. This is where things went off the rails. The Speaker missed a good opportunity to ask someone if he should be doing what he did. We understand from the testimony of the House clerks in committee that they would have advised the Speaker not to take part in these gatherings.

Then something else came out in the media. We learned that the Speaker of the House asked a former Liberal MP to write an editorial for the media. He asked him not only to support the actions of the Speaker in the House in his editorial, but also to attack the Conservatives while he was at it. In other words, someone else was asked to take partisan action.

This raises a question. How many more situations like this are we going to see? How many other roundabout ways will the Speaker play partisan politics? The mere fact that we are asking the question is enough to remind us of the importance of being able to trust the Speaker of the House. It is often said that trust is like a mirror. Once it is broken, it cannot be fixed. There was—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but I have to interrupt the member for a moment.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

REQUEST TO DESIGNATE MOTION AS PRIVILEGE MOTION—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am now prepared to rule on the point of order raised by the opposition House leader earlier today concerning the treatment of the motion standing in his name and whether it should be given priority over the orders of the day. The hon. member contended that, given the seriousness of the subject matter, the motion should be given precedence over other business until it is decided. In other words, we should treat it as if the House were debating a motion in response to a *prima facie* question of privilege.

Routine Proceedings

I wish to point out that there is a process for raising questions of privilege and proposing motions flowing from these once the Chair has determined that they should have priority in debate. The motion currently before the House did not follow that process. Instead, it was moved under the motions rubric under Routine Proceedings after having been placed on notice, as is appropriate for motions concerning the conduct of chair occupants. The Deputy Speaker noted as much in his ruling on December 5 at page 19,501 of Debates.

• (1325)

[Translation]

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, third edition, 2017, at pages 467 to 469, provides a list of examples of motions that can be moved under the rubric of motions during Routine Proceedings. That list includes motions to censure Chair occupants, the motion currently before the House.

Further, on page 469, it reads, “When debate on any motion considered during Routine Proceedings is adjourned or interrupted...the order for resumption of the debate is transferred to the *Order Paper* under Government Orders”. The only exception is motions to concur in a report of a committee governed by Standing Order 66.

[English]

While I recognize that this is a serious matter of concern to all members of the House, since it is clear that this motion was properly moved under Routine Proceedings, I cannot find any authority that would allow the Chair to direct that it be treated differently than any other such motion.

Accordingly, if the debate is interrupted or adjourned, the motion will be transferred to Government Orders on the Order Paper. I thank members for their attention.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I appreciate your rendering your decision. Just to be clear, this would fall to the bottom of the government Order Paper once we adjourn debate on the motion.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is correct.

ROYAL ASSENT

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Rideau Hall
Ottawa

December 14, 2023

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that The Right Honourable Richard Wagner, Deputy of Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada, will proceed to the Senate Chamber on the 15th day of December 2023, at 3:30 p.m., to grant Royal Assent to certain bills of law.

Yours sincerely,

Maia Welbourne
Assistant Secretary to the Governor General

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, after taking into account the Speaker's ruling, I still hope that the government will want to quickly bring the matter to a vote or that, at least, in the meantime, the Speaker of the House might decide to step down himself, so that the work of the House can continue without this frankly unnecessary distraction.

I see that I do not have much time left, so I just want to quickly say in closing that I have to wonder whether the recommendations that the Speaker himself has decided to put in place, by which I mean the development of a best practices guide for future Speakers, will really be useful in the future. Even if there had been a guide, the issue here is that decisions were made that should have never been made, simply because it is so important for the Speaker to be neutral and impartial. This is the political equivalent of “Warning: Contents may be hot after heating”.

The Speaker never should have made the decisions that he did. At the very least, he should have sought advice from the many members of his support staff before deciding for himself to do something that might not appear to be neutral and impartial. In order for the House to function properly and for us to have healthy debate in the House, the Speaker must be neutral and impartial.

Unfortunately, in this context, unless the Speaker decides to step down himself, my Bloc Québécois colleagues and I must support the motion moved by the Conservatives today.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Saint-Jean will have 10 minutes for questions and comments the next time this motion comes before the House.

The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques is rising on a point of order.

• (1330)

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent of the House to table petition e-4604.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PETITIONS

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House to table petition e-4604. This petition is the culmination of several months of work and collaboration with students, academia and the research community of Quebec and Canada. It seeks to correct a serious, glaring injustice.

