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Friday, May 3, 2024

Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 3, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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• (1000)

[*English*]

## PRIVILEGE

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on April 8 by the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, concerning the response to Question No. 1425.

Members will recall that the Speaker, having signed off on the response to this question in his previous capacity as parliamentary secretary, recused himself and requested that I rule on this matter.

In his intervention, the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola alleged that the response to his written question was contradicted by evidence given on April 5 by an official of the Privy Council Office to the public inquiry into foreign interference in the federal electoral process and democratic institutions.

The member disputed the response received to Question No. 1425, tabled on June 8, 2023, which indicated the Privy Council Office had not made any requests to social media companies to remove, edit or alter information in the media. The member claimed that providing misleading responses to written questions impeded members' ability to hold the government to account. He was supported in his claim by the member for Lethbridge, who argued that a similarly misleading response was provided to her written question, Question No. 1445.

[*Translation*]

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons rejected the claim that the responses to the written questions were untrue or deliberately misleading, indicating that the government continued to stand by its responses. He emphasized that the Privy Council Office had not initiated the removal of an article from a social media platform. According to the parliamentary secretary, the article in question was flagged to the Privy Council Office by Facebook as violating its own community standards. On that basis, the article was taken down on the initiative of Facebook.

The parliamentary secretary therefore characterized the dispute as a matter of debate. Furthermore, he held that, consistent with prior precedents, the Speaker is not empowered to assess the quality of responses to written questions on the Order Paper.

[*English*]

To sum up, the members for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola and Lethbridge argued that the responses were inaccurate, whereas the parliamentary secretary stated that they were not.

In *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at page 529, a frequently used citation is referenced in decisions from the Chair with respect to members' complaints about responses to written questions, which states:

There are no provisions in the rules for the Speaker to review government responses to questions. Nonetheless, on several occasions, Members have raised questions of privilege in the House regarding the accuracy of information contained in responses to written questions; in none of these cases was the matter found to be a *prima facie* breach of privilege.

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

Speaker Regan, in addressing a similar complaint on September 27, 2016, which can be found at page 5175 of the debates, put it succinctly, in stating, and I quote:

It has been long established and accepted that the role of the Speaker in such circumstances is tightly prescribed and limited.

[*English*]

I repeat these words because the Chair does not have the discretion to become some sort of arbiter as to the quality or accuracy of responses to written questions. As such, I cannot find a *prima facie* question of privilege.

However, as noted by many other Chair occupants, given the repeated complaints of members, it would perhaps be beneficial to re-evaluate the rules and processes surrounding responses to Order Paper questions. This being underlined, the Chair notes that, in 2004, the Auditor General was asked to review the process as it was at the time, and the Auditor General provided a certain number of recommendations to the government. It may be time to undertake a similar exercise to ensure that members can obtain the information that we require to do our jobs. I am sure we can all agree, as parliamentarians, that members are right to expect the government to answer questions in as fulsome a manner as possible.

[*Translation*]

I thank all members for their attention.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS****PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND REVIEW COMMISSION ACT**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-20, An Act establishing the Public Complaints and Review Commission and amending certain Acts and statutory instruments, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

[English]

**SPEAKER'S RULING**

**The Deputy Speaker:** There is one motion in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-20. Motion No. 1 will be debated and voted upon.

[Translation]

I will now put Motion No. 1 to the House.

[English]

**MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT**

**Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC)** moved:

That Bill C-20 be amended by deleting the short title.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and lead off debate today on Liberal Bill C-20. This bill seeks to create an independent commission for the RCMP and for the CBSA to address complaints that the public may have about their treatment.

The Liberal government has been talking about the importance of getting the legislation passed for quite some time. I find it curious that similar legislation has died in two previous Parliaments. We certainly hope to see the legislation come through in this Parliament, because it has been far too long that this legislation has been allowed—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have a point of order from the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, why did the Conservatives move a dilatory motion to delay the legislation?

**The Deputy Speaker:** That is a point of debate.

The hon. member for Sturgeon River—Parkland.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Mr. Speaker, I will continue with my remarks.

It is vitally important that we debate the proposed legislation. As it came out of committee, there were numerous concerns that we, as Conservatives, raised in the amendments to the legislation; they were not addressed. Certainly, it is not enough to impede the legislation, but it is critically important that we have a debate on it and see it come through.

I find it curious that the NDP-Liberal government, which told us last fall how important it was to get the legislation passed, has dithered. The legislation came out of committee in November, and we have had months to bring it forward for third reading debate. Here we are in May, and the government has finally brought it forward. Therefore, we do not take it very seriously when the NDP-Liberal government talks about how important it considers the legislation to be, while it is only bringing it up in May.

Our RCMP and CBSA officers make incredible sacrifices, and we need to do the very best we can to ensure that they and their families are safe and protected. They are consistently putting their lives in danger every day. It is in the interest of the public, as well as the brave members of the RCMP and CBSA, that complaints be dealt with in a timely and efficient manner. This is crucial to guard against potential abuses of power and to maintain Canadians' trust in their agencies.

Canada has the largest undefended border in the world, and the lack of resources for the CBSA to perform its role to the fullest extent is seen in the rising crime in cities, such as Montreal and Toronto, and across the country. Illegal firearms are being smuggled through our porous border and used every day in horrific crimes. Even in rural areas, including in my riding, in towns such as Bon Accord, crime is on the rise after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government's soft-on-crime policies.

Unfortunately, it seems that the government is more focused on targeting law-abiding Canadian firearms owners and hunters than on fulfilling promises to implement a policy and provide resources for our border. There, we find rampant illegal activities, such as auto theft and gun smuggling; it is at a point where the fastest-growing export in this country is stolen vehicles.

At the public safety committee, we heard the Liberals continually attempt to distract from their miserable record on crime. Amidst this ongoing auto theft crisis that is impacting communities across the country, desperate Liberals have resorted to blaming car dealerships, small businesses, for the rise in car thefts. It is clear that they do not want to talk about the facts, and the fact is that auto theft has risen to unprecedented levels as a direct result of the Liberals' soft-on-crime agenda.

We can all agree that the proposed bill is important for maintaining public trust in the RCMP and the CBSA. However, we cannot have productive debates unless we discuss the tremendous strain that is currently being placed on our brave men and women. Our law enforcement agencies, much like the Canadian Armed Forces, are suffering from significant recruitment and retention issues. What exactly is the government doing to ensure that these brave men and women feel valued and supported in their role?

Of course, the public should have a right to an independent and effective complaints commission to hold the RCMP and CBSA accountable for their actions. However, when we are not providing the resources for frontline police officers, the CBSA and other first responders to do their job effectively, it is no surprise that we are seeing mistakes. Our law enforcement personnel are under tremendous pressure as they deal with the impacts of the crime wave that is occurring across this country. When mistakes happen in the line of duty, it is frequently because these exemplary men and women are being pushed to their limit, overwhelmed by the crisis the government has created.

In fact, the National Police Federation put forward very commonsensical amendments that it wanted to see in this motion. Its members are concerned because RCMP officers are often being pulled off the front lines to do bureaucratic paperwork and deal with complaints, when complaints should really be dealt with by an independent commission. Unfortunately, the proposed bill has some flaws, because it would still maintain a requirement for extensive bureaucratic red tape for RCMP officers in providing information and supporting these investigations, which would pull our resources off the front line.

We want to see an independent commission that does its job and that is resourced and staffed. In this way, RCMP officers and CBSA officers could focus on the front lines and not the back lines.

Let us talk about drug use. Our law enforcement officers are expected to act as social workers. They are confronting daily crime and disorder that the government's drug policies have inflicted on our communities, and we know this is causing a mental health crisis within the ranks.

On violent crime, we have heard at the public safety committee that the chiefs are fearful for the safety of their officers, especially since violent offenders are able to continuously terrify communities as a result of the "bail, not jail" provisions of Liberal Bill C-75. It should come as no surprise that the government does not want to have these conversations. Its record on crime is miserable.

• (1010)

Since this government came to power in 2015, Canada has become a massive importer of illegal firearms from the United States, a massive exporter of stolen cars to Africa and to the Middle East, and also has become an exporter of fentanyl across the world. It is shameful. While implementing this soft-on-crime agenda, the Liberal government has taken very little action to ensure that the brave men and women who choose to serve their communities and their country feel supported and respected in their work.

Everyone who goes through a border crossing should be able to go without facing discrimination or unfair treatment by border agents. Bill C-20 would allow people who have had negative experiences and who feel that their rights have been violated to submit complaints formally and to have them reviewed within a six-month period. I think it is critically important that we talk about this six-month period because we have seen some cases that witnesses have brought forward, where people made complaints, and those complaints were not addressed for months, and in fact, some complaints were not addressed for years. In some tragic cases, the complainants actually passed away before they could get responses to

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their complaints, and we do not want to see that happen. Of course, sometimes it is unavoidable, but we need to set standards to ensure that these complaints are being dealt with in a timely manner.

Currently, CBSA is the only public safety agency in Canada without any independent oversight body for public complaints. Establishing an independent review body would foster and would enhance public trust and confidence in Canada's law enforcement and border services institution, which I think is something that we can agree is desperately needed in this country.

In closing, we know that the NDP-Liberal government has ignored its promises and has put off this critical legislation for years. It failed to deliver this important change; although, we hope this change will soon be delivered. It would help Canadians to renew their trust in our public safety agencies. It is a trust that I know many Canadians have, but when they see things like the police complaints commission not operating effectively or not being in existence in some cases, I think it causes some people to have some doubts about the transparency and accountability in the system.

How is it that so many Canadians had to face nothing but endless bureaucracy, when for years, we could have had legislation and a system to streamline the process for public complaints and could have established an oversight body for the CBSA?

The government has had plenty of opportunities to deliver and to fulfill its promises over these last nine years, but it failed to do so. If we have proven anything to Canadians it is that the promises of the NDP-Liberal government are just empty words, and years go by without any meaningful action or promise can be accomplished, if at all.

To perform their jobs effectively and to deliver the best possible service to Canadians, the RCMP and the CBSA require an efficient complaints process. While common-sense Conservatives are supportive of this effort, we believe that the Liberal government needs to do more to support our brave men and women in uniform who support our communities. My Conservative colleagues and I will continue to advocate on behalf of Canadians and to ensure that the highest standards are being met within the CBSA and the RCMP.

• (1015)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is truly amazing. On the one hand, the Conservative Party is trying to blame the government for not advancing the legislation, and on the other hand, it is the Conservative Party that is preventing the passage of the legislation. It is amazing how the member can stand in his place and be critical of us because of their behaviour.

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Let us look at what the member is actually debating. Today, we are debating a motion to prevent the bill from passing because the Conservatives want to delete the short title of the legislation. It is a Conservative filibuster. They cannot criticize the government for not passing the legislation when they are the problem. The Conservative Party and its leadership do not want the legislation to pass. Does the member not see the hypocrisy in that?

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Mr. Speaker, time and time again, this is what the NDP-Liberal government does. It holds its legislation until the last possible minute, and then it tells members of Parliament that we cannot have a debate on it. If we do want to have a debate on it, then we are filibustering the legislation. We cannot have that. In order to effectively represent the will of the Canadian people and in order to be effective parliamentarians, we need to have opportunities to debate this legislation.

The Liberal government has allowed this legislation to die on the Order Paper in two Parliaments. It allowed this legislation, which passed in committee in November of last year, to sit on the Order Paper and to not come to debate until May of this year. It is clear that the Liberal government is not taking this seriously. It does not want to have real debates in the House; it just wants to railroad its legislation through. Common-sense Conservatives will not allow that happen. We will stand up for our Westminster system of parliamentary democracy. We will stand up for robust debate in the House, and we will never apologize for that.

[Translation]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we are currently debating Bill C-20, an interesting bill. My colleague said that he intends to vote in favour of this bill. My colleague opposite will also be voting in favour, and I think my colleagues to my left will do the same. I have a feeling that everyone is going to vote in favour of the bill.

Therefore, rather than talking specifically about Bill C-20, I will talk about something related to Bill C-20, which is how this government handles border control and customs management. Generally speaking, aside from Bill C-20, is my colleague satisfied with how the government is managing customs?

[English]

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Mr. Speaker, we recently had shocking testimony at the public safety committee that the CBSA has not scanned any containers leaving the port of Halifax. We know that Canada's ports have become a haven for organized crime, shipping not only stolen Canadian property, primarily Canadian vehicles, but also drugs, which are being manufactured in Canada, all across the world. The fact that the current government has not given the appropriate resources to law enforcement and to the CBSA to do their jobs effectively, to protect Canadian properties and to keep our country from becoming a haven for organized crime is unacceptable. There is no excuse from the government.

The Liberal government has had nine years to fix this problem. It has risen by over 100%; car thefts are up over 100%, since 2015, under the NDP-Liberal government. It is unacceptable, and we are definitely not satisfied. We are going to fight to make sure that we fix our borders. We need to secure our borders to prevent Canadians' property from being exported abroad.

• (1020)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I like the member, and I like working with him at the public safety committee. However, seriously, the CBSA cuts were done under the Conservative government. The Liberals have not fixed what the Conservatives broke, but the Conservatives broke it in the first place.

The reality is that we saw Conservatives filibustering this bill, Bill C-20, repeatedly at the public safety committee, for months. Every time we showed up at the public safety committee to actually go through the bill, we ended up going through some motion, another dilatory motion that was raised by Conservative members at the committee.

The reality is that we are debating, today, the deletion of the short title. The cost to taxpayers of the hours of debate around this Conservative fringe motion, which is only in place to delay this legislation, is going to be tens of thousands of dollars, and we would not get to third-reading debate, which I agree would be an important debate to have.

Will the Conservatives withdraw this dilatory motion to delete the short title so that we can vote on report stage and move on to third reading?

**Mr. Dane Lloyd:** Mr. Speaker, I do enjoy working with the member at committee as well. There are definitely opportunities for collaboration. I am a collaborative kind of MP, but this is part and parcel of what we have seen from the NDP-Liberal government. We have a New Democratic Party that is more aggressive about passing government legislation without proper review and debate than the Liberal government is. The NDP-Liberal government just wants to railroad things through.

We have to remember what happened last fall. Canadians wanted answers about Paul Bernardo's transfer from a maximum-security to a medium-security prison. The NDP-Liberal government refused to allow Canadians to get those answers. We, as Conservatives, were open to having even one meeting on this, but instead, the NDP-Liberal government was desperate to cover that up and desperate to not have a conversation. The government kept the committee dragged out for months so that Bill C-20 was delayed until November.

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by recognizing and thanking those serving in the RCMP and the CBSA.

Today, we stand at an important moment in the evolution of Canada's approach to law enforcement and to border security. With the introduction of Bill C-20, we commit to enhancing transparency, accountability and public trust in our institutions.

The creation of the public complaints and review commission, the PCRC, marks a significant advancement in our continuous pursuit of a fair and just society. Let us begin by acknowledging that the essence of law enforcement and border security relies not only on the enforcement of laws but also on the public's trust. Trust is hard-earned and easily lost.

Public trust in law enforcement agencies is fundamental to the stability and the effectiveness of legal systems worldwide. It ensures that citizens respect, obey and support the enforcement of laws, which is critical for maintaining public order and security. When the public trusts the police and other law enforcement bodies, they are more likely to co-operate with investigations, report crimes and adhere to legal directives, fostering a safer community for everyone.

Trust between the public and law enforcement also reinforces the legitimacy of the police in the eyes of the community. This legitimacy is crucial as it underpins the public's compliance with laws, without the need for coercion. People comply because they believe it is the right thing to do, not just out of fear of punishment. Moreover, high levels of trust in law enforcement correlate strongly with lower crime rates. Communities where trust is prevalent tend to have more positive interactions with police, which helps in effective policing and less violent confrontations.

Furthermore, trust in law enforcement is essential for upholding the principles of a civilized society, where justice is seen to be done and is carried out fairly. A lack of trust can lead to a breakdown in civil order, an increase in crime and the potential for civil unrest. Trust ensures a collaborative relationship between the community and the police, which is vital for developing strategies that effectively address local crime and safety concerns.

To maintain this trust, law enforcement agencies must operate transparently and accountably, demonstrating their commitment to justice and fairness in all their actions. The establishment of independent bodies that can oversee, review and investigate law enforcement practices, such as complaints against police conduct, also plays a pivotal role. These measures not only help to prevent abuses of power but also ensure that the public's concerns are heard and addressed, thus maintaining the essential trust needed for a harmonious and civilized society.

In recent years, public trust in Canadian law enforcement agencies has experienced a noticeable decline. This trend has been influenced by several high-profile incidents involving police misconduct and the broader discussions around systemic racism within law enforcement. These factors have catalyzed public scrutiny and skepticism, prompting calls for greater transparency and accountability.

Restoring public confidence remains a significant challenge and an ongoing priority for Canadian authorities. The current status and trends in American law enforcement can influence Canadian attitudes towards our own police forces. The global nature of media and the Internet means that Canadians are often exposed to promi-

nent news stories and discussions about American police practices, especially concerning issues of police brutality, systemic racism and accountability. High-profile incidents in the United States, such as the killing of George Floyd, have sparked international movements like Black Lives Matter, which also resonate strongly in Canada.

• (1025)

This exposure can impact how Canadians perceive our own police services, leading to increased calls for transparency, reform and accountability within Canadian law enforcement agencies. Even though policing practices and the legal framework in Canada are distinct from those in the U.S., the widespread media coverage of and societal reactions to American law enforcement issues can heighten public awareness and skepticism in Canada as well. Moreover, similar underlying issues, such as racial profiling and the treatment of indigenous peoples and minorities, are present in both countries, further aligning public concerns. As a result, the debates and reforms happening in the U.S. often act as a catalyst for similar discussions and changes in Canadian policing and public policy.

The public complaints and review commission, or PCRC, proposed under this bill would extend its oversight to the Canada Border Services Agency as well as address a long-standing gap in our law enforcement framework. For the first time, both these critical agencies, the RCMP and the CBSA, would be under the same umbrella of independent scrutiny. The government plans to invest \$112 million to support the operations of the PCRC. This substantial financial commitment would underscore our dedication to building a robust mechanism that would serve Canadians long into the future.

One of the key features of the PCRC would be its enhanced accountability measures. We would introduce codified timelines that would require the RCMP commissioner and the CBSA president to respond to the PCRC's interim reports, reviews and recommendations within specified periods. This would address concerns about delays in responding to oversight findings and ensure actions are timely and transparent.

Moreover, the PCRC would play a crucial role in addressing systematic racism within our law enforcement agencies as the PCRC would also have a public education mandate. It would not only oversee and review the agencies but also inform and educate the public about the rights and the mechanisms available for redress.

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Knowledge is power, and empowering our citizens is a crucial step toward a more engaged and informed community.

Another significant aspect of the PCRC would be its responsibilities in handling serious incidents involving CBSA personnel. This would include the ability to send observers to ensure internal investigations were conducted impartially. This measure would enhance the credibility of investigative processes and increase public confidence in the outcomes.

Furthermore, the PCRC would operate independently, but not in isolation. It would maintain a collaborative relationship with the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency to ensure that national security-related complaints were handled with the requisite expertise and confidentiality.

This legislation is about more than just oversight. It is about reaffirming our commitment to the principles of justice and equity, which Canada holds dear.

• (1030)

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member brought up the word “racism”, and it makes me think about some of the things that have transpired under the government after nine years. We see more racism than ever all across the departments after nine years of the government, including in the immigration department. There was a report that came out in 2021, a Polaris report, that showed racism only went up in that department.

Since we are on the topic, I would like to get the member's take on the Prime Minister, someone who has done racist blackface. What are the member's thoughts on that and on the rise in racism under the government in all departments?

**Mr. Chandra Arya:** Mr. Speaker, I fully disagree that racism went up during the last nine years in our government.

What has happened is that there has been recognition of systemic racism. This has resulted in a higher number of complaints, which have been made public. Those have gone up. That is the reason we see an increase in the statistics.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate hearing the comments of my colleague. The reality is that, despite the Conservatives fighting tooth and nail to block this legislation, we are finally getting it through.

The problem is that the government has not adequately funded the commission for the work that needs to be done so these complaints can be handled in a timely fashion. This has been an ongoing problem. Repeatedly, at the public safety committee, witnesses came forward to talk about the lack of resources the government has put in. We heard from a wide variety of witnesses who wanted to have a functional commission that did an adequate job. That is not going to be possible if the government does not adequately fund it.

My question to my colleague is quite simple: Why will the Liberal government not adequately fund the commission so that it can do the important work it needs to do?

**Mr. Chandra Arya:** Mr. Speaker, our government has indeed made adequate funding provisions for the public complaints and re-

view commission. We have committed about \$112 million. This substantial financial commitment underscores our dedication to building a robust mechanism that would serve Canadians long into the future.

[Translation]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague opposite, who seems quite proud of his government's track record. Bill C-20, in particular, talks a lot about the work of customs officers. From the testimony given in committee, something that seemed to crop up quite often was the whole issue of overwork and fatigue among customs officers.

Many of us remember the endless airport lineups to get through security and customs. When people are too tired, they sometimes make mistakes. They might go further than they should.

Does my colleague think that the lack of resources provided to customs officers could also have played a part in the mistakes they made? If his government had given them proper funding and the resources they needed, there would be fewer problems like the ones we are trying to fix through Bill C-20.

• (1035)

[English]

**Mr. Chandra Arya:** Mr. Speaker, obviously, the workplace conditions, the working conditions, of all of the men and women in uniform should be included as required.

The member mentioned the delays at the airport, but at the same time, we have seen that the process of going through the airport has been smoother. Obviously, from time to time, depending on the season, depending on the particular day, there might be an overwhelming workload and the conditions have to be improved.

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I greatly appreciated the comments of my colleague regarding the empowerment of citizens to forward their complaints through this process. I would like to know his thoughts on how this complaints process would help the RCMP and the CBSA to better manage their affairs.

**Mr. Chandra Arya:** Mr. Speaker, this is a very important thing. The more complaints that are handled in a transparent way, the more the agencies, the officers and the executives there would feel accountable, and that is how this would work out.

[Translation]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today we are debating Bill C-20, which deals with changes to the handling of complaints filed in connection with the level of service delivered by customs personnel or their possible misconduct.



I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise in the House for a second time this week, since I did have the opportunity to give another speech earlier in the week on the government's budget. I do intend to talk about the government's budget again, because it will bring me to Bill C-20. Members will soon see the connection.

The budget presented by the Liberal government this week was in fact historic. I say this because never before has a budget interfered so much in provincial jurisdictions or disregarded provincial powers to such an extent. In my speech, I criticized the government for not looking after its own jurisdictions and instead interfering in areas that are not under its responsibility. I also called out the Prime Minister for acting like the new self-proclaimed king. Perhaps he is inspired in part by his monarchist leanings and his somewhat theological view of Canada.

That being said, in the case of Bill C-20 I must commend the government. That may surprise some people, but instead of always criticizing the government's bills, sometimes we have to acknowledge when they get it right. I am taking this opportunity to do just that. Obviously, once is not a habit and sometimes it is the exception that proves the rule. In this bill, there is certainly an exception. The exception is that the Liberal government is doing its job, it is minding its own business. It feels good to see a government staying within its jurisdiction. We would like to see more of that, I must admit. If that happened more often, this country might be better off. We are not going to deny it.

What exactly is Bill C-20 all about? Sometimes ordinary people have to travel overseas. The vast majority of us have gone to another country. When we want to enter a country, the customs officers ask us all sorts of questions. How long are we staying? Where will we stay? Why are we here? They want to know if the travel is justified.

Customs officers work to try to prevent threats to national security. They want to know whether people are entering the country with good intentions, whether they are authorized to enter the country and whether their visit will be positive, rather than dangerous or threatening to the country. Customs officers do extremely important but also extremely sensitive work. That is why they are granted sweeping powers to ask us questions, search our luggage without a warrant or take us aside and detain us for a little longer. These are indeed considerable powers, which ordinary citizens may sometimes find intimidating. When they stand before a customs officer, most people always wonder whether they are guilty of something or whether they put something in their luggage that could be dangerous. Perhaps people do not have the right to bring lead pencils into that country. I am joking, but I think that members know what I mean. We never know the exact rules or all the laws of every country that we visit.

It is the same sort of thing for people who come here. Plus, there is an added challenge. People coming here often do not know what recourse they have against any abuses they might experience. They find themselves somewhat powerless in the face of a customs officer's authority. This authority is nonetheless a good thing, since the job of customs officers is ultimately to protect us from security incidents or, at the very least, from people who might break the rules and harm society's overall well-being by transporting dangerous objects.

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For example, no one wants to see an individual pass through customs only to realize a little later that he is a member of an organized crime group and has come here to commit murder. Perhaps there are foreign agents infiltrating our country to exert undue influence, or people transporting drugs. These are all things we do not want to see happen. For these reasons, it is important that customs officers have the authority they need to do their job. However, situations can arise where these people abuse their power.

● (1040)

We hope that such situations are kept to a minimum whenever possible, but we know—considering the many cartoons about it—that some administrations in other parts of the world are less strict than our officers are here. We have almost come to expect to see abuses when we go through customs.

That is not what we want to see in the country where we live. We live in a western country, a G7 nation, that theoretically respects people's rights. In fact, ours is a country with a Constitution. Some well-known rights were enshrined in that Constitution by the current Prime Minister's father. Although we may disagree on these rights, or at least parts of them, we nevertheless hope that the people called upon to uphold the Constitution, once it takes effect, will respect it.

To digress just a little, that is also why we hope that this government will respect its own Constitution. When the government draws up budgets, it sometimes meddles in matters that are not its concern.

In the case of customs officers, these individuals are also government representatives, so they must remain above reproach as much as possible and as needed. When an officer opens someone's luggage and turns everything inside out, as customs officers are entitled to do, they are invading someone's privacy. Officers open people's suitcases and see what they wore the day before, whether they did their laundry and so on. These things can be a little uncomfortable. We always hope these procedures are carried out with respect for human dignity.

The same is true when an officer decides to search an individual. For example, a customs officer may decide to strip search someone to see if that individual has hidden prohibited items inside their body. Officers might even inspect that individual's genitals. No one wants customs officers to comment on anything like whether the person showered yesterday or how little they are interested in that person. They also should not say anything about the size, shape or colour of an individual. All of these things would be completely inappropriate in circumstances where the person being searched is in a vulnerable situation.

### *Government Orders*

That is what Bill C-20 tries to fix. Let us hope it is adopted. It is about recognizing that customs officers have rights and they need to enforce the law and protect society and the country. However, this power must also have limits and be regulated.

In the past, passengers could file a complaint. That recourse already existed. The problem is that a complaint about a customs officer or service was dealt with internally. It seemed like there was a lack of transparency or like there could sometimes be a certain form of institutional bias. For example, in my riding, we often heard people complaining about the noise and speed of the trains. They had to file their complaint with the company's police service. People felt like they were being jerked around. They file a complaint with CN's police service and CN is the one that is going to look into the complaint. The perception is that the complaint does not get treated the way it should.

That is what Bill C-20 seeks to do. It seeks to ensure that, from now on, an independent body will have the authority to resolve complaints. If people want to go directly to the independent authority, then they can do so. They can also file their complaint the old way by submitting it directly to border services, where it will be addressed internally first. Later on, they can file an appeal with this completely independent authority, which will be run by civilians, not by former customs or RCMP officers. It will be the same authority that already exists and that independently handles complaints against the RCMP, the federal police service. It will do the same work, but with the name change, it will also be able to independently handle complaints about alleged abuse committed by customs officers.

I will close by saying that this is a constructive measure that will strengthen the public's confidence in the system. Most importantly, we need to ensure that customs officers, who do an exemplary job of performing very important work for our community, have the resources that they need. Even though this does not excuse inappropriate behaviour, we know that sometimes people can make mistakes when they are burnt out.

• (1045)

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I really appreciated my colleague's speech. I am very pleased to hear him acknowledge that the federal Parliament can do good things at times.

I am also very grateful that the member indicated that the work of customs officers and members of the RCMP is not easy. It is a very demanding job.

Does my colleague agree with me that what we really need is a more diverse workforce within both agencies? Does he agree that this will help us improve services to the public?

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Mr. Speaker, that question caught me a little off guard.

I would say that I take it for granted that every customs officer does their job professionally and that, regardless of their skin colour and religion, they are going to do as professional a job as any other customs officer.

Would forcing greater diversity among customs officers really bring about change? It seems to me this question actually assumes that someone would have a different way of working or be less professional because of their ethnic background or language. I hope that is not what my colleague is saying.

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-20 is clearly important for building trust and accountability within the RCMP and the CBSA.

Unfortunately, the current Liberal government always seems reluctant to prioritize legislation that enhances accountability. Here is another example. The review of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Act was supposed to begin in the fall of 2022, but the government has refused to initiate that accountability process.

Why does the member think the Liberal government is reluctant to prioritize legislation that enhances accountability?

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague on his French. I think it always deserves mention when we see people from other provinces of Canada who choose, out of respect for others and perhaps out of personal interest, to learn the language of people who are part of the same country, at least for now. A lot of Quebecers are learning English or know it well. We usually see the opposite, I mean, francophones who learn and speak English. We rarely see anglophones learning French. I have to point that out.

To answer my colleague's question more specifically, I cannot say that I am surprised by his question about the government's reluctance to do its job. That is generally what I said in my speech. This is a government that rarely shows much interest in its own job. It is usually more interested in things outside its jurisdiction, in jurisdictions that belong to the Government of Quebec, like health and education. It even meddles in our laws, such as our law on secularism. It usually lectures us, yet it does not even look after its borders.

The best example is customs. During the pandemic and even up until not so long ago, we saw endless lineups at customs, staff shortages and exasperated travellers speaking out about situations and flight cancellations, sometimes due to a shortage of air traffic controllers.

We truly have a federal government that does not do its own job and yet lectures everyone else. If I could make one recommendation to the federal government, it would be to concentrate on its own job.

• (1050)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I really liked my colleague's speech.

I would like to talk about the request made by several organizations, including the Customs and Immigration Union, both the francophone and anglophone chapters of Amnesty International Canada, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Council for Refugees, and more.

All of these well-respected organizations have asked for a standard time frame for processing complaints, especially complaints about systemic problems such as systemic racism. The government rejected these amendments and, what is more, it refused to allocate resources so that the commission could operate properly and meet its objectives.

Would my colleague agree that this is a mistake that the government made twice with this bill, which has many positive aspects but could have been better?

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Mr. Speaker, I have not read the specific amendments that my colleague is referring to. However, a problem that sometimes comes up when we talk about systemic racism is a prior assumption that there is a situation involving racism or systemic racism. If the goal of the amendments was to automatically assume that everyone is racist, then, of course, there may be a problem.

For example, one good thing about the bill is that the commission must report to the government and the public on what kind of complaints it normally has to deal with. Even the RCMP and the CBSA will have to report on how they handle the recommendations that they get and on the nature of the complaints that they normally receive.

That means there will already be a way to get an overall picture of what is happening and to look at whether further action needs to be taken in some areas where problems seem to arise more often than in others, such as problems related to racism.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising to support this legislation, Bill C-20. It is something that has been needed for some time. The reality is that we heard from so many stakeholders, the groups that I cited a few minutes ago, that having an act establishing the public complaints and review commission and amending these acts and statutory instruments is an extremely important and needed improvement to the existing situation.

As I mentioned earlier, the fact that the Liberals have not set in place service standards and have not adequately funded this commission is profoundly disturbing. The proposed budget is far below what is needed. All the witnesses who appeared before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security indicated this. This continues to be a problem, but there is the reality that this bill has been vastly improved through parliamentary procedure.

I mentioned earlier the fact that the Conservatives stalled this legislation for months. It makes it a bit rich that they are pretending today that they want the legislation to go through, but I will be testing that in a few minutes. The reality is that report stage amendments normally have to be substantive to be considered and the fact that we are considering right now deleting the short title, which is a meaningless motion that is only designed to delay the legislation, is something that really saddens me.

We know that the legislation is long overdue. It was delayed for months because of a filibuster by the Conservatives at the public safety committee. We finally got it through, but it is important to note that three-quarters of the amendments, even at the public safe-

ty committee, that Conservatives filed on Bill C-20, they withdrew. They filed and then withdrew those amendments.

#### *Government Orders*

That is not the case with New Democrats. As members know because they have heard it said before, we are the worker bees in the House of Commons, the adults in the room, and we very diligently went to work to make a number of improvements to the legislation. That is what I want to focus on for the few minutes that are accorded to me. We did not succeed in forcing the government to put in place service standards. We have not yet succeeded in getting adequate funding for the commission, but what we did do through a variety of amendments that were passed, and we are talking about a dozen key areas where the NDP sought and succeeded with the support of all parties, was improve the legislation.

First off, the Customs and Immigration Union had serious concerns about the lack of union representation in the bill. That is something we pushed for and achieved. We now have union representation through the commission process, which is vitally important. Second, we wanted to increase transparency and accountability. That is something that the Breaking Barriers coalition, which is a coalition of civil liberties associations across Canada, was calling for. We ensured, with a number of amendments, more transparency and accountability in the legislation.

There was very little that actually ensured the reconciliation process with indigenous peoples. We had a number of amendments passed that ensured that reconciliation had to be taken into consideration throughout the commission process. We are proud of those series of amendments as well. In most cases, what New Democrats proposed, as the worker bees in Parliament at the public safety committee, I am thankful to say, and this shows collaboration from all members, was passed unanimously or often with three of the four parties around the table supporting.

We also wanted to expand the investigative power, including provisions around mental health information. When there is misconduct, it is not just the physical medical information but also often mental health information that can be conclusive. We were able to get that amendment passed as well to improve the legislation. We wanted to make sure, as I mentioned earlier, in terms of transparency and accountability, that the public is aware of how privileged information is protected within the scope of the act. That, as well, was passed.

*Statements by Members*

● (1055)

We wanted to give complainants a longer period to come forward to make a complaint. That is a matter of respect to complainants, and we got that passed as well. We banned the use of non-disclosure agreements to silence victims. We wanted to make sure that there was no process of intimidation around this, and we got that passed as well. We also wanted to make sure that the PCRC had the ability to investigate a complaint related to disciplinary measures taken by CBSA management, and we managed to get that in place as well.

All those improvements have meant that this bill is much better, and we need to proceed to third reading with no more delays. Therefore, if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion that, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, the motion in amendment at report stage to Bill C-20, an act establishing the public complaints and review commission and amending certain acts and statutory instruments, in the name of the MP for Sturgeon River—Parkland, be deemed withdrawn and Bill C-20, an act establishing the public complaints and review commission and amending certain acts and statutory instruments, be deemed concurred in at report stage as amended.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1100)

[English]

### NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

**Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Fayaz Karim, a former NDP candidate for Mississauga—Streetsville, recently posted anti-Semitic comments and personal insults against me on his X account. The posts were disturbing. Among other things, he accused me of being a “Zionist whore” and a “Zionist prostitute”. There is no place for such language by this former NDP candidate. Respectable debate and different opinions are fair; this vindictive bile is not.

Mr. Karim also attacked British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak for his support of Israel. He wrote that Prime Minister Sunak needed a history lesson on the last six months and referred to him as a “house coolie”.

The NDP tries to pass itself off as a party of inclusion and diversity, but one would not know it with Mr. Karim in its midst. Is this the type of person the NDP wants in its party? I call upon the NDP leader to denounce these anti-Semitic, racist and insulting ravings.

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### NATURE CONSERVATION

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Milton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is home to a quarter of the earth's wetlands, temperate rainforests and boreal forests, 20% of the world's fresh water and the longest

coastline in the world. We have precious habitats for birds, fish and mammals. We have a special responsibility to the world, and we are doing our part.

It is nature week, so I met with organizations focused on our shared commitment to protect and preserve our greatest natural resource. I offer a big thanks to Nature Canada and the Bruce Trail Conservancy for championing the cause of nature conservation.

The Bruce Trail Conservancy is securing and conserving Niagara Escarpment lands, including territory in my riding of Milton, with a five-year, \$5-million grant and beautiful new trails in Lowville. Additionally, Parks Canada's contribution of over \$3.5 million to Conservation Halton for the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System showcases our dedication to creating interconnected green spaces.

Through budget 2024, we are also investing in Canada's new national parks to preserve them and create three new parks in B.C., P.E.I. and Windsor, Ontario. With Canada's pledge to conserve 30% of our lands and waters by 2030 and with \$2.5 billion in new funding to combat nature loss, Canada remains unwavering in our commitment to safeguarding our precious ecosystems for generations to come.

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### GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with more Canadians using food banks than ever before and many on the brink of financial ruin, the next election cannot come soon enough, yet this Prime Minister has insisted on pushing policies that Canadians know are wacko.

Handing out needles to prisoners while they are in jail is wacko. Insisting that the budget will balance itself is wacko. Thinking that vitamins and supplements need to be regulated the same as prescription drugs is wacko. Letting repeat offenders out on bail so they can reoffend over and over is wacko. Turning a blind eye to foreign interference in our elections is wacko. Letting people smoke meth next to kids in our parks and playgrounds is wacko.

After nine years of wacko policies, it is time for Canadians to switch to a blue solo cup, because the red one's messed up and the orange one is bad luck. Let us bring it home.

## OUTDOOR THEATRE

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Rainbow Stage is Canada's largest and longest-running outdoor theatre. It is truly a jewel in the north end of Winnipeg. This year, it will be celebrating 70 years of providing incredible, world-class entertainment.

Starting on June 27, the first of two musicals is going to be on stage. *Ma-Buhay!*, a new musical, is going to be an amazing show. I would encourage people who have never witnessed Rainbow Stage to get out and become a part of something absolutely new. It is going to be entertaining. It will be followed by *Mary Poppins*, something we are all very familiar with.

This year is special. With *Ma-Buhay!* and June being Filipino Heritage Month, it is a great opportunity for us to celebrate the 70th year of Rainbow Stage.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will remind members that we should have our T-shirts, if we are wearing them, underneath our jackets.

The hon. member for Nunavut.