Our new generation of scientists have not had a raise since 2003. For 20 years the federal government's graduate scholarships have not gone up one penny. In the meantime, minimum wage has more than doubled in Quebec and the cost of living has gone up 55%. The result is simple: We are condemning our master's and doctoral students to a precarious and vulnerable life.

This petition did not come out of nowhere. It is the fourth on the topic to be tabled in the House of Commons. My colleagues from the New Democratic Party, the Conservative Party, and even the Liberal Party endorsed identical texts. There seems to be a consensus.

This very week, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Science and Research published a report on the same subject. This report came after a study I initiated, which heard from 38 witnesses and received 39 briefs.

The overview is comprehensive and the finding is unanimous: The federal government must invest in our next generation of student scientists and increase the amount, number and duration of these graduate scholarships. The Quebec government did so earlier this year by increasing its own scholarships.

I hope that as a result of petition e-4604, the Liberal government will finally understand that it needs to meet the expectations and needs of our students and researchers.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member may present only the content of the petition. He cannot present his point of view on the petition to the House. I just want to make this point, because a member was about to raise a point of order on this subject.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-321, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (assaults against health care professionals and first responders), as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

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

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC) moved that the bill be concurred in.

Orders of the Day

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

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. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I would ask for a recorded vote.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 88, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, January 31, 2024, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

● (1335)

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think that all members support the initiative that has been put forward by my colleague from Cariboo—Prince George. He was prepared to speak to something today that I thought we had all agreed on. I am sure that was not intentional, but it seems that effectively we have had—

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

Mr. Garnett Genuis: I would like to seek unanimous consent.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is no unanimous consent.

I want to remind members that they should be careful while talking across the way.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FINANCE

The House resumed from November 30 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, the issue of competition in this country is an incredibly important one when it is set against the backdrop of skyrocketing prices.

Orders of the Day

After eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, we have seen the effect of its policies. Take a look at rent; it has doubled. Take a look at mortgage payments; they have doubled. The cost of borrowing has skyrocketed. What we need in our country right now is not less competition. How would less competition manifest itself with banks? Right now, there are a couple of big banks that are in competition. That has produced record-high interest rates. Everyone who is just trying to get into the housing market or who is looking for a renewal has never seen interest rates at the levels we have today. People who are going to be renewing mortgages in the next two years are going to be renewing their 1.8%, five-year fixed mortgage at, what, 5.5% or 6.5%? People's mortgage payments have doubled, at a time when we have record food bank usage.

Food price inflation has skyrocketed. I was having a conversation with a manager of one of the local food banks in my community. One of the challenges they have is a need for more funding or more volunteers, more folks to be at the food bank longer, because now, it has to have longer operating hours. Why is that? It is a new problem. It needs to be open when people finish their shift at work. People are working one or two jobs, and then they have to find the time to get to the food bank to pick up enough nutritious food to supplement what they are able to afford, in order to be able to feed themselves and their children. A third of all food bank users today are children. Prices are going up. Shelter costs are gobbling up the income, the available funds, that families should have to be able to feed their—

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I believe we are talking about the concurrence motion. I am just wondering about the relevance of what the member opposite is saying, to the merger of HSBC and the Royal Bank of Canada.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members that there is some flexibility during members' speeches. At the same time, I do want to remind members that they need to be speaking to the motion itself.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

• (1340)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, I guess that if the member opposite has not had to worry about the financial pressures that other Canadians have had, because of her personal financial situation and great success, then congratulations to her on her many, many millions of dollars. However, for everyday Canadians, shelter costs will go up when banks merge—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill is rising on a question of privilege.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, I do not know how anything about me personally, which he does not even know about, has any relevance to the motion or to what we are talking about—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is becoming a point of debate; it is not a question of privilege.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, that the member opposite can talk about my personal financial situation—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, it is a point of debate. However, I do want to remind members that

they need to be respectful toward each other here in the House of Commons.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, I would encourage the member opposite to crack open the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* and take a look at what the Standing Orders are before she rises in the chamber.