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## NATIONAL ARCTIC STRATEGY

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, on Wednesday, I joined a productive panel discussion with my colleagues from the other House Senator Dawn Anderson and Senator Pat Duncan, as well as Jackie Jacobson, a former MLA in the Northwest Territories, to discuss the Arctic Research Foundation's impressive work in drafting the national Arctic strategy, which was released in October 2023. This great work was prepared in preparation for the Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

What I appreciated about the strategy is the way it is organized into four pillars, including reconciliation and the production of knowledge, protecting the environment while understanding and adapting to climate change, capacity building and economic development, and Arctic data management.

I encourage all levels of government, indigenous rights-holding groups and others to use this document to guide policy decisions in the north, as they can help make much-needed improvements in the north.

I thank the communities, the hunters and trappers organizations that helped form this strategy, as well as other communities, including communities in Nunavut, NWT and other Arctic regions.

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• (1105)

[Translation]

## JOSEPH MARCEAU

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the municipality of Saint-Cyprien-de-Napierville was immensely proud to inaugurate Rue Joseph-Marceau on April 19. The street's namesake, Joseph Marceau, was a local man, a patriot who was exiled to Australia and was the only patriot to remain there.

## Statements by Members

His Australian descendants visited Quebec for the ceremony. They feel it is a true honour to know that one of their forefathers was a patriot. Thanks to the work of documentary filmmaker Deke Richards, the people of Châteauguay—Lacolle are making an effort to shine a light on the history of the men who were deported to Australia, since many of them came from our region. We are forging ties with our friends across the Pacific, who, like us, are striving to uphold the democratic ideals these men held dear.

I would like to acknowledge the presence of Marie-Anne Alepin, president of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, and Chantale Pelletier, mayor of Napierville. I also want to thank Mayor Jean-Marie Mercier and the members of the Saint-Cyprien-de-Napierville municipal council, who are contributing to our collective duty of remembrance.

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[English]

## NETHERLANDS LIBERATION DAY

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on May 5, 1945, the Canadian Army finally secured the liberation of the Dutch people from Nazi occupation. It was a welcome end to a fierce year-long campaign starting on D-Day in northern France, continuing through a cold winter bogged down at the Scheldt River, and finally ending with the liberation of Arnhem and surrounding cities. This victory came at a cost of 7,000 Canadian soldiers, but it was also the start of a long and celebrated friendship between the people of Canada and the grateful people of the Netherlands. This friendship gave birth to a huge influx of Dutch immigrants after the war, including my parents, and it is still celebrated on both sides of the ocean every year.

I am thankful once again for Canada's selfless service to freedom and justice. I am thankful for the many Canadians of Dutch descent across the country, including in Langley. We are a richer and stronger nation because of them.

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## CAPE BRETON CHORALE

**Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to congratulate members of the Cape Breton Chorale, who are celebrating 50 years of music across the globe. In that time, the chorale has given over 200 performances at home and overseas in places like England, Wales, Ireland, and many more. During their travels, they have shared the stage with the likes of Rita MacNeil and Celine Dion, and also performed before such dignitaries as Queen Elizabeth II.

Founded under its original director, the late Sister Rita Clare, this organization has flourished over half a century in operation. While a lot has changed since 1973, the choir's dedication to its craft and audiences has been truly unwavering.

My riding of Cape Breton—Canso is world-renowned for its vibrant culture and music. The chorale proudly strengthens that musical stance on the world stage.

Cheers to 50 years to all members of the Cape Breton Chorale.

*Statements by Members***GRAND VALLEY INSTITUTION FOR WOMEN**

**Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, recently I had the honour of welcoming the Minister for Women and Gender Equality, along with the member for Oakville North—Burlington and the member for Hamilton Mountain, to Kitchener South—Hespeler, where we visited the Grand Valley Institution for Women, a federal facility for incarcerated women. We had a very thorough tour of the facility, and in fact we will need to return to see the minimum-security site another time.

Incarceration affects not only the offender, but the entire family as well, and I was particularly impressed by the mother and child program, which aims to provide support to mothers and expectant mothers in maintaining ongoing relationships with their children. Personally, I feel that separation from one's family is one of the most difficult aspects of incarceration, and for 25 years, Patrice has been doing an exemplary job in supporting mothers and their children through these challenges.

My thanks go to the exceptional staff at Grand Valley Institution for Women for the important work they do in a very challenging environment.

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• (1110)

**HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN**

**Mr. Kyle Seebach (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Iranian regime has sentenced Toomaj Salehi to death. His crime was protesting the death of Mahsa Amini. The sentence comes after he was beaten, tortured and put in solitary confinement.

We all know the Iranian regime. They support Hezbollah and Hamas and recently attacked Israel. Canada's response to this outrageous sentence was "Use of the death penalty to suppress human rights & freedoms is unjustifiable." What a joke. Sadly, it is not surprising. The Liberal-NDP government has failed to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization, six years after Parliament demanded that it do so. The Liberal Prime Minister bowed and shook hands with Iran's foreign minister after the IRGC shot down a plane, killing 57 Canadians.

Let me be clear. Conservatives condemn this sentence. We condemn the imprisonment of Toomaj Salehi, and we call for his immediate release.

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**DURHAM IRISH ASSOCIATION**

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Durham Irish Association on the momentous occasion of its 20th anniversary. Established in 2003 by a group of dedicated individuals of Irish descent, this association has been instrumental in preserving and celebrating Irish culture and heritage in Whitby and the surrounding region.

The Irish community has very strong roots in the Durham region. Indeed, Irish people were some of the very first settlers in the area and have made many contributions to the area's history. As the MP for this vibrant community, I commend every member who has contributed to the success of the organization. Their dedication has

ensured that the Irish spirit not only endures but thrives in the Durham region.

May the next 20 years bring even more opportunities for cultural enrichment, community engagement and celebration of our shared heritage.

*Sláinte* and congratulations again to the Durham Irish Association on 20 years of preserving and celebrating Irish heritage.

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**ETHICS**

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years, shady business has become the government's status quo.

It has recently been revealed that the Prime Minister's only Alberta minister was sneakily cashing cheques from a lobbyist who secured \$110 million in contracts from his own government, even from his own ministry. Not only that, but until two weeks ago, he was listed as a director of Global Health Imports, a company winning over \$8 million in government contracts. The smell of a looming scandal is undeniably pungent.

Despite that, time and time again, the minister has sat quietly in this House and hidden behind his government House leader, claiming he did nothing wrong. If he is so innocent, why does the Minister of Employment not stand up in this House today and tell us how much money he got from his lobbying side hustle?

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**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the cost, the chaos, the drugs and the crime.

After nine years of the Prime Minister's extremist policies, deadly hard drugs are now available in B.C.'s public spaces, such as parks, coffee shops and even hospitals. Now, the Prime Minister wants to expand his radical experiment from British Columbia to Toronto. Of course, my riding is only an hour away from Toronto, and my residents love going to the beautiful city of Toronto, shopping there, going to work and cheering on the great Toronto Maple Leafs.

However, if the Prime Minister expands his radical experiment, there is no doubt that it will spread chaos and drugs like never before seen in Toronto, and that this chaos and tragedy will be spread to surrounding communities, such as my own.

It is time the Prime Minister ended his terrible radical experiment, which is costing lives, right now.

• (1115)

### SIKH HERITAGE MONTH

**Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, April is over and with it brings the end of Sikh Heritage Month.

This April, Sikh Punjabis made strides across Canada and broke records across the nation. In my home city of Surrey, Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar hosted the largest Vaisakhi Nagar Kirtan parade, with over 550,000 attendees who travelled from across the world. They sang beautiful kirtan, served amazing langar and shared their history and culture with all.

Then, only a week later, Punjabi superstar Diljit Dosanjh made history at BC Place. Dosanjh kicked off his Canada-wide tour with a sold-out show to an audience of more than 54,000 people. The energy was electric and the vibe was amazing. From topping billboards to selling out stadiums, feats that are usually left for the likes of Taylor Swift are now quickly spreading to the Punjabi community.

As Sikh Heritage Month wrapped up its fifth anniversary, with Punjabi Sikhs breaking records every day, I have never been prouder to represent such a vibrant and flourishing community.

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### DECORUM IN PARLIAMENT

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, being the member of Parliament for London—Fanshawe is a privilege I will never take lightly.

Parliament is supposed to be a place where elected representatives from across the country work together to make life better for those they represent. We may disagree on exactly how that should happen, but we are supposed to discuss issues and events respectfully. We owe it to our constituents.

Tuesday was an extraordinary day, another low in a pattern of behaviour that has consistently undermined this place year after year. There are those who use every form of misinformation, intimidation, gamesmanship, meaningless slogans and rage farming solely for the purpose of attaining and holding on to power.

I know many members have questioned what we have become, and I am not the only woman in this place who wonders if she can remain here. However, I also know that my family and I have poured our lives into this institution and the ideals it espouses. I will continue to fight to stop those who undermine this important place.

We have to do better. People need us to do better.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### HEROIC RESPONSE

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Annabelle St-Pierre, a student in Senneterre, went into cardiac arrest in the middle of gym class. She will be forever grateful to the people who saved her for their swift and effective response, but also to her school for offering first aid courses.

### Statements by Members

After hitting her head, Annabelle lost consciousness and fell to the ground. In a fortunate turn of events, teacher David Leblond was on the scene. David has been teaching his grade 9 students CPR for almost 20 years. With help from staff members Cheryl Chalifoux and Joanie Fillion, he used the defibrillator twice and fortunately saved Annabelle's life. Annabelle has no memory of the intervention that saved her life, but ever since that day, she and her rescuers have shared a special bond.

I would like to pay tribute to David, Cheryl and Joanie and commend them for their heroic response. I also wish Annabelle every success in her studies at the Val-d'Or CEGEP.

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[English]

### GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

**Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, here is a memo to corporate Canada from the next prime minister of Canada: Fire the lobbyists, ignore the politicians and go straight to the people.

There are far too many corporations that have Stockholm syndrome in this country. They feel grateful when their taxes only go up a little or when the job-killing regulation is not as destructive as it could have been.

To be clear, advancing one's interests is not done by meeting politicians or holding luncheons or forums. If one has a good policy proposal, one needs to convince Canadians it is good for them. One must convince waitresses, carpenters, truckers, seniors and families, because when we start hearing it at the doorstep, that is when we will know it is a good idea. That is who Conservatives will be listening to: the common sense of the common people.

If one wants to stop the latest Liberal tax hike or get bureaucracy out of the way to build homes, mines, factories, pipelines or anything else, one should cancel one's fancy lunch, fire the lobbyists and go straight to the people.

Unlike Liberals, who only listen to insiders, Conservatives will always listen to the common sense of the common people.

*Oral Questions***WELLAND SPORTS WALL OF FAME**

**Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this weekend I will be attending the Sports Wall of Fame class of 2024 induction ceremony in the city of Welland.

I wish to recognize and congratulate Dan Girardi, Jack “JB” Balantyne and Steve Latinovich for their contributions to hockey, Corey Lee for his contributions to judo, Lauren Aiello for her contributions to rowing, Mike Rao for his contributions to basketball, and Ray Sarkis for his contributions in sport at Niagara College.

I also wish to congratulate the three teams being inducted for winning Ontario Championships: the 1973 Welland Atlas Steels tykes baseball team; the 1977 Club Richelieu midget baseball team; and the 2016 Jean Vanier Lynx, senior girls high school basketball team.

Sports are more than just games. They are powerful agents of positive change within our communities. All of these individuals have inspired future athletes and our community at large. I look forward to recognizing their successes this weekend.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this Prime Minister should be ashamed of himself for waiting seven days and still not announcing the end of this program, which is costing lives. Six lives a day are being lost in British Columbia, and what are the Liberals doing in the meantime? They are waiting and studying the issue.

Dirty needles are being found on soccer fields. Nurses are having to stop breastfeeding because they fear for their health given they are exposed to fumes from drugs being consumed in hospitals. Crime is on the rise. People are afraid. Quebec is not immune to this crisis.

When will the Prime Minister stop dithering and end his radical experiment? We want a date, please.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, of course British Columbia is proposing adjustments to its pilot project and we support them.

Our approach is and always has been to save lives and reduce the risk to our communities. That is what we are committed to doing.

We have nothing to learn from the Conservative Party and the failure of its immoral policy, that even an adviser to Stephen Harper described as immoral and antiquated. We will not take any lessons from them and we are looking after Canadians.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's hesitation is worrisome.

He just has to say the word to end this deadly experiment because, essentially, he is the one responsible for criminal law in Canada. That is where it ends. It is as simple as that. It is worrisome to see him insist on keeping this extreme policy in place with the support of the Bloc Québécois.

This morning, the Journal de Montréal said, “Crack, heroin, fêces: the early childhood centre in Montreal's Chinatown at the centre of escalating violence.”

Yesterday, the Bloc Québécois critic for health reiterated his support for decriminalization.

Will the Prime Minister say no today to the legalization of hard drugs in Montreal and across the country?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows full well that no active requests have been made by authorities in Montreal, Quebec or elsewhere, so this pilot project will not be extended to Quebec or Montreal. He is well aware of that, and I would invite him to watch what he says about that.

That being said, we will not take any lessons from the Conservative Party, whose senior adviser has done an about-face and is saying that what the Conservatives did when they were in government was immoral.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

• (1120)

[Translation]

**MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS**

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of extreme ideology, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost of the lives lost to overdoses.

Exactly one week ago today, seven days ago, the Premier of British Columbia asked the Prime Minister to reverse his disastrous experiment involving the legalization of hard drugs.

When will the Liberal Prime Minister put an end to his extreme policies that have caused chaos and death? We want a date, just a date, please.

[English]

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as a mother and a member of the government, I find the tragedies that are happening across this country, and the lives lost, completely devastating. It is shameful that the opposition continues to politicize this.

B.C. asked the federal government to work with it on a three-year pilot program. It has come to us and asked for an amendment to that proposal. We are working through it with the province because we have to get this right. We are here to save lives. We need to get it right with law enforcement and we need to get it right with our public health services, because our focus here is to save lives so that people do not die alone.

Conservatives have no plan, and—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.



• (1125)

[English]

**Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it has been a week since the B.C. NDP government begged the Prime Minister to reverse his decision that made it legal to shoot up heroin on public transit and to smoke meth and blow it in the faces of nurses in hospitals. On what date will the Liberals make that illegal again in British Columbia?

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Province of B.C. came to the federal government with a three-year pilot program using decriminalization, so that people would not die alone but would get health care. The B.C. government has asked for an amendment to its proposal. We are working through it with the B.C. government because we need to get it right. We want people to live, not be criminalized. We want them to get health care.

The opposition does not have a plan. All its members do is stand there and shamefully fundraise off the lives of people who are dying.

**Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it has been a week. Why is this not done already?

The stories in B.C. are horrifying. Heroin is being shot up in parks, on buses and even at Tim Hortons in Maple Ridge. Nurses are having meth smoke blown in their face. Parents in Abbotsford are scouring sports fields before their kids' games to make sure there are no needles and syringes around.

However, it gets worse. The Prime Minister will not even rule out expanding the policy to cities like Montreal and Toronto that have asked for the same craziness.

Why will the government not clearly give a date, just end the failed policy now, frankly, in B.C., and never expand it to anywhere else in Canada?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, ever since the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was born 42 years ago, Canadians have had confidence that their federal government will respect their charter-guaranteed rights and freedoms.

Now the Conservative Party will not say that it has promised to tear up the Charter of Rights in matters of criminal justice. Where will the Conservatives stop? They have not ruled out extending it to reproductive rights. They have not ruled out extending it to the rights of people to a fair trial.

Where will the Conservatives stop when it comes to ripping up the rights of Canadians?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### CBC/RADIO-CANADA

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we fully realize that the plan to bring the CBC and Radio-Canada closer together has only one objective, and that is to protect the CBC from a potential Conservative government that plans to make cuts to En-

#### Oral Questions

glish-language public television. This has nothing to do with modernization, digital media or efficiency. It is simply management's defence against a potential Conservative government. They are willing to sacrifice Radio-Canada's identity to save the CBC.

Can the minister assure us that she has no intention of transforming Radio-Canada into a francophone version of the CBC?

**Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would caution the Bloc Québécois against speculating as to what is currently happening at CBC/Radio-Canada.

I want to reassure the employees and my Bloc Québécois colleagues, who I know are very fond of Radio-Canada, as are we. Radio-Canada's francophone content and programming will remain separate. We understand how important this is to francophones across the country.

Radio-Canada will use public funds wisely. I am being careful because we know very well what the Conservatives want to do: They want to defund the public broadcaster.

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Canadian Heritage is working on a plan. CBC management is working on a plan too. The two are not communicating and have no idea what each other's plans are. What we have here is another example of the federal government's legendary effectiveness.

Are these the people we should be relying on to ensure Radio-Canada's independence from the CBC? Are these the people we should be relying on to ensure the future dissemination of our culture?

Will the minister listen to the Bloc Québécois's proposal and make CBC and Radio-Canada two separate, independent Crown corporations?

**Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois apparently fails to understand that the Crown corporation and its internal management are independent from government for reasons related to the fundamental freedom of the press and independence of our public broadcaster.

As for me, I am committing to reviewing the financial structure, governance, mission and mandate of CBC/Radio-Canada to ensure their consistency with the current reality, in 2024.

The Bloc, however, never managed to protect the public broadcaster from cuts when the Conservatives were in power. They never will be able to protect Radio-Canada from the Conservatives.

*Oral Questions*

● (1130)

**IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, for the past six months, Palestinians in Gaza have been subjected to daily bombings. More than 34,000 people have been killed, including more than 14,000 children. A humanitarian crisis is unfolding before our very eyes. Some 1.5 million people have been displaced without medicine, food or fuel.

The Liberals promised 1,000 visas. Only about 100 have been issued. Four months after contacting Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Ahmad has received no response. He managed to come here on his own. Today, he has a question for the Minister of Immigration. Will the minister save the lives of his nephews and nieces, who are still stuck in that hell?

**Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we continue to work hard to get people out of Gaza. Yes, over 100 visas have been issued. People are travelling to Canada. We continue to push to get people out.

Obviously, Canada does not control exits at Rafah. If people manage to get to Cairo, they can go through biometrics and from there, if successful, they can be directed to Canada.

\* \* \*

[English]

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, mouldy homes, no clean water, impassable roads and no Internet make up the reality of first nation, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada under the Liberals and the Conservatives.

Indigenous communities have identified over \$400 million in infrastructure needs because of historic underfunding, yet the Liberals have barely scratched the surface of this gap with the federal budget.

What is the Liberals' plan to correct their discriminatory funding choices?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more important to our government than reconciliation with indigenous peoples. That is why, from the very beginning, we have been working very closely, in partnership with all indigenous peoples across the country, to ensure that we rectify past injustices and making the necessary investments.

It is difficult work. It is work that we will continue to do with indigenous peoples, and that is why in this budget, and in past budgets, we have made a tremendous amount of investments in indigenous communities across the country. We will continue to do that work.

\* \* \*

**MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS**

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals continue to insist that they do not have enough data from the B.C. government to end the open drug use of

hard drugs, such as cocaine or fentanyl, on streets, in playgrounds and in hospitals in British Columbia.

The B.C. government confirmed that it sent the Liberals the data that they requested within hours of asking. However, if the minister cannot make a decision, why not consider the fact that more British Columbians sadly died of overdoses in January and February of 2024 than in all of 2014?

Why are the Liberals not being honest with Canadians and just end their radical drug policy?

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, every step of the way, we have been working hand in hand with provincial jurisdictions, communities and municipalities across this country. We are speaking to families and health teams to understand how we can save lives.

We are working with the province of B.C. on the amendment to its proposal. We need to get it right. We need to make sure that communities are safe, but we also need to make sure that people are not dying alone, that they are getting the health care services they need. We cannot treat someone if they are dead. We are committed to saving lives.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the member thinks that B.C.'s experience with open public drug use is so great, then why is she not advocating for it in her province?

I was talking to a resident just two days ago from my—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Deputy Speaker:** We are getting a lot of yelling back and forth, and I would appreciate it if members could keep it down. I am hearing a lot from all sides of the chamber. I want to make sure that we keep the volume down as we debate these important issues.

The hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country has the floor.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Mr. Speaker, if the member thinks that the B.C. experience with open public drug use is so great, then why is she not advocating for it in her own province?

I was talking to a resident from my community just a couple nights ago who told me that she came around the corner from her apartment to be faced with something that burnt her eyes. People were openly using drugs on the street. She is rightfully concerned about what she is being exposed to. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident.

After nine years of the Prime Minister, enough is enough. Why are the Liberals not being honest with Canadians and just end their drug policies?

● (1135)

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that question has been asked many times and answered many times by my hon. colleague, the minister.

I want to know something. The member is a female member of her caucus. This morning, a headline reads, “Conservatives don’t rule out using notwithstanding clause beyond criminal justice matters”. Fifty years ago, Roe v. Wade was enacted in the U.S., and women have lived under that protection in the U.S. for 50 years. For 42 years—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. This goes all ways. Members need to keep it down so I can hear the questions and the answers.

The hon. government House leader has the floor.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Mr. Speaker, for 50 years, women in the U.S. have lived under the protection of Roe v. Wade. For 42 years, women in Canada have lived under the protection of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Conservatives will now not rule out using the notwithstanding clause beyond criminal justice matters.

Will the member stand in her place to tell us what rights she intends to take away from women?

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the Liberal-NDP Prime Minister, it is clear that he is not worth the crime, the chaos, the drugs or the disorder.

As a result of his extremist drug policies, we have open drug use in front of an elementary school in Langley, discarded needles at a playground in Willoughby and crack smoking at a bus stop in Brookwood.

People from Langley want to know when the Prime Minister is going to end his extremist experiment to legalize hard drugs, such as cocaine, fentanyl and opioids.

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will say this again: We have to approach the opioid crisis and the illegal toxic drug supply with compassion, science, evidence and health care. On this side of the House, we all want the same thing, which is public safety and access to public health care services so that people do not die alone.

We are approaching the issue of public consumption with urgency, working with the B.C. government on its requested amendments to its proposal. B.C. asked for this exemption. We will continue to work with it hand in hand because families are demanding it of us. They do not want to lose their loved ones.

On this side of the House, we will save lives.

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the result are in, and they are a disaster, with 2,500 opioid—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. If I need to shut things down over here, then I need to shut things down over there. Let us try to keep the chatter down.

The hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove has the floor.

### *Oral Questions*

**Mr. Tako Van Popta:** Mr. Speaker, the results are in. They are a disaster, with 2,500 deaths last year and six, on average, every day this year.

The Liberal minister responsible for hard drug use says that she is waiting for more information from B.C., but the B.C. government says that it has given her all of the information, as if 2,500 drug deaths in one year is not enough data to go on.

Canadians want to know why Liberals are misleading them. When are they going to put an end to this disastrous, failed drug use experiment?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that question has been asked and answered. B.C. has been making adjustments to its pilot project. Of course, we are supporting that.

I had no luck with the last member. Let me ask this member if Conservatives will not rule out using the notwithstanding clause—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

As I have said before, if I need to shut the noise down in one corner of the room, then I need to shut it down in the other corner of the room. Please let the hon. member respond so that we can get on to the next question.

The hon. government House leader may continue, from the top.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Mr. Speaker, of course, B.C. is making adjustments to its pilot project, and we are supporting it in that endeavour. The member should be under no ambiguity about that.

However, the member is ambiguous, just like his previous colleague, about which charter protections his party would rip up. Is it reproductive rights? Is it the right to a fair trial? Is it the right to free expression?

That member, that party and that leader need to get up to tell Canadians exactly which fundamental charter rights they will be taking away from Canadians.

● (1140)

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the Prime Minister is clearly not worth the cost. His minister responsible for hard drugs on the streets is misleading Canadians.

She said that the Liberal government is waiting for more information from B.C. on if it should reverse its decision that allows cocaine, opioids and fentanyl in parks, playgrounds and hospitals. The B.C. NDP government confirmed that it answered, within hours, the government's request for more information.

*Oral Questions*

Why is the Liberal-NDP government misleading Canadians, and why can it not just end its disastrous drug policy?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that member needs to unplug from the wall, replug and reboot. He is not listening to the earlier questions.

We have told them, very clearly, that B.C. has requested changes, and we are working with B.C. to make those changes.

Maybe that member will tell us, specifically, which freedoms and which rights described in the 42-year-old Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which Canadians cherish, he will be advocating for removing from Canadian women and from Canadian people. Is it the freedom of expression? Is it reproductive rights?

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member that his government illegally invoked the Emergencies Act, removing civil liberties from Canadians. After nine years of radical NDP-Liberal government drug policies, and with the toxic drug deaths in B.C. reaching a 380% increase, the number of children aged 10 to 18 who have died from overdoses has increased by more than five times. Opioids and illicit drugs are now the leading cause of death of youth aged 10 to 18 in B.C.

Will the Prime Minister end his radical drug policies, or will he continue to show he is simply not worth the cost?

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are right ways to go about things, and then there are explosive, dramatic and catastrophic ways to go about things. In talking about using the notwithstanding clause, the Leader of the Opposition's response was, "All of my proposals are constitutional, and we will make them constitutional using whatever tools the Constitution allows me to use to make them constitutional. I think you know exactly what I mean", he says. "They will happen, and they will stay in place."

For anybody like me, who has a right that was afforded to him because of this charter in my lifetime, these are chilling words that they—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Repentigny.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions increased in 2021-22. That is why the advisory board appointed by the Minister of Environment himself is issuing a warning: Climate policies work when they exist.

In other words, they do not work when they do not exist, for example, in the oil industry, where emissions continue to rise. Emissions are going to skyrocket with the opening of the Trans Mountain pipeline, a new dirty oil pipeline, on Wednesday, given that there is no emissions cap on oil.

When will the minister rein in oil companies instead of opening pipelines?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would invite my colleague to carefully read the report that was published yesterday because it states that Canada's greenhouse gas emissions are 44 million tonnes less than they were before the pandemic in 2019. That is equivalent to taking 13 million vehicles, or half of Canada's vehicle fleet, off the roads.

The last time that greenhouse gas emissions were so low in Canada, Connor McDavid from the Edmonton Oilers had just been born, O.J. Simpson was on trial and the google.com domain name had just been purchased.

Our plan is working. We need to continue to fight climate change.

• (1145)

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the minister was quite proud to say that Canada was "the only major oil producer in the world that has proposed putting a cap on these emissions". The key word here is "proposed" instead of "imposed".

I would remind the minister that he once was more ambitious than simply being better than Russia or Saudi Arabia when it comes to progressive policies. While he is proposing to do better than them, he is opening a brand-new pipeline: Trans Mountain.

When will there be any action on reducing, not increasing, emissions?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague that if she bothered to read the report, she would see that our record between 2019 and 2021 is the same as Germany's or even Italy's and that it is better than that of the United States of America.

We are not talking about Russia or Iran here, but the United States of America. Our performance on fighting climate change is better than our neighbour to the south.

We have tabled the consultation document to impose a cap on greenhouse gas emissions. I have said that we would have draft regulations this year and final regulations by next year.

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[English]

**MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS**

**Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the crime, chaos, drugs and disorder that he has unleashed on our streets. After nine years, the Prime Minister's radical experiments with legalized hard drugs is turning our hospitals, beaches and schoolyards into one giant drug injection site. Our children are witnessing drug abuse, discarded needles and overdoses as they play and learn, and the Prime Minister's taxpayer-funded drugs are now ending up in the hands of our children.

When will the Prime Minister stop treating our communities like his own personal woke petri dish and end his radical experiments on Canadians?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, that question has been asked many times and answered. I wonder about the hon. members' hearing over there.

We get mail. One example reads, "Canada's significant credit strengths will continue to preserve its AAA-rated sovereign credit profile, underpinned by its high economic strength and very strong institutions and governance. Together, these factors provide Canada with a strong foundation for future growth and a very high degree of economic resiliency to potential shocks".

I am thankful for Moody's credit rating.

**Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, Canadians are struggling, and rampant crime, drugs and disorder have become the norm. Instead of offering treatment and support to those who need it, the Prime Minister is jeopardizing the safety of Canadians by allowing hard drugs to be used openly in public: on buses, in hospitals and right in front of children and their families. That is enough.

Will the Liberals end their radical drug policies, or will they inflict elsewhere the same chaos seen in B.C.?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that question has been asked and answered, but the letter goes on: "In addition, Canada's credit profile has very limited susceptibility to event risks, supported by stable political institutions, a strong and well-regulated banking system, and reserve currency status which underscores the government's deep and unfettered market access. At the same time, despite an initial sharp deterioration in the government's fiscal position from the pandemic, Canada's debt ratios have since materially improved and the government is pursuing a gradual path of...fiscal consolidation."

I am thankful for Moody's credit rating.

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### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have heard over and over again that Canadians have never had it so good. During Wednesday's question period, the Prime Minister guaranteed to the Canadian public, those people who are counting on interest rates going down, that they will start coming down in the next few months. That is great news. The problem is that the Bank of Canada, the organization that actually decides what the interest rates will be, says it has not decided that yet.

I have a simple question for the government: Who is lying, the Governor of the Bank of Canada or the Prime Minister?

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, based on what the Conservatives are saying, they are going to need to explain to Canadians how Canada is rated number one for budget bal-

ance by the International Monetary Fund; maintains a AAA credit rating, which was reaffirmed by Moody's just yesterday; has the best net debt-to-GDP ratio and the lowest deficit in the G7; has been projected by the IMF and the OECD to have the strongest economic growth in the G7; and is number one in the world when the per capita adjustment is made for foreign direct investment.

On this side of the House, we continue to lead. On that side of the House, they continue to mislead.

• (1150)

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, over the last six quarters, there has been declining GDP per capita growth. There has been zero GDP per capita growth in the last 10 years. The government's response has been to spend more money, spreading more fire on the already burning-out-of-control inflationary fire, with \$61 billion in new spending.

Once again, I will ask this. Canadians are barely hanging on. Some of them are going to lose their house shortly. Will the government stand behind the Prime Minister's word and guarantee that interest rates will go down, or is that more misinformation from the government?

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians should not listen to the trumped-up rhetoric of the Conservatives when it comes to our economy. Just yesterday, the independent Governor of the Bank of Canada reaffirmed that due to our commitment to the key fiscal guardrails we have put in place, he believes that since the government's net fiscal plan has not changed a lot, he does not think it will have a big effect on projections for the economy or inflation.

With inflation in the target range for three months in a row, Canadians have reason for hope. Conservatives are looking to cut our investments in the middle class, and we are not going to let them.

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### GROCERY INDUSTRY

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Edmontonians are fed up with Loblaw's sky-high prices and record profits at their expense. Every time they go to the grocery store, they have to put food back on the shelf. The Liberals are doing nothing about it, and the Conservatives are in the pocket of Galen Weston. People are frustrated and are using their power to boycott Loblaw. Edmontonians deserve a government that fights for them, not for wealthy CEOs.

When will the Liberals open their ears, start listening to Canadians and stop the greed?

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know that the member opposite feels that grocery prices are too high, and they have been, certainly. However, the CPI index has shown that food prices are stabilizing in our economy, which is good news for Canadians.

What the government is doing is proposing multiple rounds of reforms to the Competition Act. It is good to see that the NDP and other parties are starting to work with us. Earlier this week, we got Bill C-59 through the finance committee, which was great progress on reforming the competition laws.

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**MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS**

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, sadly, Alberta is on track to have the most toxic drug deaths per capita in Canada by June. Clearly, Alberta's Conservative recovery-only model is tragically failing, but who has jumped on board to support it? The Conservative leader has. While he regularly meets up with far right extremist groups, he will not even meet with Moms Stop the Harm, families that have lost loved ones to the toxic drug crisis. That is the kind of guy he is.

The Liberals have let it happen by not taking a national approach to fighting the crisis. When will the Liberal government finally intervene?

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, too many Canadians are dying every day from the ever-challenging illegal toxic drug supply.

The opposition leader talks a big talk about investing in treatment, but when the Conservatives were last in government, they cut two-thirds of their own drug treatment fund. Will he slam the door in the face of those groups like Moms Stop the Harm that are asking for help? Will he cancel safe consumption sites, knowing that they save lives? Will he refuse to meet the moment of the situation, just use slogans and do nothing, or will he commit to harm reduction, prevention, treatment and saving lives?

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*[Translation]***CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the other day I was thinking about why it is so important for Canada to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. It is important for the economy. Obviously, economic prosperity and ecological prosperity go hand in hand. I was looking at the national inventory report, and I was pleasantly surprised to see that we have reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

I would like to ask the environment minister what the next steps are to ensure we continue on the right track.

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question.

In fact, yesterday's report demonstrates—and this has been confirmed by the independent Canadian Climate Institute, for one—that we are on track to meet our 2026 interim targets and the 2030 goal. This will be a first in Canadian history.

Between 2019 and 2022, we reduced greenhouse gas emissions in Canada by the equivalent of 15 million vehicles taken off our roads, but we need to do more. I completely agree. That is why we are working on new regulations for a carbon-neutral electricity grid by 2035 as well as regulations for a cap on greenhouse gas emissions, which will be announced shortly.

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● (1155)

*[English]***ETHICS**

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, \$110 million is how much the Liberal employment minister's private company landed from the Liberal government.

The Liberal minister used his role to get meetings for his business partner with the finance minister and with the Prime Minister's office, using his position to enrich his business partner and himself. After nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, it is clear it is not worth the cost and certainly not the corruption.

How much taxpayer cash did the Liberal minister pocket on the backs of hard-working Canadians?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada, of course, has the most stringent ethics rules for parliamentarians in almost all of the world. The minister has addressed the question.

It is pretty clear that the Conservatives will do anything they can to distract from their vow to rip up the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are trying to distract and divide. A common-sense Conservative government would use the notwithstanding clause only on matters of criminal justice.

It is unconscionable that the government would allow a mass murderer like the Quebec mosque shooter to ever be released from prison. He murdered six innocent worshippers, and the only way he should have left maximum security was in a box.

Our question was about the corruption of the Liberal government and the employment minister's pocketing cash on the backs of taxpayers. Will the Liberals do the right thing and call in the RCMP?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** It is very nice, Mr. Speaker, to have some clarity on that. I would remind the member that at one time in this country, reproductive rights were a criminal matter.

Could the member lay out, in very specific detail for the House, now that he is talking about the notwithstanding clause, whether he would make reproductive rights for women in this country a criminal matter once again, yes or no?

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a lobbying firm owned by the business partner of the lone Alberta minister secured \$110 million in federal contracts. As money went out the door, the minister was receiving payments from the very same lobbying firm. This is scandalous.

Canadians deserve to know what the minister's cut was. How much was he paid?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Canada has incredibly stringent ethics rules, Mr. Speaker, and the minister has addressed those questions.

I do not know whether the member has communicated with his hon. friend who just got up, but maybe he could answer for us specifically now which criminal matters will apply to the ripping up of Canada's fundamental rights and freedoms? I would ask him to be very specific and point us to chapter and verse. Which rights of Canadians is he vowing to rip up today?

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister is clearly in full cover-up mode, because it gets worse. The minister's business partner was lobbying the minister's own department as cheques were being cut from the lobbying firm to the minister. If that does not smell of self-dealing and corruption, I do not know what does.

Once again, how much has the minister pocketed from the lobbying firm since he was appointed to cabinet?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, of course, the minister has addressed that question, but I want to return to this theme. The Conservatives—

**Som hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Deputy Speaker:** There are a number of questions to go, so I want to make sure we have order in the House.

The hon. government House leader.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Mr. Speaker, it is pretty clear that the folks over here have not really spoken and gotten their story straight. The member is proposing to put reproductive rights back into a category of criminal behaviour. Other members will not answer which specific rights they would take away.

The member has refused to stand up to answer the question of which rights. Is it the freedom of expression? What specific rights would your leader take away as a result of his vow to tear up the Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

## Oral Questions

● (1200)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Members are to make sure that their questions and answers go through the Chair.

The hon. member for Terrebonne.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## SMALL BUSINESS

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a growing number of small and medium-sized businesses, or SMEs, are warning us that the federal government is behaving like a predator when it comes to emergency business account loans. They tell us that they paid off their entire loan to the federal government, but after being just a few days late, sometimes for reasons beyond their control, the federal government is still cutting their \$20,000 grant portion.

Out of sheer intransigence, the Liberals are threatening the very survival of businesses and organizations, even after they repay their loans. Why are they being so inflexible toward SMEs acting in good faith?

[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.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for her continued advocacy for small businesses in Canada. We share that view. That is why the CEBA program supported over 900,000 small businesses through the pandemic, and we estimate that 80% of them have repaid their loans so far. As we move away from the pandemic, we are taking serious concrete action to support small businesses, both by providing funding and by cutting costs.

I am getting heckled, of course, by the Conservatives, who voted against every single measure that we have put forward since 2015 to support small businesses.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government is supposed to support struggling businesses, not kick them when they are down. This is a very unfortunate situation that perfectly illustrates the federal government's program management.

Once again, when people want to talk to the federal government, there is no one human on the other end of the line. There is no flexibility, no exceptions, no case-by-case consideration and no humanity.

Can the government tell us how many businesses that repaid their loans are still going to be squeezed out of another \$20,000 due to sheer lack of compassion?

*Oral Questions**[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.):** Mr. Speaker, I answered that question in the previous answer, and nearly 80% of small businesses have actually already paid back their CEBA loans. As we move forward from the pandemic, small businesses have nearly three years, until the end of 2026, to repay their CEBA loans, and they have access to a low interest rate of 5%.

Meanwhile, we are investing in communities and strengthening our economy. Budget 2024 has a number of supports for small businesses, whether it is through supporting start-ups with quantum AI.

I am looking forward to more to come to speak to—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame.

\* \* \*

**CARBON PRICING**

**Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week, Winston at the Gander & Area Food Bank confirmed that usage is up 44% in just six months. He is concerned about volunteer burnout. The CEO of Food Banks Canada now says that, because of record-smashing demand, food banks are on the brink.

For folks now forced to use food banks, who never had to do it before, the government and the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister are not worth the cost. Will he stop his increase in carbon tax by 23%, or better still, axe the tax so that Canadians can afford to put food on the table?

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is \$1,192 for a family of four in Newfoundland and Labrador, \$760 for a family of four in New Brunswick, \$824 in Nova Scotia, \$880 in PEI, \$1,120 in Ontario, \$1,200 in Manitoba and \$1,800 in Alberta. These are not phony benefits. This is not chicken feed, as has been described by the other side. This is cold, hard cash. This goes into the pockets of Canadians.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot wait for a Conservative government to restore all the rights and freedoms that the government has destroyed.