What would be really helpful for Canadians is if she was respectful to the people who are falling on hard times. She obviously is not experiencing that. This is why she does not understand that, when these banks merge, if the Liberals permit that to happen, they are going to face rising shelter costs. That is the relevance of a bank merger.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, we can hear the member for Kingston and the Islands. If he wants to shout me down while I am talking about the hardships that Canadians are facing, it is not a surprise. The champagne Liberals—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. This is prolonging the debate. We want to make sure that everybody who wants to speak to it can.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, it is no surprise that the Liberals, who are part of the most corrupt government in our country's history, are presiding over an economy where their inflationary spending is driving Canadians to food banks in record numbers, yet they do not want elected representatives to speak to the very real challenges Canadians are facing. Their failure to understand those realities is not a defence for their actions and inactions. We have seen corruption and mismanagement from the government driving these inflationary prices, and that is indefensible.

If we look at the billion-dollar green slush fund that the Prime Minister, his members and the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill are prepared to stand up and defend, it is egregious. We have the embezzlement of taxpayer dollars by Liberal insiders. This is a situation that, in any other industry, would rise to the level of criminality. We have directors who are Liberal-appointed members of this board; they are putting forward motions and then voting on them to give themselves hundreds of thousands of dollars. They are embezzling the money, putting it into their companies and then drawing salaries out of those companies—

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I realize this is my colleague speaking, but how does this discussion exactly relate to the subject we are talking about? I want to make sure that everything is on track and that he is—

• (1345)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The point of order the hon. member is raising is with respect to the relevancy of the speech.

I want to remind members that they should at least mention the motion or something within the motion to make sure that relevancy is there.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, every time anyone has risen during this, I have circled back to the same point I made before, which is that the merger of banks is going to drive up costs for Canadians at a time when they cannot afford it. What they cannot afford is Liberal—

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I remember the member for Carleton saying that Conservatives would work until Christmas, but we do not have quorum in the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Let me check whether we have quorum.

And the count having been taken:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have quorum.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I do believe that, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion, that the House shall continue—

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is no unanimous consent.

We are going out in style for Christmas.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, it is fascinating that the member for New Westminster—Burnaby has debased himself to the point that he had all his members leave the chamber to call quorum, along with the member for Kingston and the Islands—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I would advise the hon. member to be very careful with how he indicates whether individuals are in the House or not. If the hon. member could get back to his speech, that would probably be wise.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, we have members of Parliament who have been elected, such as the member for New Westminster—Burnaby and the member for Kingston and the Islands, who have taken to defending a government that is corrupt, and that corruption is costing Canadians.

That cost to Canadians is fuelling the inflationary fire that is driving up the price of everything. That is why, at this time, it is so important that we have more competition. Competition in our banking sector is incredibly important because, if there are fewer banks, then the banks that we do have will charge higher rates. Those higher rates are going to drive up the prices that Canadians are paying every month for their rent and for their homes.

We have members, such as the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, who are defending a Prime Minister who has been twice convicted of breaking Canada's ethics laws. He is the first Prime Minister in Canada's history who has broken Canada's ethics laws—

Orders of the Day

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby on a point of order.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, the member is well experienced. He knows that personal insults and speaking in—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I cannot hear the hon. member who has the floor on a point of order. If the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo has a point of order, he should wait to call a point of order.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby has the floor.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, congratulations on becoming a grandmother. It is exciting.

I just want to cite the rule of relevance, the member is wandering all over the place. I hope that he has read the report. If the member could stick to the report that is before the House and stop with the personal insults, I think that would be appropriate.

● (1350)

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, it is a bit rich coming from the member for New Westminster—Burnaby—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): What is the point of order? The member seems to be debating.

I would like to remind the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes to please speak to the motion for concurrence. As well, if the hon. member could mention the motion or something that is within the motion, that would be very helpful.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order with respect to relevancy, on each occasion when the Chair has advised that I go back to speaking to the issue I referenced, every time that I have spoken, I have done that. I did it in the 60 seconds prior to the member for New Westminster—Burnaby interrupting me.

He might not like what I am saying, but it certainly is relevant to the topic when we are talking about a report from finance and we are talking about competition in the banking sector, which is having an effect on affordability for Canadians and the cost of the government's inflationary policies that are in support of them. It is absolutely germane—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the additional information. I would just ask members to please, as they move forward, if they wish to bring forward other points of order, that they actually mention the standing order they are bringing up. A lot of them seem to fall more into debate. There will be an opportunity for questions and comments, and not just five minutes but 10 minutes, so other members will be able to put points or questions forward.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes may continue with his speech.