After nine years, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister has driven two million people to food banks. With record-smashing demand and donations drying up, the CEO of Food Banks Canada says that food banks are becoming unsustainable.

Knowing Canadians are suffering, the Prime Minister raised the carbon tax by 23% and refused to pass Bill C-234 in its original form to make food less expensive for Canadians. He is not worth the cost. Why is the Prime Minister punishing the poor and exterminating the middle class?

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, wow, a mem-

ber who has advocated to roll back the rights of women just stood in this place and said that Conservatives cannot wait to implement those measures.

Women will remember what Conservatives are saying. They are saying that they will take away women's rights, just like in the U.S. We will not stand for it.

\* \* \*

● (1205)

**CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA**

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, do you ever wonder why former inmates who have had vocational training while incarcerated are just as likely to reoffend as those who have not, despite the fact that Corrections Canada claims to have issued 112,000 vocational certificates in the past three years alone? Well, the answer is this: These vocational certificates are meaningless participation awards. In the same period, only 64 inmates in the entire country were able to complete a Red Seal apprenticeship program.

Why has Corrections Canada failed to introduce real vocational certification programs?

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Harper Conservatives did everything in their power to restrict Corrections from being able to offer offenders vocational opportunities to ensure that there is not recidivism. The Conservatives' own former criminal justice expert has come out condemning Conservative policy, saying that it was not based in facts.

The Conservatives, when it comes to criminal justice, do nothing to keep our communities safe, but we do.

\* \* \*

**MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS**

**Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the overdose crisis continues to devastate our country, and no region, including the north, has been spared. As a former chief medical officer, I am also deeply concerned by the level of disinformation currently being promulgated by the Conservatives.

The study that I proposed is currently in the health committee; it would allow all parties to travel around the country, learn from experts and make thoughtful recommendations to the government. Can the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions tell us if she agrees that, to address this crisis, we need to work together using the full spectrum of tools that we have?



*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member for Yukon said, we need to trust in science and in health care, not slogans written on the back of a napkin. Canada's model recognizes that prevention and treatment are two ends of the spectrum of care; we must also care for people who are struggling in between the spaces while they struggle with substance use.

People need to be alive to make it to recovery. Canada's model means supporting cities; it means supporting indigenous peoples with the emergency treatment fund; it means preventative measures, such as implementation of the Icelandic model; it means providing law enforcement with the tools it needs; and it means saving lives.

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[Translation]

**FINANCE**

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government makes it sound as though everything is going great, that the economy is doing well. The reality is that people are struggling. They are going into debt to cover their daily living expenses.

After nine years of this Prime Minister and his wasteful spending, life is more expensive. Right now, we are paying over \$54 billion in interest on the debt. That is more than the health care transfers to the provinces and territories. The Bloc Québécois voted in favour of that. Bloc members say one thing and do the opposite.

Will this Prime Minister, supported by the Bloc Québécois, stop wasting money so that Quebeckers can regain their pride?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will tell my hon. colleague what Quebeckers have gained.

They got dental care. They got a school nutrition program. They got nearly 35,000 new child care spaces funded by the Government of Canada. They got a housing plan and \$1.8 billion to speed up the construction of new housing under an agreement with the Legault government.

With our government, Quebeckers have regained progress, well-being and a government that forges ahead for them.

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I just said, this government thinks that everything is fine. I invite government members to visit a grocery store. Grocery retailers are putting security tags on steaks. That is unheard of.

This Liberal government has been in power for nine years, and our country's debt has doubled. Our friends in the Bloc Québécois are voting in favour of \$500 billion in additional funding. How can they trust this government?

Tiff Macklem, the Governor of the Bank of Canada, confirmed yesterday that this government's spending is keeping interest rates high.

When will this Prime Minister, supported by the Bloc Québécois, stop wasting money on the backs of Quebeckers?

• (1210)

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps my colleague did not read the same thing as I did. The Governor of the Bank of Canada—the very one whom the Conservatives promised to fire right away, I might add—said yesterday that he could consider a return to lower interest rates. All of this has been confirmed by international credit rating agencies, such as Moody's. Canada is maintaining its AAA credit rating with a stable outlook. That is gold.

We are responsible, and we are governing for Quebeckers and Canadians.

**Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this Prime Minister, who is not worth the cost, his wasteful spending habits have not changed. As a result, interest rates remain extremely high, as was confirmed yesterday by the Governor of the Bank of Canada, Tiff Macklem.

Back home in Beauce, food bank use has risen by 20% since the start of the year, proof that voting for the Bloc Québécois is costly. That party continually votes to support the government and its \$500 billion in centralizing, inflationary spending.

When will this Bloc Québécois-backed Prime Minister stop this wasteful spending so Quebeckers can afford decent housing and food?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the people of Beauce benefit not only from all the investments I have just listed to my colleague opposite, but also from an AAA credit rating. This is the highest possible rating for G7 countries. Moody's spoke specifically about Canada's stable fiscal and economic outlook. This assertion was backed up yesterday by the Governor of the Bank of Canada, who said that he could see interest rates falling in the near future. We are delighted about that, and things are going well.

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**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, democracies across the world are facing growing threats from both state and non-state actors. Of course, this includes direct aggression, like Ukraine is facing, and cybersecurity threats. However, another harmful and constantly growing threat concerns right-wing extremism and conspiracy theorists.

Can the Leader of the Government in the House talk about the importance of standing together in denouncing these threats?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this past week and, I dare say, this past half hour, have been a sad point in time for Canadian democracy. We have a Conservative Party that is promising, as we have just heard, to shred the fundamental rights of Canadians.

The week in question started on Monday, when I pointed out that the Leader of the Opposition had encouraged white supremacy, anarchy and misogyny.

*Points of Order*

I do not know what is happening on the other side, but we are drifting into something that is not normal. I invite—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

\* \* \*

[English]

**PENSIONS**

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, wildland firefighters have tirelessly kept our communities safe against devastating wildfires, but despite this dangerous and life-saving work, wildland firefighters are not considered firefighters under the national occupational classification, and this impacts their retirement and pensions. It is absurd that the Liberal government and the Conservatives before them have done nothing to fix this.

Will the Liberals immediately change this, so wildland firefighters can retire with financial security?

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank all the wildland firefighters, who have done amazing work. We have been working very closely with provincial counterparts to address this issue, but one thing to make clear is that, in fact, we care very deeply about the work that they are doing. That is why we increased the tax credit for the volunteer firefighters as well.

We will do everything possible to make sure we support them.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, the Ontario government is proceeding with construction on the destructive and unnecessary Highway 413, a \$10-billion waste of public money to pave through the Greenbelt. The government could have put a stop to it by requiring a thorough environmental assessment in a restored and repaired Impact Assessment Act. Instead, it has proposed a change in an omnibus budget bill that could still let projects such as Highway 413 off the hook.

Will the government strengthen the proposed IAA and reject Highway 413 to prevent paving over 2,400 acres of farmland and green space?

• (1215)

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would remind my hon. colleague that the Supreme Court of Canada, in an opinion last year, told us that we had to revise the Impact Assessment Act. This is exactly what we are doing.

However, through an agreement with the Ontario government, we will make sure that federal laws, such as the Species at Risk Act or the Migratory Birds Convention Act, will apply to Highway 413. These elements will be assessed as part of this project.

**POINTS OF ORDER****ORAL QUESTIONS**

**Mr. Jamil Jivani (Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, a lot of noise was made about the Leader of the Opposition saying “wacko”, yet earlier, during question period, the government House leader used decidedly unparliamentary language toward me in an attempt to defend his colleague from Whitby.

I would like to ask, through the Speaker, that the government House leader apologize and withdraw his comment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I did not hear it because there was lots of noise happening around that time. Maybe what we can do is go back and listen.

The hon. government House leader.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to withdraw whatever comment the member is referring to.

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government House leader acknowledged he did, in fact, use the term, which was captured by Hansard. It is customary, when this kind of language is used in the House, that an apology is offered by the offender. The offender in this case is the government House leader, and this was directed at one of the newest members in the House, which is not only a terrible example but completely unacceptable. The hon. gentleman should apologize immediately.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Like I said, I did not hear what the offending word was, but I would ask the member to maybe just retract it one more time and apologize.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Mr. Speaker, I have withdrawn whatever they are speaking about. I am happy to apologize for whatever they are talking about, too.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Just for identification, we will go back and have a look to see if there is anything on the tapes.

**Mr. Jamil Jivani:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to confirm it was captured by Hansard, and it is very clear what the government House leader said. It was decidedly unparliamentary, especially for a government that made a lot of noise about the term “wacko” earlier this week.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We will have a look at that and come back to the House.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 30th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled “Main Estimates 2024-25: Vote 1 under Office of the Auditor General”.

\* \* \*

[English]

### PETITIONS

#### JUSTICE

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in which the petitioners are calling on the government to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and for Parliament to pass Bill S-281, known as Brian's bill, which would do just that, such that convicted murderers would no longer be eligible to apply for parole after they served their minimum sentence. Rather, they would only be able to apply at the time of their automatic review as opposed to the current situation, where they can apply each and every year after their minimum sentence. This is in recognition of the significant trauma and harm it causes to victims' families to be put through repeated parole hearings.

#### BIODIVERSITY

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise here today to present petition e-4673, a very important petition with over 5,000 signatures from across the country.

The petitioners point out that Canada and the world face a biodiversity crisis with one million species facing extinction globally, that Canadian governments have consistently failed to meet their international commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity, that Canada demonstrated leadership in the Convention on Biological Diversity in Montreal in 2022 and the IMPAC5 conference in Vancouver last year, that the 2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework signed by Canada sets binding international targets, that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change stated his intention to introduce by early 2024 legislation that enshrines accountability for achieving these goals and that such legislation should recognize and affirm indigenous rights and jurisdiction in alignment with the UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Therefore, petitioners ask that the government introduce legislation in early 2024, this year, to conserve nature in Canada by implementing the global biodiversity framework.

● (1220)

#### PAKISTAN

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to be able to stand in this place today and

### Routine Proceedings

present a petition on behalf of Canadians who are raising concerns about the actions taking place in Pakistan.

Specifically, these are Pakistani Canadians who point out there is increasing political unrest that has led to the arrest of opposition parties and challenges free and fair elections in that country. The signatories of this petition are calling upon the government and the House of Commons to ask the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development to immediately explore the feasibility of imposing sanctions on the Pakistani military members responsible for these egregious acts.

The signatories also ask the Government of Canada to use its membership on the IMF to require insurance of new and current loans and the extension of existing loans to the Government of Pakistan to be conditional on Pakistan's holding of true, free and fair elections. Finally, the signatories request that these measures be kept in place until freedom can be brought to Pakistan.

#### VACCINE EQUITY

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to table today.

The first petition is a petition signed by many Canadians who are concerned about Canada's response during COVID-19 to vaccine equity. We know there is a potential for future pandemics.

These petitioners call on the Government of Canada to support the WTO TRIPS waiver and to work harder to ensure that, in future pandemics, vaccine equity is available to all people in the world.

#### UKRAINE

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls on the Government of Canada to provide additional support to Ukraine. The war in Ukraine, the illegal war by Putin and the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, is worrying for all Canadians.

Of course, we have an enormous number of Ukrainian diaspora members in this country. All Canadians want to see the government do everything possible to make sure that Ukrainian children are returned to Ukraine and to make sure that all supports we can provide to Ukraine at this time are done.

#### SURF GUARD SERVICES

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table a petition on behalf of constituents of mine from Tofino and Ucluelet on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

*Routine Proceedings*

Petitioners highlight that lifeguards watched over Lovekin Rock at Long Beach, which is in Tla-o-qui-aht territory, in Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. It had a surf guard program for 40 years until the federal Conservative government cut the program in 2012. This beach probably has the highest concentration of people at any beach in Canada without a lifeguard. Emergencies are often being attended to by Parks Canada in collaboration with the Canadian Coast Guard, West Coast Inland Search and Rescue, the B.C. emergency response group, the RCMP, volunteer firefighter departments in Ucluelet and Tofino, and even CFB Comox. There have been multiple deaths since the closure of this program.

Petitioners are calling on the government to reinstate the surf guard tower and surf guard services and to extend the duration of the surf guard program to accommodate the growing number of emergencies, as well as visitors, at Long Beach national park reserve. There was a meeting about this in March. The petitioners are waiting for the results of that meeting and hopefully the reinstatement of this program.

• (1225)

## CARBON PRICING

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise to present a petition on behalf of folks who are quite concerned with methane-fired electricity generation, and they have an interest in moving to low-carbon energy sources.

The petitioners start with the science, as they should. They note that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change notes that we need to be building no new fossil fuel infrastructure and reach net-zero electricity generation by 2035. They note that, while some people call natural gas a transition fuel, in reality it is a fossil fuel, and it is a methane producer, a very potent natural gas.

This is a significant petition, so I will move quickly through it. In Ontario, petitioners note that methane-fired generation is set to account for 25% of the province's electricity generation by the late 2040s, which is more than triple its current role. They go on to note that this increase in projected methane-fired electricity in Canada, and particularly in Ontario, indicates that the current level of carbon pricing of methane-fired generation does not send a sufficient price signal to incentivize the transition away from fossil fuels to low-carbon energy sources, and that the current proposed clean electricity regulation process is too slow to address it. In fact, it also contains loopholes, which makes the issue even worse.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to make methane-fired electricity generation subject to the fuel charge components of the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, and if methane-fired generation remains in the output-based pricing system component of the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, they want it subjected to increased carbon pricing.

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## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, just to acknowledge your comments after my S.O. 31, I appreciate what you said and will respect that.

The following questions will be answered today: Nos. 2440, 2442, 2443, 2446, 2450, 2451, 2453 and 2455.

[Text]

Question No. 2440—**Mr. Philip Lawrence:**

With regard to the amendments to valuation regulations published in Part I of the Canada Gazette on May 27, 2023, which will increase duties on imported products into Canada: (a) will the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) publish revised regulations, and, if so, (i) when does the CBSA expect to publish such regulations, (ii) will those regulations undergo further consultations or will they be published as final; (b) did the CBSA estimate the cost to Canadian consumers of their proposed regulations, and, if so, what is the estimated cost; (c) has the CBSA estimated the reduction in competition in the Canadian market of their proposed regulations, and, if so, what is the estimated reduction; (d) has the CBSA estimated the administrative cost to Canadian companies due to this proposed regulatory burden, and, if so, what is the estimated cost; and (e) has the CBSA estimated the increase in revenue from the implementation of these regulations, and, if so, what is the estimated increase?

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments published in part I of the Canada Gazette would not increase duties on all products imported into Canada. The proposed amendments seek to provide greater certainty when determining which sale is to be used to determine the transaction value of goods. The proposal intends to address a competitive advantage that favours non-resident importers. Due to a current lack of clarity in regulations, non-resident importers are able to declare a value for duty based on an earlier and lower-priced sale between two foreign entities rather than the sale to an actual buyer located in Canada. The amendments are intended to help Canadian importers compete on a more level playing field with non-resident importers. The intention is to establish a consistent and reliable method for identifying which sale is to be used when calculating the value for duty for all importers.

In response to parts (a)(i) and (ii) of the question, the CBSA is continuing to work on the proposed regulatory amendments to the valuation for duty regulations, and amendments to the proposal are being considered to address stakeholder feedback received through the Canada Gazette, part I, consultation process. The CBSA does not have further consultations planned at this time. The CBSA cannot confirm when the regulations will be published, given that it does not control the Treasury Board process or timing. Regulations are made once the Governor General signs the regulations' order in council. The final regulations are then published in the Canada Gazette, part II, and come into force on the day or days set out in the regulations.

*Routine Proceedings*

With respect to parts (b) and (c), under the proposal, non-resident importers would now declare the value for duty on the basis of the sale to the buyer in Canada. As a result, non-resident importers would declare a higher value for duty on which duties are calculated. However, as indicated in the “Canada Gazette, Part I, Volume 157, Number 21: Regulations Amending the Valuation for Duty Regulations”, with non-resident importers only accounting for about 11% of the total value for duty declared to the CBSA under the transaction value method, higher prices for Canadians on imported goods and any reduction in competition are expected to be minimal.

Regarding part (d), the regulatory amendments are not anticipated to change anything for Canadian resident importers, who currently declare their purchase price from their foreign supplier. As such, the CBSA does not anticipate an increase in administrative costs to Canadian companies.

Regarding part (e), as indicated in the regulatory impact analysis statement, the CBSA estimates an average increase of \$224.7 million in duties per year after implementation.

**Question No. 2442—Mr. Luc Berthold:**

With regard to comments made by the deputy minister of Public Services and Procurement Canada at the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on March 7, 2024: (a) what is the total value of staff augmentation contracts per year from 2015 to present, broken down by department; (b) of the 635 companies mentioned by the deputy minister, how many have fewer than five employees; (c) what percentage of the contracts referred to in (a) were completed entirely by employees of the contracted organization; (d) what percentage of the contracts referred to in (a) were completed with more than 50% of the resources subcontracted to another firm; (e) what percentage of the contracts referred to in (a) were completed with more than 90% of the resources subcontracted to another firm; (f) what is the total dollar value of commission paid to the companies in the contracts referred to in (a); (g) what is the total dollar value of compensation paid to resources in the contracts referred to in (a); (h) what is the difference between the average cost per resource in the contracts referred to in (a) and an equivalent position pursuant to the public service collective bargaining agreement; (i) of the 635 companies mentioned by the deputy minister, how many currently employ an individual who is also an employee of the Public Service; (j) how many cases have been referred to the review mechanism, as referenced by the deputy minister, related to preventing vendors from providing input into Requests for Proposals; and (k) how many of these cases have ultimately been referred to the RCMP?

**Mr. Charles Sousa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, PSPC does not have a specific contracting or accounting code for “staff augmentation contracts”. Further, many of the 635 companies that are qualified for government contracting under the professional services contracting supply arrangement are also qualified for government contracting under other procurement instruments, i.e., supply arrangements. Determining which companies and which contracts were specifically for staff augmentation would therefore require a manual collection and validation of data that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incorrect or incomplete information.

Regarding parts (c) to (i), this information is not centrally tracked. Gathering the information would require a manual collection and validation of data that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incorrect or incomplete information.

With regard to parts (j) and (k), the Government of Canada has a broad framework in place to prevent, detect and respond to potential wrongdoing in order to safeguard the integrity of the federal procurement system. This approach includes a variety of tools to actively detect wrongdoing and to respond to allegations that the government is being defrauded, either in a specific contract or on a broader scale. In cases where these tools uncover fraudulent or unethical practices, PSPC takes all appropriate steps to safeguard the expenditures of public funds, including referring cases to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

**Question No. 2443—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:**

With regard to the Lake Babine Nation Foundation Agreement signed by the government in September 2020: (a) does the government agree that an Incremental Fisheries Agreement (IFA) would fulfill the government's commitment with Lake Babine Nation to ensure sufficient healthy stocks to fully satisfy Lake Babine Nation's domestic harvest needs and derive economic benefits from the fisheries resource in the territory; (b) for how long has an IFA term sheet and budget been awaiting Cabinet review; and (c) is the government committed to ensuring that the IFA is approved expeditiously to maintain Canada's reconciliation efforts with Lake Babine Nation and protect the sustainability of Skeena River sockeye stocks?

**Hon. Diane Lebovitch (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is with regard to the Lake Babine Nation Foundation Agreement signed by the government, Lake Babine Nation and the Province of British Columbia in September 2020, which sets out the steps for transformational change in the relationship between the parties, including on fisheries matters. Fisheries and Oceans Canada, or DFO, has since worked with Lake Babine Nation to codevelop a term sheet and budget for a proposed incremental fisheries agreement intended to provide immediate benefits on fisheries matters to Lake Babine Nation, including those related to collaborative fisheries management, scientific and stewardship initiatives, and economic fisheries opportunities. The codeveloped proposal also envisions Lake Babine Nation and Canada working together to sustainably manage fish stocks in Lake Babine Nation's traditional territory, including those of the Skeena River sockeye, which are of tremendous importance to both Lake Babine Nation and Canada, given the Skeena sockeye is one of the largest sockeye runs in Canada. Based on the codeveloped proposal finalized in February 2023, DFO has followed regular Government of Canada decision-making processes to seek the authorities to begin formal negotiations with Lake Babine Nation. DFO recognizes the significant effort Lake Babine Nation has invested in codeveloping the term sheet and budget, and appreciates Lake Babine Nation's patience as the department continues to work to secure the necessary authorities. The Government of Canada remains committed to fulfilling the obligations set out in the 2020 Lake Babine Nation Foundation Agreement, including the commitment to negotiate fisheries matters.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2446—Mr. Kyle Seeback:**

With regard to applications received by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, since January 1, 2016, and broken down by type of application: (a) how many applicants were deemed inadmissible pursuant to (i) paragraph 34(1)(b), (ii) paragraph 34(1)(c), (iii) paragraph 34(1)(f), of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (S.C. 2001, c. 27); and (b) broken down by each paragraph of the act in (a), how many of the applicants who were deemed inadmissible were members of the (i) Kurdistan Democratic Party, (ii) Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, (iii) Movement for Change or Gorran, (iv) Kurdistan Islamic Union, (v) Kurdistan Justice Group or Komala, (vi) Assyrian Democratic Movement, (vii) The Sons of Mesopotamia, (viii) Chaldean Syriac Assyrian Popular Council?

**Mr. Paul Chiang (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, insofar as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, or IRCC, is concerned, since January 1, 2016, the following approximate number of temporary and permanent resident applications have been found inadmissible on security grounds.

With regard to part (a)(i) of the question, there were 80 instances refused under paragraph 34(1)(b), and 125 instances refused under paragraph 34(1)(b.1).

With regard to part (a)(ii), there were 80 instances refused under paragraph 34(1)(c).

With regard to part (a)(iii), there were 815 instances refused under paragraph 34(1)(f).

It should be noted that an application may have more than one refusal ground. All values are rounded down by a multiple of five for privacy reasons, as it prevents individuals from being identified when IRCC data is compiled and compared to publicly available statistics. As a result of rounding, data may not sum to the totals indicated.

With regard to part (b), IRCC undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. IRCC does not track information on the affiliation of clients' political or religious organizations. Therefore, IRCC is unable to provide these data.

Under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, all visa-required foreign nationals, including visitors, temporary foreign workers and students; immigrants; and refugees are carefully assessed to ensure that they are eligible and admissible to come to Canada.

Visa determinations are made by IRCC officers on a case-by-case basis when an application is received, and are subject to review for inadmissibility.

IRCC works closely with Public Safety Canada partners to screen applicants in order to determine whether they are admissible to enter or remain in Canada. Their expertise in security screening helps to identify those who might pose a threat to the safety, security or health of Canadians, and to mitigate the potential security risks associated with those seeking to enter Canada.

**Question No. 2450—Mr. Bob Zimmer:**

With regard to the items listed in the Main Estimates, 2024-25, under Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency: (a) of the \$7.5 million listed under "Grants for the Inclusive Diversification and Economic Advancement in the North

initiative", what are the details of all funded grants, including, for each, the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) amount, (iii) purpose of the funding, (iv) project description, (v) location; and (b) what criteria were used to determine which projects would receive funding, and how much funding each project in (a) would receive?

**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.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to the items listed in the main estimates, 2024-25, under Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, or CanNor, the response is as follows.

The main estimates provides a listing of the resources required by individual departments and agencies for the upcoming fiscal year in order to deliver the programs for which they are responsible. It identifies the spending authorities, or votes, and the amounts to be included in subsequent appropriation bills that Parliament will be asked to approve to enable the government to proceed with its spending plans.

In response to part (a)(i), CanNor funded the Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce, or YFNCC, through a multi-year grant agreement; (ii) \$30,000 is committed for 2024-25; (iii) the purpose of the funding is to support a northern investment conference, as described in the project description; (iv) YFNCC will host the Arctic Indigenous Investment Conference that focuses on economic reconciliation and growth, youth entrepreneurship and leadership development, and fostering collaborative relationships across the territories' Yukon first nation business community; and, (v) Whitehorse, Yukon.

Furthermore, CanNor applies the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, or ATIA; whereby information relating to grants and contributions that has yet to be publicly disclosed on Open Government is not included in the response. As of March 18, 2024, CanNor had committed an additional \$46,000 in grants to other approved projects not listed in the above response. Open Government disclosure information on grants and contributions can be located at <https://open.canada.ca/en/proactive-disclosure>.

In response to part (b), CanNor supports economic development in the north through project-based funding which strengthens territorial economies and increases economic participation by northerners. CanNor employs place-based decision-making when assessing and ranking projects. Funding levels are determined based on thresholds determined in CanNor program terms and conditions, applicant requests and budget availability. CanNor accepts applications for project funding through a call for expressions of interest, or EOI. Information on CanNor's EOI priorities, including the project selection process, are outlined in the EOI applicant guide at <https://cannor.gc.ca/eng/1546864521572/1546864541613>.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2451—Mr. Brad Vis:**

With regard to the carbon tax revenues collected from small businesses since 2019 and the over \$2.5 billion in fuel charge rebates owed to small businesses: (a) when will the new system referenced by the Minister of Finance on January 22, 2024 to distribute funds owed to small businesses through the fuel charge return programs be implemented; and (b) what is the rebate schedule for when small businesses will receive the over \$2.5 billion owed?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, regarding part (a) of the question, budget 2024 proposes to return fuel charge proceeds from 2019-20 through 2023-24 to an estimated 600,000 businesses, with 499 or fewer employees through the Canada carbon rebate for small businesses. This new refundable tax credit would deliver over \$2.5 billion directly to small and medium sized businesses in the provinces where the fuel charge applies. Proceeds would be returned to eligible corporations automatically through direct payments from the Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, separately from CRA tax refunds. With respect to the 2019-20 to 2023-24 fuel charge years, the tax credit would be available to Canadian controlled private corporations, or CCPCs, that file their tax return for 2023 by July 15, 2024. For each fuel charge year and province, the amount would be equal to the number of employees reported by the CCPC in that province for the corresponding calendar year, multiplied by a payment rate specified by the Minister of Finance.

The proposal would return proceeds for future fuel charge years, including 2024-25, in a similar manner each year.

With regard to part (b), amounts would be automatically paid to eligible businesses once enabling legislation receives royal assent, payment rates have been specified by the Minister of Finance and the Canada Revenue Agency has put in place the systems to process the automatic payments.

**Question No. 2453—Ms. Niki Ashton:**

With regard to litigation and other legal expenditures involving Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) or Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) between February 6, 2006 and January 1, 2016: (a) what were the total expenditures on (i) outside lawyers or legal advice, (ii) in-house or CIRNAC departmental lawyers, (iii) in-house or ISC departmental lawyers, (iv) Department of Justice Canada lawyers; (b) how many lawyers are represented in each subsection of (a); (c) of the expenditures in (a), what are the number of cases and total expenditures, broken down by standing of the government; and (d) what are the details of all cases involving government expenditures of over \$100,000, including, for each, the (i) case name, (ii) date of the initial court filing, (iii) current status of the case, including the result, if applicable, (iv) total expenditures to date?

**Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to parts (a) (i) and (iv), total expenditures on outside lawyers or legal advice and Department of Justice lawyers can be found in the public accounts of Canada archive, where information is broken down by fiscal year, April 1 to March 31. This information can be found in Volume III: Additional Information and Analyses, Detailed information Section 3: Professional and special services, under the category "Legal Services".

With regard to parts (a) (ii) and (iii), Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada or CIRNAC, and Indigenous Services Canada or ISC do not hire in-house or departmental lawyers.

Concerning part (b), with regard to (a)(ii) and (iii), CIRNAC and ISC do not hire in-house or departmental lawyers.

Concerning part (b), with regard to (a) (i) and (iv), and parts (c) and (d), CIRNAC concluded that the information requested is not centrally tracked in a system and would require extensive manual research to produce and validate a comprehensive response to this question. This would not be possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

**Question No. 2455—Ms. Niki Ashton:**

With regard to the Indigenous Services Canada 2024-25 Departmental Plan and mental health services that are available in communities: (a) what efforts will the department undertake to advance work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners to (i) improve access to high-quality services, (ii) improve well-being in Indigenous communities, (iii) support Indigenous peoples in assuming control of the delivery of services they choose specific to mental health and wellness; (b) which self-reported health surveys does the government use to measure distinctions-specific progress towards increasing positive outcomes; (c) which other surveys and research efforts does the government use to measure distinctions-specific progress towards increasing positive outcomes; and (d) does the government believe that it can achieve its department results for First Nations, Métis and Inuit adults who report 'excellent' or 'very good' mental health while also sunseting funding for mental health and wellness from budget 2021?

**Ms. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, regarding parts (a)(i), (ii) and (iii), Indigenous Services Canada, or ISC, will continue to advance its mandate to work with first nations, Inuit and Métis to improve access to high-quality services; improve well-being in indigenous communities across Canada; and support indigenous peoples in assuming control of the delivery of services at the pace and in the ways they choose.

Budget 2024 proposes \$630.2 million over two years, starting in 2024-25, to support indigenous people's access to mental health services, including through distinctions-based mental wellness strategies. This investment will help provide indigenous peoples with equitable access to compassionate, trauma-informed and culturally based mental health resources and care in communities across Canada. The budget 2024 funding builds upon the over \$300 million annually the department invests on an ongoing basis in indigenous mental wellness services.

This continued funding for mental wellness demonstrates the government's commitment to support and improve health equity, access to culturally appropriate health services and support for holistic approaches to healing, including community-based, culturally relevant and trauma-informed mental health services.

*Routine Proceedings*

Communities and indigenous leadership are actively working to address their unique mental health challenges. By supporting indigenous-led, community-driven initiatives that reflect the cultural needs and aspirations of the people that use them, indigenous leadership and communities are better equipped to address their unique mental health needs and improve mental health outcomes.

Regarding parts (b) and (c), ISC works closely with first nations and Inuit partners to gather and develop monitoring systems to address the need for timely, community-based and national-level data. We work collaboratively to ensure high-quality, timely data informs policies and programs, and seek to build upon national monitoring and research activities.

The department currently uses results from the first nations regional health survey administered by the First Nations Information Governance Centre for first nations living on reserve and in northern communities, as well as the indigenous peoples survey administered by Statistics Canada for self-reported results for first nations living off reserve, Métis and Inuit. When data becomes available, the department plans on using results from the Qanuippitaa? National Inuit Health Survey, an Inuit-owned and Inuit-led national survey program.

Regarding part (d), budget 2024 proposes \$630.2 million over two years, starting in 2024-25, to support indigenous people's access to mental health services, including through distinctions-based mental wellness strategies. This funding will support continued access to mental wellness teams in communities, wraparound services at opioid agonist therapy sites, suicide prevention and life promotion services, as well as trauma-informed cultural and emotional support services across Canada.

ISC is working with indigenous partners towards achieving the mental health targets identified in the departmental results framework, which seek that 55% of first nations and Inuit report "excellent" or "very good" mental health, by March 2028. The department measures distinctions-specific progress towards increasing positive outcomes by using data from self-reported health surveys that ask respondents to rate their mental health.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 2438, 2439, 2441, 2444, 2445, 2447 to 2449, 2452 and 2454 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

**Question No. 2438—Mr. Dan Mazier:**

With regard to expenditures on consultants by Environment and Climate Change Canada since November 4, 2015: (a) what is the total amount of expenditures incurred on consultants; and (b) what are the details of all such contracts under object codes 0431 (Scientific consultants), 0446 (Training consultants), 0473 (Information

technology and telecommunications consultants), 0491 (Management consulting), 0422 (Engineering consultants – Construction), 0423 (Engineering consultants – Other), 0301 (Advertising services), 0351 (Communications professional services not elsewhere specified), and 0352 (Public relations services), including the (i) amount, (ii) vendor, (iii) date of the contract, (iv) duration of the contract, (v) description of the services provided, (vi) reason or purpose of the contract?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2439—Mr. Michael Barrett:**

With regard to the Memorial to the Victims of Communism project: (a) what specific work was done on the memorial between February 1, 2023 and March 18, 2024, broken down by month; (b) what is the current (i) targeted completion date, (ii) projected total budget; and (c) what are the details of all contracts over \$1,000 entered into by the government related to the project since November 4, 2015, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount, (iv) description of goods or services provided?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2441—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:**

With regard to contracts entered into by the Department of National Defence or the Canadian Armed Forces relating to diversity, equity and inclusion services, since November 4, 2015: (a) what is the total value of such contracts, broken down by year and by type of service provided (policy development, training, guest speaker, fee, etc.); and (b) what are the details of each such contract, including, for each, the (i) vendor, (ii) date, (iii) amount or value, (iv) description of goods or services, (v) manner in which the contract was awarded (sole-sourced versus competitive bid)?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2444—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:**

With regard to the Environment and Climate Change Canada's Holland Rock weather station near Prince Rupert: (a) how many unscheduled outages have occurred in the years 2015-2024; (b) what were the dates and durations of these outages; (c) what were the dates of visits to the weather station by the department or its contractors, (d) what maintenance and repair activities were performed during these visits; and (e) what were the costs of these visits and activities?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2445—Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to Immigration and Refugee Board hearings on refugee claims, in 2023: (a) for written hearings, how many claims were (i) accepted, (ii) rejected, (iii) abandoned, (iv) withdrawn and other, in total and broken down by the country of origin of applicants; and (b) for oral hearings, how many claims were (i) accepted, (ii) rejected, (iii) abandoned, (iv) withdrawn or other, in total and broken down by the country of origin of applicants?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2447—Mr. Bob Zimmer:**

With regard to the items listed in the Supplementary Estimates (C), 2023-24, under Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs: what are the details of the \$9 million listed under "Contributions to Promote Social and Political Development in the North and for northerners", including which organizations received funding, how much each organization received, what criteria were used to determine which organizations would receive funding, how the funds were used, and the details of each project funded with the money?

(Return tabled)



*Government Orders***Question No. 2448—Mr. Bob Zimmer:**

With regard to the items listed in the Main Estimates, 2024-25, under Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs: (a) of the \$94,603,783 and the \$4,151,000 respectively listed under "Contributions for promoting the safe use, development, conservation and protection of the North's natural resources, and promoting scientific development" and "Grants for promoting the safe use, development, conservation and protection of the North's natural resources, and promoting scientific development", what are the details of projects funded with this allocation, including, for each, the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) amount, (iii) purpose of the funding, (iv) project description, (v) location; and (b) what criteria were used to determine which projects would receive funding, and how much funding each project in (a) would receive?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2449—Mr. Bob Zimmer:**

With regard to the Northern Responsible Energy Approach for Community Heat and Electricity program: (a) what is the government estimate of the total costs required to achieve the stated goal of reducing diesel consumption by 7 million litres; (b) how much has this program spent to date, and what amount and percentage of this were spent on administration expenses; (c) how many employees or Full Time Equivalent's have been hired for the program to date, in total, and broken down by year; and (d) what are the details of all projects funded to date, including, for each, the (i) recipient, (ii) location, (iii) amount of the funding, (iv) project description?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2452—Ms. Niki Ashton:**

With regard to nurses employed by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to provide health care to rural, remote and Northern communities, broken down by province or territory: (a) what is the current number of nurses employed by ISC who are (i) full-time, (ii) part-time; (b) what is the total number of new nurses hired since September 1, 2022; (c) what is the current number of vacant nursing positions; and (d) which nursing stations had their capacity reduced due to staffing shortages in other communities?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2454—Ms. Niki Ashton:**

With regard to funding programs managed by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), and broken down by fiscal year since 2015-16: (a) what are the details of each funding program, broken down by (i) name of program, service, fund, or initiative, (ii) amount of funding allocated for funding program, (iii) amount of lapsed funding, (iv) number of applicants to program; (b) which of the funding programs in (a) have been identified by ISC as part of budget 2023's commitment to refocus government spending; and (c) what is the total amount of funding reduction that each program or grant in (b) will experience?

(Return tabled)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, finally, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand at this time, please.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

**PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND REVIEW COMMISSION ACT**

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-20, An Act establishing the Public Complaints and Review Commission and amending certain Acts and statutory instruments, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of Motion No. 1.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, where we left off this morning, Conservatives were saying

that they wanted the bill to pass. In fact, they even chastened the Liberals for not passing the bill.

Just prior to question period, I asked for unanimous consent to move beyond this dilatory motion, delay motion, obstruction motion, that the Conservatives have put. What they are asking Canadians to do is to pay \$70,000, which is the cost of one hour of parliamentary time, for a parliamentary debate around whether the short title of this bill should be deleted. Now, \$70,000 is a lot of money where I come from. For most Canadian families, \$70,000 is what they earn in a year. Conservatives have burned that money just in the last hour.

What I did was that I asked for unanimous consent to move to third reading, because at this point, in report stage, all we are doing is debating the Conservatives' stupid amendment, a wacko amendment, that simply says that we are going to delete the short title of the bill. There is no substance to it. It does not improve the bill in any form. It does not make any difference in terms of the public commission that so many people have been crying out for and that is so badly needed.

All it does is delay and cost Canadians \$70,000 for each and every hour of this absolutely useless obstructionism. It is wacko obstructionism from an official opposition that is not a serious party. The Conservatives had the opportunity to move on that—

• (1230)

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie):** The hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Mr. Speaker, our leader was expelled earlier this week for using the word “wacko”. My colleague has already said it twice, and has only been speaking for maybe two minutes.

Is this considered unparliamentary language, yes or no? I would like to have a decision.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie):** I would ask for a bit of decorum in the House.

I thank the hon. member for his point of order. Obviously, there is a difference between using that unflattering term to characterize a policy or a decision and using it to describe a person. That is how the Chair has interpreted the Standing Orders. I therefore invite the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby to continue his speech.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I like your interpretation a lot because it corresponds to what the member and the Conservative members could read in the rules of the House. We are not allowed to attack other members. That is what the Leader of the Opposition and member for Carleton did. He attacked the Prime Minister, he insulted him and he refused to withdraw his comments.

*Government Orders*

The member for Carleton, who has been here for 20 years, should at least understand how things work in the House. He did what everyone knows and that is exactly the opposite of how we are supposed to behave under our rules. We can criticize ideas and actions, but we cannot criticize people. Every Conservative member should know that.