Orders of the Day

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, the member for New Westminster—Burnaby has defended this Prime Minister and the policies that he has put forward, including the billion-dollar green slush fund. This is at a time when Canadians are struggling greatly with affordability. This week alone we learned that, at the billion-dollar green slush fund, \$150 million has been misappropriated. Canadians cannot afford the government to be borrowing money to have Liberal insiders then embezzle that cash and have Canadians pay interest on it while these Liberal appointees are off lining their pockets. Those are the policies that are being supported by the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, instead of coming here to advocate for Canadians and speaking to an issue that is as important as competition in our banking sector.

This report from the Standing Committee on Finance could not be discussed at a more germane time for Canadians than right now. Lineups at our food banks have been precipitated by the inflationary spending of this government. Home prices have doubled. A report from rentals.ca says that it costs the same to rent a room in a two-bedroom unit as it was to rent a unit when this government came to power in Canada. This is unacceptable.

We need to consider the real-world impacts for people who are acutely aware and feel these effects in the market as they happen. If we take one of the players out, one of the players offering the lowest rates as would happen with this merger, what happens to those prospective customers? What happens to the rest of the market? Well, the prices are going to go up.

I remember a time when people like the member for New Westminster—Burnaby would have fought for Canadians and not fought for a Prime Minister twice found guilty of breaking ethics laws; a Prime Minister with a cabinet of serial lawbreakers. I remember those times, but they are not the times we are living in now. So desperate is that member to support this Prime Minister that he has turned his back on Canadians, and so Canadians are the ones who are left to pay the price every single month that they can ill afford to.

We can look at the tens of billions of dollars that this NDP-Liberal government has committed to spending on overseas replacement workers taking Canadian jobs. We hear from local unions about the effect that these policies are having in terms of lost wages for their members. We are seeing lost wages and lost jobs and Canadians are seeing their government borrow money to finance it. Who pays the interest on that debt? Well, Canadians do.

This Prime Minister told us that interest rates would stay low for a long time. We will remember that was his famous line when pressed on it. However, interest rates did not stay low. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance said the same. The Governor of the Bank of Canada had said the same. However, Canadians are now getting hammered with rising interest rates, just like they will get hammered with rising interest rates with a bank merger like this. It is unconscionable—

• (1355)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, please. There seem to be discussions going back and forth. I want to remind members to please step into the lobby if they want to have a conversation.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes has the floor.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government and its inflationary policies, rent has doubled, mortgages have doubled and food bank usage is at record highs, with a third of food bank users being children. It is clear that the Prime Minister and his cabinet of serial law-breakers are just not worth the cost to Canadians. It is the first time in Canadian history that a government has absolutely lost its ethical compass and ability to follow the law, and Canadians are paying the price.

When we have the opportunity to influence the market in a way that is going to encourage competition, that is what this House should be doing. It should be encouraging an environment where Canadians can pay lower prices. That is what we are going to do. We are going to support that kind of competition because Canadians cannot afford otherwise after eight years of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, last Thursday night we saw Conservatives vote to gut food safety programs. They seem to like salmonella and botulism. They do not seem to like investing in food safety, air safety and national defence. They wanted to cut the RCMP dramatically and over \$100 million from policing across the country. They voted to gut half a billion dollars from affordable housing. They voted 120 times to destroy everything that has been put into place by generations of Canadians to reinforce and provide services and support to Canadians.

I have a lot of respect for my colleague, but it was unbelievable to see him vote to cut food safety, air safety, affordable housing, indigenous services, national defence and border services. From correctional services, they were going to gut \$300 million, which would basically open the door to any prison because we would not be able to afford to run prisons. Why did they vote to gut all of those services that Canadians need?

• (1400)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, Conservatives last week had the opportunity to vote non-confidence in the government because we do not have confidence in the government. We have had the opportunity to do that dozens and dozens of times, just like we will vote against a Liberal budget that promotes higher taxes and less competition and is doubling shelter costs for Canadians, with longer lines at our food banks. We are going to vote for policies that take off the carbon tax so Canadians can afford to feed themselves and to heat their homes. That is unfortunately not what the NDP or its Liberal coalition partner is interested in doing.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague made many important points about the immense corruption we are seeing from the coalition right now, but I want to ask him specifically about the arrive scam scandal because I know he has done a great deal of work on it.