[English]

In the last hour, the Conservatives have burned \$70,000 of Canadian taxpayers' money.

Members will recall how woefully terrible the Harper regime was at managing money. It gave \$116 billion in the big bank bailout on liquidity supports. Each and every year, \$30 billion was given in the infamous Harper tax haven treaties. It was a sweetheart deal for Canadian billionaires and the most profitable corporations in the country, and the Conservatives just splurged that money because money does not mean anything to them.

They are terrible financial managers. Conservative financial management is an oxymoron. They are the worst financial managers anyone has ever seen, and the 10 dismal years of the Harper government will remain, in infamy, the worst years of financial management in our country's history: consecutive deficits throughout that period, massive handouts to the banks, massive handouts to the oil and gas CEOs and massive handouts to overseas tax havens. At this same time—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie):** The hon. member for Calgary Centre is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Mr. Speaker, I am shocked. The member has called me and my party bad fiscal managers. I assure him that I was a money manager before I came to the House, yet I do not see any money managers over there. He is suggesting that I and other members of my party do not know how to do this, but I would strongly suggest that we have, personally, much better fiscal plans and much better economic plans than I have ever heard come out of the member's mouth.

As such, I would like him to retract that remark, please.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie):** I thank the hon. member for Calgary Centre for his intervention. However, that is a matter for debate.

I invite the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby to continue his speech.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I have won consecutive business excellence awards, so I have no lessons to learn from any Conservatives in the House. The reality is that the member can consult the fiscal period returns produced by the Department of Finance. It is not a hotbed of social democracy, but the federal Department of Finance, over the last few decades, produced the fiscal period returns. They say that Conservatives and Liberals are terrible financial managers and that the best governments are NDP governments.

Year after year, the fiscal period returns, which every MP, Conservative, Liberal or of any other persuasion, can consult, will show that NDP governments have the best record of managing money

and of paying down debt. We do that because we are able to run programs like health care and education, and we do not fritter away money like the Conservatives are doing today. For \$70,000, there is this debate around this frivolous distraction of deleting the short title of this bill rather than getting on to third reading so that we can actually get in place the—

• (1235)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie):** I thank the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

[Translation]

Unfortunately, his time is up. We will move on to questions and comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was rather enjoying a good portion of the member's comments.

I want to pick up on one aspect, when he talked about the short title because, for those who might be following the debate, there is a valid argument to be made that the Conservatives are doing nothing more than playing an obstructive role. Even though they say they want the legislation passed, they go out of their way to prevent the legislation from passing.

When the member makes reference to the short title, this is what the Conservatives are proposing to delete: This act may be cited as the "Public Complaints and Review Commission Act". They want that aspect of the legislation deleted.

I am wondering if the member could provide his thoughts in regard to the obstruction that the Conservative Party is playing on such important legislation.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the point. It is not that they want to spend hours and hours debating that one sentence and whether we remove it, when it has absolutely no impact on the legislation or on the public complaints commission, but that they want to spend. They want to waste. I see the finance critic for the Conservatives in the House right now, and they want to waste \$70,000 for each and every hour—

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie):** The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn on a point of order.

[English]

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:** Mr. Speaker, I do not think we are allowed to mention who is or is not inside the chamber.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie):** The hon. NDP House leader knows the rules of the House. He cannot say who is present in the House and who is not. He has a few seconds left to finish his answer.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, they have wasted \$70,000, so far, on this meaningless debate and delay tactic. I think Canadians would say to get on with the public complaints and review commission.

Why did they not accept the UC that I moved prior to question period, which would actually allow us to move to third reading debate on this bill?

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member talked a lot about, really, restricting or censoring the ability of members in the House to speak and voice their concerns about legislation.

Does the hon. member think that all members of the House should have an equal right to speak to any bill at any stage of the debate, and if he does not, as the House leader for the New Democratic Party, how does he censor or restrict his members when they are speaking in this chamber?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment my colleague for his French question a little while ago. I was quite impressed with that. His French is coming along well.

The reality is that there is no censorship, when one is paying \$70,000, to debate deleting one line that has absolutely no impact on the bill. The short title has no impact on the bill itself. This is nothing but a delay tactic.

I point out Conservative hypocrisy, when Conservatives rise in the House and say that it is really important that this bill passes and wonder why this bill has not passed, and it is their fault that it has not passed. They held this bill up for months in the public safety committee by bringing forward meaningless motions, constantly, so that we could not actually get to the nuts and bolts of the bill.

I spoke earlier about the many amendments and improvements that the NDP brought. As the worker bees of the House of Commons, as the adults in the room, we wanted to improve the legislation so that it was better. However, the Conservatives just want to block it and block it.

If one blocks legislation, at least step up and have the guts to say that they have been blocking it for months, that they are going to block it even more and that they do not mind if Canadians are spending \$70,000 an hour listening to us debating this meaningless amendment that deletes the short title. If one is going to block legislation and stop good things from happening, at least have the guts to own up to it.

• (1240)

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is an important bill. The accountability and transparency of many agencies, including the CBSA and the RCMP, is fundamental.

I would like my colleague to explain to me in French why the Conservatives are delaying the passage of this bill right now, even though they say they support it.

### *Government Orders*

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie is one of the best MPs in the House. He does a tremendous amount of work and is always very productive. We listen carefully when he asks questions.

Honestly, I do not have an answer. Why are the Conservatives saying that this bill is important while doing everything they can to block it, even though their filibuster costs \$70,000 for every hour of useless debate?

They do not want the bill to go to third reading. That is a useful debate, but they do not want to do it and I cannot explain why.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and speak in the House.

When I think of Bill C-20, which we are debating today, I cannot help but reflect on what the member for Sturgeon River—Parkland said today, which was that the Conservative Party was disappointed, in essence, that the legislation has not been passed. He was challenging the government on why we have not passed the legislation.

The type of hypocrisy we see flowing out of the Conservative Party of Canada is truly amazing. The Conservatives have a far-right mentality of trying to say to Canadians that everything is broken, and that includes what takes place here on the floor of the House of Commons. They like to spread misinformation, and they like to filibuster and do everything possible to prevent things from actually happening in the chamber that is positive for Canadians.

On Bill C-20, I agree with the member opposite who spoke to the bill. He talked about the fine work that our RCMP and our border control officers perform, day in and day out. Everyone recognizes the importance of this legislation, but there is only one political party that is going out of its way to see this legislation actually not pass, and that is the Conservative Party, that alt-right group that we witness every day across the way when the House sits. We see that in the behaviour of the leader of the Conservative Party. They do not want to see a productive House of Commons.

To those who follow this debate or who follow CPAC on a regular basis, recognize that no matter what sort of filibuster or block the Conservative Party puts in place on a daily basis, we will continue to be there to fight for fairness for all Canadians. We saw that in the presentation of a budget that builds upon Canada's middle class and that provides a higher sense of fairness so that those who have more could cover for other individuals, so that everyone would pay their fair share and so that we would not forget about millennials and generation X.

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Bill C-20 would go a long way in providing a substantial initiative that is needed to support our RCMP and our border control officers. However, we are debating, instead of trying to get to the matter at hand, in hopes that we could try to pass this legislation. Opposition members know full well that there is a limited amount of time for government legislation, and one would think they would take that issue seriously, especially if they say that they support the legislation. However, instead of allowing the debate to go into third reading, the Conservative Party of Canada has moved an amendment to a substantial piece of legislation.

There is a long title for legislation, and there is a short title. This is what the bill itself, under “Short Title”, actually says: “This Act may be cited as the Public Complaints and Review Commission Act.” How much simpler could it be? How could that possibly be controversial? There is no controversy surrounding that issue, so I would ask this question: Why did the Conservative Party member opposite decide to bring in this particular amendment?

● (1245)

The short answer is that they do not want it to go to third reading. Rather, they want us to debate that aspect in the form of a filibuster. This is obstruction, something we witness far too often on the floor of the House of Commons. Today, it is a ridiculous amendment meant to prevent legislation from going into third reading. Then the Conservatives will cry that they want more debate time, that they want this and they want that. They bring forward absolutely illegitimate arguments to justify behaviour that I believe a vast majority of Canadians would not support. There are some in society, being the far right Diagonal group, that would support those types of actions.

I would say to the leader of the Conservative Party that the vast majority of Canadians would not support or condone the type of far right extreme behaviour that we are seeing being implemented by members of the Conservative Party. This includes bringing in senseless amendments like this one today, which has the sole purpose of preventing the bill from moving forward.

At the same time, the Conservatives are tenacious and persistent in their critiques of the government for not bringing forward legislation or not getting it passed. Look at what the member said in his speech. He was critical of the government for not supporting CBSA border control officers. Does the member not even realize that it was the former Conservative prime minister who cut hundreds of jobs in that area and millions of dollars from that department? The member criticized our government on that issue, but we reinstated the funding and added to it. Do the Conservatives not have any shame whatsoever? Do they not realize the hypocrisy that is overflowing from the modern, right-wing Conservative Party? We are witnesses to that hypocrisy, day in and day out, when the House is sitting.

The Conservative Party is not there to support Canadians. When we talk about supporting, it means not only getting behind legislation like what we have today and allowing it to pass but also recognizing the initiatives that are there in the budget to support our border control agents and the RCMP by developing the board that the legislation will put into place, being the independent and enhanced public complaints and review commission. That is, in fact, needed.

Everyone in the chamber recognizes that, but only one party wants to prevent it from becoming law and having it enacted.

The Conservatives will criticize, just as the member opposite tried to criticize us for not taking action on the issue of gun smuggling. Are they serious? The member can take a look at the actions we have taken in comparison to the previous administration, under Stephen Harper. When Conservatives talk about auto theft, the greatest auto theft that was taking place in Manitoba was in that 2004-08 era, under national Liberal and national Conservative governments. The federal government, provincial government and non-profits such as Manitoba Public Insurance came together to deal with the problem. That is why we had a summit. The government took action, contrary to what the Conservatives said.

● (1250)

Actions speak louder than words, but all we get is wind from the Conservatives. It does not smell good at all. I would ask the Conservative Party to grow up on the issue.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberals stand in the House today and say it is a waste of time to be debating this very important legislation. It is not a waste of time for all the civil society organizations that have very serious concerns about the bill, concerns that were not fully addressed at committee.

The National Police Federation, union officials and working people are concerned that, if there is an unfounded allegation against them, they are off work for a year and are not going to get paid. Conservatives put forward amendments to try to ensure that they would get back pay if the allegation was unfounded. The Liberals defeated them. That is why it is so important to have debates on this in the House.

I would draw the attention of the House to the parliamentary secretary himself. He is saying that these are ridiculous motions. On November 26, 2018, he himself moved a notice of motion to delete the short title of Bill C-87; again, on March 6, 2017, the parliamentary secretary put a motion on notice to delete the short title of Bill C-22. The Liberal parliamentary secretary is being a hypocrite in the House. He has done this on numerous occasions, and he should be ashamed.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, there is no hypocrisy. The member should allow me the time to expand on the things he just finished saying.

We are talking about substantial legislation, on which there is support from all sides of the House, and how the Conservatives are using this as a tactic in order to filibuster. What makes it even worse is the member's response to my comments. He says, “All these people outside the chamber do not want us to pass the legislation. They are the ones making us do it.”

I can tell the member opposite that, at the end of the day, the Conservatives need to grow up, take responsibility, recognize that they too were given a mandate to work with government, not just oppose for the sake of opposing and filibuster everything. They have a responsibility. They're not letting us—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Nepean.

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in a civilized society, the security of communities comes not only from the implementation of laws but also from the public's trust in law enforcement agencies. This trust provides stability and effectiveness in any society.

Could the hon. member comment on that particular issue?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, establishing a public complaint and review commission would reinforce and strengthen public confidence in the system. That is what makes the essence of the legislation powerful; it is a potentially effective tool that would assist in keeping that confidence in two institutions, the RCMP and our border control agency, which do phenomenal work. That is recognized not only domestically but also internationally, and I believe it is one reason the legislation has the support that it has from all political parties in the House.

It is unfortunate that one leader, the leader of the Conservative Party, has taken the decision to advocate more for policy positions of the extreme right, which is causing issues here in the House of Commons.

• (1255)

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on why his party voted against the NDP's amendment, which called for a standard service time for complaints related to things like systemic racism. Without a standard service time, things can drag on and people do not get answers.

The National Council of Canadian Muslims, Amnesty International and many other civil society groups requested a standard service time.

Why did the Liberals reject that amendment?

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, as I am sure you can appreciate, I was not necessarily at the committee, nor did I hear the explanations that would have ultimately been provided. The member would be best advised to sit down with department officials or possibly have that discussion with the minister.

I appreciate the fact that members of the Bloc and New Democrats have recognized the importance of the establishment of the commission. That is the most important thing. Not only do they recognize it, but, ultimately, they would also like to see it pass. I see that as a positive thing.

Unfortunately, based on what we are witnessing today, it would appear that time allocation might be required in order for this to see

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the light of day. The Conservatives are determined to prevent it from passing, even though they say they support it.

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to stand and debate the issues that are so important to Canadians.

If I could, I would like to cast light on some of the rampant disinformation and misinformation being propagated by the parliamentary secretary across the way and the House leader from the New Democratic Party. In fact, the member will be very interested to hear that it is a relatively common practice to bring about amendments at report stage. The member himself did so in an example from 2016, which I have in front of me, where he moved a motion that would delete clause 1, which is the short title. His explanation for doing so was not that he was trying to delay and stop legislation; rather, he said that there were important issues that needed to be discussed.

There are a number of examples where the member, the parliamentary secretary, was quick to move amendments that were not necessarily substantive but would ensure that certain issues could be discussed. Some of those issues are very important in the context of the discussions we have in this place.

I say to the NDP members, and specifically the House leader of the NDP, that they are maybe the worst negotiators in the history of coalition agreements; they have accomplished virtually nothing while propping up a government that continues to do things they complain about on a daily basis. I will put that issue aside. However, I will remind them that they have actually moved a number of amendments. In fact, I have an example here from 2018, where the NDP member from Victoria, seconded by a member of the Bloc Québécois, moved a motion that would have deleted a short title.

The indignation shown by other members of this place speaks to how they are so quick to dismiss the very valid concerns that can be brought forward, including, in this case, by members of Canada's law enforcement. I would suggest that what drives the attitude to which they are bringing the debate into the House today is not one of wanting to pass the bill, because here are the facts: The government controls the legislative agenda, yet the bill has twice died on the Order Paper. The government says it is somehow a priority; however, we are now in the third year of the current Parliament, and here it is today.

Government members may want to not talk about it. They may not put a priority on it. However, excuse me if I, along with my Conservative colleagues take the opportunity to do our jobs when we have the opportunity to discuss important issues in a bill that we will be supporting. That is why Canadians sent us here. It is indicative of how truly dysfunctional those two parties are when we hear the absolutely absurd rhetoric being propagated by their senior members.

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When it comes to the substance of the bill we are debating today, many Canadians may not understand the specifics around what we are talking about. I think most Canadians would agree, certainly including those I chat with when it comes to some of the issues facing Parliament. However, then there are those who face challenges, those who have a complaint. When there are concerns brought forward, and specifically, when it comes to policing and, in particular, the RCMP, there has to be a process in place to ensure complaints can be talked about, investigated and evaluated with integrity.

My understanding is that, as the study was undertaken at committee, a host of witnesses talked about things that could be made better in the bill. There is agreement among all parties that changes have to be made. This is a shining example, despite the absurd rhetoric from other political parties here today, that there is a desire to see some changes brought forward to ensure there is integrity within our policing system. I would suggest we need to take seriously some of the suggestions that have been brought forward.

• (1300)

Various stakeholders, including indigenous chiefs and folks from the National Police Federation, have flagged that there will be resource issues. There are some suggestions that if we do not have a truly independent process, there will be some hesitation, whether among those who come forth with civilian complaints or those within the RCMP. We need to make sure that there is true and needed independence. If it is within the command structure, I am sure we can see how there would be some hesitation about how a complaint might be treated if it was brought forward.

Again, I think it is indicative that the other two parties in this place are concerned that we are talking about this, yet they say it is a priority. Here I think we have an example of that. Deep within their ranks, there is this anti-police, anti-law enforcement ideology that is permeating. It is this “defund the police” type of movement. They may not stand for it publicly, although a few of them have. We have heard those things, and Conservatives have been quick to call out the absurdity of that. It is concerning that they say in this place that it is important, yet they are unwilling to actually take action. I would suggest that this is driving the way they talk, which shows such indignation that we would dare talk about this and have additional debate. Therefore, I would suggest there is a deeper cause driving that “defund the police” movement, which needs to be stopped, because in Canada today it is not easy to be a police officer.

I speak with police officers on a regular basis. I compliment them and thank them for their service, because it is not easy when they have so many things working against them, whether it is how they feel demoralized when they put sometimes hundreds of hours of work into an investigation, only for the perpetrator to be let back out on the streets, which is absolutely unacceptable, or whether it is some of the other issues they face as we continue to bring awareness to mental health and trauma-related mental health injuries and how all of those things are brought forward.

In fact, it was an honour to be able to attend the Sam Sharpe dinner with my colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound. That was specifically in relation to the military and the story of Sam Sharpe, but it talks about the bigger issue of occupational brain injuries and

PTSD and how they can have devastating effects. Therefore, morale within police departments across Canada is certainly a huge issue.

There are two specific concerns that I want to bring forward, which are related to this, on how we need to make sure that government is responsive to the concerns.

I would simply suggest this when it comes to the RCMP and every aspect of what that looks like, in terms of being able to support our men and women who wear the red serge or the other police services across our country. This was raised to me. I will not get into specifics, but a local law enforcement member, and he will know who I am talking about, talked about how he served as a police officer in Afghanistan, training national police there. He highlighted to me recently how, even though he suffered occupational stress injuries as a result of that service and was there partnered with the RCMP, because he was not a current serving member of the RCMP at the time, he is not qualified to receive the supports that RCMP members would receive. He has been successful, and he is a community leader today, but he has had to bear the brunt of being able to make sure that he fights for those supports himself. He shared his story with me, and I greatly appreciated hearing about his fight.

I know my time is running very short, but I would simply say this: There is so much work that needs to be done. Whether it is support for our police services, municipal and all the way up to the RCMP, whether it is law and justice reform or whether it is support for our veterans and our military, there is a lot that could be talked about. It is a worthy thing that we are talking about, and it is something that we should continue to talk about. I find it very disappointing that the Liberals and their partners in the NDP would be so quick to dismiss a chance to raise these important issues.

• (1305)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, those were interesting words. I can tell members that I have been a parliamentarian for over 30 years now. Most of that time has been in opposition.

I can honestly say that this is really amazing, with this particular Conservative Party, even though it is saying that it supports the legislation. The member himself said that he supports the legislation. Does he not realize that Conservatives, with the amendment they are attempting, are again preventing the legislation from passing?

If the Conservative Party was true to what it says inside the House, why would it oppose having the bill go through automatically through a unanimous consent motion, as the NDP proposed, and have it go directly into third reading? The Conservatives said no.

Would the member, today, make a commitment now that he would be prepared to see it start third reading today? We do not have to be debating the deletion of some five- or six-word clause. Would he not agree with that, in principle, based on what he is saying?