We have seen how rotten the procurement system has become under the government and how these tiny companies that ostensibly do not do much of anything can receive contracts and pass those contracts on. They are sitting on this unexplained gold mine, where the government pays them and they pay somebody else less and collect a fee along the way, getting millions of dollars for at best being LinkedIn recruiters. The government has refused to come clean about who is responsible for the decisions to hire these companies.

We asked about that repeatedly, and I put in an Order Paper question, in fact, to try to get the answer. Who is responsible for hiring GC Strategies for ArriveCAN? Can the member share what he thinks is behind this deep rot at the heart of our procurement system that is leading to the waste of millions and millions of dollars?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, the \$54-million arrive scam app is another example of this out-of-touch government being more concerned about lining the pockets of their well-connected insider friends than delivering results for Canadians or delivering services at a price that ought to be paid. This is an example where \$11 million flowed through a two-man shop. As the hon. member said, they were basically glorified LinkedIn recruiters.

When pressed on this, we have a government that is charging \$54 million to the taxpayers and is not able to tell us who selected any of the vendors. If we were to bring in the minister, the deputy minister, the ADM and their officials, no one made the choice, they would say, to select these recruiters and ghost contractors. It is important to note that some of these same contractors who worked on the \$54-million arrive scam app are under RCMP investigation.

This is a government that is facing more investigations than any government in history and seems to have the limitless support of the NDP while the RCMP, the Ethics Commissioner and the Auditor General have all orders of the government under a magnifying glass.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am glad the member opposite mentioned being out of touch. In his rather freewheeling remarks on the motion before us, he referred to me as not being able to represent my constituents because of my personal situation.

I am wondering if he might explain to me how the 83% of members opposite are able to represent the over 50% of people in their ridings who are women when they are all men.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That question is not really related to the motion before the House. I know that it was part of the member's speech. I am just saying that it is not part of the motion itself, but I will allow the hon. member to respond.

I would remind members that they should not make personal attacks on each other within their speeches or questions.

Orders of the Day

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

• (1405)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, the member opposite and her colleagues are part of a government that has a cabinet filled with serial lawbreakers, and it is unbelievable that they are able to face Canadians when this is the record they have. Multiple members of the cabinet have been caught breaking the law. If anyone would like me to detail—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. government House leader is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Karina Gould: Madam Speaker, according to Standing Order 18, I do not think the member opposite should be making false accusations like that. That is completely inappropriate.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Members need to be very careful and respectful toward each other in the House.

I will pull out the standing order. Standing Order 18 states:

No member shall speak disrespectfully of the Sovereign, nor of any of the royal family, nor of the Governor General or the person administering the Government of Canada; nor use offensive words against either House, or against any member thereof. No member may reflect upon any vote...

We keep going back to that.

I want to remind members that they should not call members serial criminals. I would ask members to please stay away from that.

I would ask the hon. member to withdraw that comment.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, on the point of order, with respect, first of all, it was the member for Kingston and the Islands who said “serial criminals”. What I said was “lawbreakers”. The Prime Minister twice broke ethics laws. The small business minister broke ethics laws—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is going into points of debate. I want to ask the hon. member to please withdraw the comment about serial criminals. It is causing disorder. Withdrawing the comment would allow the debate to continue.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We need to be very careful about situations in which one member says something that is obviously verifiably true and then other—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan should be careful and judicious in what he is saying.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I will not speak to the substance of the issue. However, if we have a case where one member says something that, in their sincere view, is true and that they have good evidence to believe is true, but others do not like it and react to it, I think it is fair to ask who is responsible for that—

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Hon. Gudie Hutchings: Madam Speaker, congratulations on your grandchild.

I would like the member opposite to withdraw the comment where he said “all cabinet”.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): If the hon. member does not wish to withdraw, I am going to move to the next speaker.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

• (1410)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, in this House, we have members of cabinet who have been found to have broken Canada's ethics laws.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, while I am being interrupted—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I already have an hon. member who is speaking on a point of order. He has withdrawn his comment, and I will now allow him to finish his speech.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister broke ethics laws twice. The small business minister and the former housing minister broke ethics laws. The member for Hull—Aylmer broke ethics laws.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I was told my comment was not relevant. I do not know what the relevance of this is to the question I asked.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member may not like the response, and the call for relevance now becomes more a point of debate. If the hon. member has another question after that, she can bring it up.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, what we have here in the House is that the members are again looking to defend the indefensible, and it is a group of people who are going to have to defend that “record”, a word which can be taken two ways. However, we are able to represent our constituents and our communities, and we are going to stand up for lower prices for families, even if the Liberals will not.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Speaker, another way to approach this is that it is in the DNA of the Liberal Party. When we look back 30 years ago to the Chrétien era, we had things such as Shawinigate and the sponsorship scandal. These were the beginnings of the things that we are now seeing and have seen over the past eight years.

The member spoke about the ArriveCAN app. Could he speak about some of the other scandals and problems that we have seen with the corruption in the current Liberal government?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, it is a very interesting question because we have a situation where the government continues to engage in conduct where it is taxing Canadians hundreds of millions of dollars, in other cases billions of dollars, to line the pockets of the well-connected. We saw the response to that when it came to outside consultants and its record use. No government has

ever used more outside consultants than it has. It then asked a consulting company, and spent three-quarters of a million dollars, to find out whether that consultant thought it should use consultants less.

The same is true with the billion-dollar green slush fund. We learned this week about \$150 million that has been embezzled by Liberal insiders. Two Liberal-appointed members of the billion-dollar green slush fund are now under investigation for breaking Canada's ethics laws. This is top down. They see that example. It comes from the Prime Minister and now we have his appointees who are also breaking the same laws the Prime Minister has broken.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I heard the member earlier in his intervention talk about how Conservatives voted non-confidence, this, that and the other thing.

Does he actually think that means something to his constituents? Does he think his constituents take comfort in knowing that he voted against Ukraine, voted against the 988 crisis helpline and voted against countless measures for farmers?

Does he actually think this narrative of, “We voted for non-confidence in the government,” really means something to people who were going to be on the receiving end of those very important supports?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, we voted against the government and that member who sent turbines to Russia to fund Putin's war machine. We voted against a government that sent detonators overseas to be used by Russia, that are blowing up and killing Ukrainians. We voted against a government that had to be embarrassed by a Conservative member into finally delivering on a 988 suicide prevention hotline. We voted against a government that has driven up costs for Canadians, doubling the price of housing and doubling the price of rent. There are record lines at our food banks.

My constituents sent me here. I am a member of the official opposition. I oppose the government and its corruption, and I am going to stand against that every single day.

• (1415)

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to add my congratulations to you becoming a grandmother. That is very exciting.

As this is likely the last time I am to take the floor for this parliamentary session, and for this year, I want to extend my gratitude and thanks to all of the staff on Parliament Hill who have made this such a wonderful place to work. As always, they do such hard work.

I would also like to note that, in accordance with Standing Order 25, I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

[Translation]

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

[English]

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.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, we have been trying to get Bill C-234 passed, but in the absence of any agreement, we would like to request a recorded vote.

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

Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:

• (1500)

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, I am speaking on behalf of the member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, who would like to change her vote in order to vote against the motion. She experienced technical problems with the voting application.

The Speaker: Does the member have the unanimous consent of the House to allow the member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix to change her vote?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I see that the member for Egmont voted but his photo is not recorded. If we could get confirmation that this was correctly done, I would appreciate it.

The Speaker: I regret to inform the member for Egmont that because he is not online, we will have to strike his vote.

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 612)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies

Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Gainey	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Petipas Taylor
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Robillard	Rodriguez
Romanado	Rota
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Singh
Sousa	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thompson
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Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Beaulieu
Berthold

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Block	Bragdon
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
Desbiens	Desilets
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Godin	Goodridge
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Khanna
Kitchen	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
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Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Majumdar
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
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Moore	Morantz
Morrice	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Normandin

Patzer	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Perkins
Perron	Plamondon
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
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Scheer	Schmale
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PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.[*English*]

I would like to wish all members a very merry Christmas, happy holidays and happy new year.

It being 3:03 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday, January 29, 2024, at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 3:03 p.m.)

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