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**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, this would only be from a Liberal and a socialist. Certainly the environment minister openly admitted that he was a socialist. It would only be the left-leaning coalition that we have in this country that would be so scared of doing its job. It is terrified, absolutely terrified, of talking about the issues that matter to Canadians.

In fact, it was December 5, 2016, when the member for Winnipeg North, and I cannot say his name, seconded by Mr. Graham, who is no longer a member of this place, moved to amend a bill by deleting clause 1. They are accusing Conservatives of doing things that this member himself has done on multiple occasions.

That is nothing more than politicking because they are hiding a defund-the-police, anti-police agenda within the ranks of their party. It is shameful, and they should be absolutely disgraced because of the terrible precedent they are setting.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I take umbrage with a number of comments, starting with respect for the police.

At the health committee, we had police testify on the toxic drug crisis, and as soon as the Conservatives did not get the answers they liked, what did they do? They tried to test the credibility of the RCMP and undermine it. This is totally unacceptable. These are the people who protect us day in and day out.

He also cited that the NDP has gotten nothing done out of our deal. I am going to name a few things: a national dental care plan; a pharmacare plan, so that people who have diabetes can get insulin; a school lunch food program; a youth mental health fund; anti-scab legislation; a doubling of the GST tax credit to help people deal with inflation; a doubling of the firefighter and search and rescue tax credit; a renter protection fund; a red dress alert; and more money for child care and housing.

I could go on and on, but maybe the member could name just one opposition party, outside of Tommy Douglas bringing in universal health care, that has gotten more done for people. Maybe he could even name one thing that the Conservatives have gotten done in the last nine years.

• (1310)

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting.

He just provided a list. I do not have the time to dispel many of the myths that the member is propagating.

Let me simply say this: Many of the things on that so-called list of accomplishments are things that they compromised on, things that they have not actually accomplished, things that are not being delivered, or things that are billed as one thing.

However, Canadians, including Canadians who reach out to me to ask questions about the specifics of those programs, express extreme disappointment, including of members. Although there are not too many of them, there are a few people in my constituency who have voted NDP in the past. They have expressed to me extreme disappointment with how that member and that party have sold their souls to the Liberals.

Let me say this: When it comes to the toxic drug crisis, there is a very clear sentiment that I hear across this country, and it is that the failed policy that the Liberals and the NDP are pushing upon Canadians is not something that Canadians support. This needs to end, the free drugs and, in many cases, taxpayer-funded drugs.

We need to get people who are suffering from the challenges associated with addiction into the treatment they need so that they can get better, and not simply, as the minister suggested the other day, not dying alone. They should not die at all.

Let us get them into treatment. Let us give them hope because that is the promise of what this country is, not the embarrassment that it has become under the NDP and the Liberal government.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in this debate on Bill C-20. Basically, this bill, in its very essence, seeks to increase people's confidence in the justice system and to hold accountable all those across Canada who ensure our safety and that of our borders.

This bill holds that the RCMP and the CBSA deserve certain things to make their work a lot more effective. We are well aware that the challenges of today, in 2024, are a far cry from the challenges of 30, 40 or 50 years ago. Leaving aside social media, just think of the transfer of information, and the quick and effective access we have to information today thanks to AI and other tools, like our smart phones. These tools have taken national security challenges to a whole new level. They have changed and our tools must be adapted. That is why this bill seeks, as I said earlier, to increase Canadians' confidence in the RCMP and border policing system. It also aims to ensure that their work is done properly, and therefore gives them even more relevant and practical powers to address the actual problems that police officers have to face.

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It is important to understand that information is the key to security, particularly when it comes to long-term criminality, which is what the RCMP deals with. This has to do with international relations, where foreign powers or individuals from foreign states infiltrate our country, and, of course, the access people have on our soil. Let us not forget that Canada has the longest non-military border on the planet. Obviously, we share that with our American partner, so we are not alone. We share the border with the Americans. It is more appropriate to put it that way, out of respect for our neighbour. We share the world's longest demilitarized border. It is 8,891 kilometres long. I am referring, of course, to border dividing the north from the south, the one closest to where we are now, between Canada and the United States. However, we must not forget the border that is more than 2,400 kilometres long, between Alaska and the northern part of our country, the northwest boundary of our country.

The challenges at the border are immense. We can take great comfort in the fact that our Canada-U.S. border is one of the best. That said, it also presents certain challenges. I will come back to that later with the issue of illegal firearms. It is important to understand that, under the current circumstances, border services have completely different challenges. That is why we need to review certain aspects of the border services organization and the RCMP. That is what this bill seeks to improve.

This bill is not perfect, but overall we believe that it is a step in the right direction. Among other things, we want to improve communication between the various law enforcement partners and law enforcement authorities, whether we are talking about the border services or the RCMP. We also want much more fluidity of information. On the other hand, we want to reinforce the respect that people should have for their police forces and their border service officers. If, by some misfortune, something happens and someone ends troubled by a situation and feels they have been mistreated in connection with a problem at the border or with the RCMP, that complaint must not end up in limbo or fall through the cracks, as they say, and not be spoken of again.

We therefore need to strengthen the rights of citizens to complain about situations that they feel are completely inappropriate and ensure that investigations into such situations are conducted properly. That is where we have some concerns. Police forces have said that an officer's career can be tarnished for months if a citizen wrongly reports them for inappropriate behaviour, and in the end it is determined that everything was done by the book and that the complaint was unfounded. It is a very long process, so we need to be aware of that. We presented an amendment in that regard, but unfortunately, it was rejected.

That being said, we still need to keep in mind that this bill also seeks to give more flexibility in addressing new challenges, as I said earlier.

• (1315)

Let us take auto theft as an example. In recent years, there has been a sadly astronomical increase in car theft. As members of the official opposition, we have diligently done our job by tackling this problem head on and proposing concrete and effective solutions. I would like to point out that those solutions have been very well re-

ceived by the people who have first-hand knowledge of the situation, namely the police.

To begin, our leader, the Leader of the Opposition, leader of the Conservatives and member for Carleton, made an announcement in Ontario and, the next day, an announcement in Quebec.

The first announcement was about ways to tackle auto theft and indicated that we will ensure we take a much more punitive approach to those who commit these crimes. No more weekend house arrests, known as Netflix sentences. With those types of sentences, the person sentenced can spend the weekend at home in their basement, watching Netflix. We proposed tougher sentences, specifically in a bid to scare off the miscreants who might be tempted to get involved in car theft. That is another thing. The first step is to go after the thieves themselves and ensure tougher penalties.

Second, border services officers, especially those working in ports, have to be properly equipped. That is why our leader made an announcement at the port of Montreal, which many observers welcomed as the right thing to do. Our leader promised to properly equip our customs officers and customs services, exactly the people called on to flush out abnormal and illegal situations inside containers concealing vehicles stolen just hours earlier from downtown areas, whether that be Toronto, Montreal or somewhere else.

Our proposal is to provide real search tools. That means 24 X-ray scanners, devices that can see through containers and identify their contents. We have to properly equip our people, buy 24 new X-ray scanners and hire 75 people to perform checks at ports, especially in Montreal.

Our proposal, articulated by the Leader of the Opposition and MP for Carleton, was two-pronged: to make sentences a lot harsher and to properly equip our border services. This is a practical response to a real problem. The approach is not dogmatic, aimed at setting ambitious targets or whatever. These are concrete actions.

I was very proud to see the Quebec National Assembly vote unanimously on a motion just a few days later that very closely reflected the Conservative proposal, that is, to toughen penalties and provide the necessary tools. That is exactly what we were hoping for. Auto theft is a major problem for border services.

There are also illegal weapons, which I mentioned earlier. We know that there has unfortunately been a huge increase in violent crimes committed with weapons, especially illegal weapons. We know that this government, initially supported by the Bloc Québécois regarding which firearms would be prohibited, took a completely dogmatic and disrespectful approach. Pages and pages of weapons, hundreds of them, were to be prohibited. However, as the front page of *The Globe and Mail* clearly showed, they were essentially weapons that had absolutely no criminal purpose. They were, in fact, hunting rifles.



Unfortunately, we know that illegal guns cross the border quite often. This needs to be properly addressed. That is why, when we talk about security, the border and the work of the RCMP, we do it respectfully and in concrete terms, focusing on realistic, responsible, applicable and effective solutions. What is more, our solutions respect those who work in the RCMP or in our border services across the country to ensure greater security for all Canadians. We sincerely thank them. We appreciate their work and their commitment. Far too often, they put their lives at risk to keep everyone safe throughout the country. We are very grateful to them.

We will vote in favour of this bill. We would have liked it to be a bit more tailored to the reality of these workers, but, generally speaking, it is a step in the right direction.

• (1320)

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to set the record straight. My colleague spoke about hunting rifles. The Bloc Québécois has never been in favour of the list, which did not make any sense. We were the first to speak out against that. I would like to remind the House and my colleague that, when it comes to firearms, the Bloc Québécois's position is by far the most responsible one, at least in my opinion. We suggest respecting the rights of hunters while banning assault weapons, so that attacks like the one at the École polytechnique never happen again.

In that regard, I would like to recognize the tremendous work done by my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, who managed to negotiate and obtain something constructive.

On one hand, we have the government, which wanted to restrict the rights of hunters. On the other, we have the official opposition, which wanted to continue to allow assault weapons. That is unacceptable. Attacks like the one at the École polytechnique must never be allowed to happen again.

Will my colleague recognize my colleague's great work?

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague that one of his Bloc Québécois colleagues was very clear during a parliamentary committee study. I am quoting him from memory and I will admit right away that it is not exactly word for word: It is so good, you would think the Bloc Québécois wrote it.

Facts are facts.

[English]

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in any society, the public should have trust in its law enforcement agencies. We cannot maintain security in any community with just the implementation of the laws, but with the very clear involvement of the community, and the community should have trust in the law enforcement agencies.

I would like to ask the member whether he agrees that this bill, through the establishment of this commission, would work towards increasing transparency and helping to build Canadians' trust in our law enforcement agencies.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the comments from my colleague.

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I think I said many times that we would support the bill. We are saying that the bill is going in the right direction and, yes, we need to confirm the responsibility of our people who are working in the RCMP and in the CBSA. The issue is that we have to modernize our rules, obviously. In 2024, and in the years ahead, the challenges are far different from what we had 30 or 40 years ago because of artificial intelligence, social media and also the transfer of information. We are saying that the bill is going in the right direction. It is not as good as we expected, but at least it is in the right direction.

• (1325)

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech as well as for pointing out that facts are facts. Speaking of facts, although the Conservatives are saying that this bill is important and that we must move forward, all we see is obstruction.

On one side, we have the Bloc Québécois; everyone knows them. On the other side, we have the “block everything party”, which is the Conservative Party. The Conservatives filibustered in committee and are now forcing us into a pointless debate. In fact, technically, we are debating the title. That is what the Conservatives are making us do today.

We are wasting our time debating the title, even though they are saying this bill is important. I do not understand the position of the Conservative Party, which is stepping on the gas and slamming on the brakes at the same time.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, I find it unfortunate to hear that from a colleague who has been in the House for 13 years and two days now, if memory serves. Yes, that is right: He was first elected on May 2, 2011. I am grateful for the day he was elected.

However, it is unfortunate to see such an experienced member lament the fact that we are having a debate. That is why we are here. We have raised issues. The other side also raised issues. That is perfectly fine.

In terms of what debates over titles are acceptable, I would like to remind the member that his party previously supported a motion, moved by another party, which sought exactly that, a debate over a title.

[English]

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to take the opportunity to correct something from my hon. colleague from the Bloc Québécois. He did use the term “military-style assault rifles” when referring to the legislation. However, there is nothing in the legislation that refers to that, so it does bother me when we hear misleading comments that confuse Canadians.

*Private Members' Business*

My question to my hon. colleague is specifically about the bill and why it takes so long for any legislation from this government when it comes to accountability. This was actually passed at committee last November, and here we are six months later. To give another example, I sit on the NSICOP committee, and while that act was mandated to start review a year and a half ago, the government has yet to bring legislation forward to do that necessary review.

Could the member just elaborate on the importance of actually dealing with accountability legislation, and the lack thereof, by the government?

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, the last time we debated this bill was back in November. For six months now, this bill should have been debated in the House, and yet for six months those members on the other side of the House found a not to debate it.

If the debate is all that urgent, why did they not put it on the agenda over the past six months, as they could have and should have done?

[English]

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this bill for the first time. I understand I have only two minutes, so I am not going to be able to address all the concerns.

However, I just want to start. There has been a lot of commentary so far about how members should not have the opportunity to debate. It is one of my biggest observations, and I find it very frustrating when members across all parties want to have the opportunity to speak to a bill, yet we are constantly, especially with the current government in the last couple of years, met with countless time allocation motions and restrictions of the ability for members to speak to legislation here in this chamber.

Really, what is this bill all about? It renames an existing body that already exists for the RCMP. It obviously expands upon that, but most importantly, it does expand to cover the Canada Border Services Agency. This is very important, because currently the CBSA is the only public safety agency in Canada without that independent oversight body for public complaints.

Establishing this independent review body would foster and enhance public trust and confidence in Canada's law enforcement and border services institutions, something that I think all parties desperately agree is very important.

As I just mentioned in my previous comment, it is disappointing that this bill has languished for the last six months and has not been a priority for the government. I am going to address a number of concerns, recognizing I only have a few seconds left. I want to highlight the lack of consultation around this bill, specifically some other issues around potentially how the actual members of the commission would get appointed, and the lack of independence in the process.

I will get to that when this bill becomes a priority for the government once again.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

• (1330)

[English]

**IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACT**

The House resumed from March 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-375, An Act to amend the Impact Assessment Act (federal-provincial agreements), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to the private member's bill before us, Bill C-375, regarding federal-provincial agreements in the Impact Assessment Act. We appreciate the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent's interest in the Impact Assessment Act, which plays an important role in sustainable development and economic prosperity in Canada.

We need an efficient and effective review process for clean energy, critical minerals, transportation, and other major projects to keep our economy competitive while creating good, well-paying jobs. We recognize the important role that our natural resource and clean energy sectors play in ensuring the prosperity of our country while meeting our emissions reduction targets. These targets include reducing emissions to 40% below 2005 levels by 2030, a net-zero electricity grid by 2035 and overall net-zero emissions by 2050. An efficient and robust regulatory system is essential to advancing the projects that will help achieve the net-zero targets, and the Impact Assessment Act is an important part of this system to ensure that a clean environment and a strong economy go hand in hand.

While the Supreme Court of Canada provided direction on specific changes needed to the Impact Assessment Act, changes that we recently tabled as part of the budget implementation bill, the court also confirmed the role of the Parliament of Canada to enact impact assessment legislation to “minimize the risks that some major projects pose to the environment”. The court recognized the clear federal role and the clear need for federal impact assessment legislation. In its decision on the Impact Assessment Act, the court underscored the need to exercise cooperative federalism, respecting the authority of each jurisdiction.

The Government of Canada is keen to work cooperatively with every jurisdiction under the Impact Assessment Act. Bill C-375 has been introduced under the veil of provincial cooperation. However, it would result in the provincial assessment process being the only process for projects subject to an agreement. Bill C-375 aims to promote agreements between the minister and a provincial government to exempt potentially wide ranges of projects from the Impact Assessment Act.

The Impact Assessment Act already focuses only on those major projects that are most likely to have the potential for significant adverse effects in areas of federal jurisdiction. Blanket exemptions of these projects from federal assessment without appropriate safeguards does not mean they would be done in collaboration. What it means is that the federal government would no longer have the authority to manage what is clearly its responsibility, with no role in determining the potential effects of a proposed project that are within its own jurisdiction, nor be able to identify ways to mitigate those effects or even decide whether those effects within its own jurisdiction are in the best interest of Canadians. This is contrary to cooperative federalism, which the Supreme Court of Canada encouraged.

The Supreme Court of Canada was clear that we must respect each other's jurisdiction, but we also must work together. By working together in coordinating regulatory processes, we achieve our collective goal of attracting investment and projects that advance a low-carbon economy while protecting the environment and indigenous rights. Co-operation and coordination are central objectives of the Impact Assessment Act to ensure that impact assessments are done as efficiently as possible. The Impact Assessment Act already requires that the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada offer to consult with other jurisdictions on project assessments, both up front during initial planning and throughout an impact assessment. By working together, we can clearly focus federal involvement on those matters that are squarely within federal jurisdiction.

• (1335)

This provides process certainty and reduces duplication during project reviews. The Impact Assessment Act includes tools that allow for coordinated assessments, delegation of aspects of the federal impact assessment to another jurisdiction, joint review panels and substitution, where a provincial process can replace the federal process.

These legislated tools reflect the flexibility needed for co-operation; they can be tailored to meet the needs of each jurisdiction and can include sharing information and expertise; coordinating or jointly undertaking activities, such as public comment periods, indigenous engagement and consultations, instructions to proponents and technical reviews; and substitution of a provincial process for a federal process.

We know these tools can work. We have had tremendous success under an agreement with British Columbia. Particularly, the provincial process is used as a substitution for the federal assessment process. At the same time, both orders of government retain the ability to exercise their responsibility to decide on whether effects within their jurisdiction are in the public interest.

We are keen to extend this success to other provinces and truly achieve the objective of “one project, one assessment”. To this end, and in response to the Supreme Court, the Government of Canada announced amendments to the Impact Assessment Act that would further advance this principle. This was done through budget 2024, entitled “Fairness for Every Generation”.

The amended act, as proposed through the budget implementation bill, would provide certainty for businesses and investors through measures that include increased flexibility to co-develop a

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harmonized approach to assessments. Here, the federal government and a province or indigenous jurisdiction can enter agreements to share responsibility for different elements of assessment. This approach would greatly reduce duplication and result in the best-placed jurisdiction undertaking the most appropriate aspects of an assessment, which would be set out in agreements.

Importantly, federal obligations with respect to the consideration of indigenous knowledge and indigenous consultations would be maintained. Final decisions would remain with each jurisdiction, ensuring accountability to the public on effects within respective areas of jurisdiction.

The Impact Assessment Act also seeks to maximize leadership of indigenous peoples in impact assessment processes and enables co-operation with indigenous jurisdictions in recognition of our nation-to-nation relationships. Bill C-375 does not recognize the unique role of indigenous peoples in the Crown's assessment of impacts of major projects. The Impact Assessment Act recognizes the special constitutional relationship between the Crown and indigenous peoples and the particular perspectives and interests they bring to the process.

The proposed private member's bill should not be viewed as a tool for collaboration. Instead, it would create a tool to effectively eliminate any co-operation by removing federal requirements from impact assessments altogether. The ultimate goal of the bill is to have no federal impact assessment requirements apply and to eliminate federal decision-making in assessments of major projects, even where there is clear federal jurisdiction.

We already have the tools needed to collaborate effectively with provinces under the IAA, and these would be strengthened through amendments proposed in the budget implementation bill. I encourage my colleagues to reject the proposed private member's bill and focus on supporting true co-operation under the Impact Assessment Act.

• (1340)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-375, introduced by the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, who is one of my colleagues on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

Despite the rhetoric from the member for Niagara Centre, we in the Bloc Québécois see this bill as useful. It aims to improve coordination between the federal government and the governments of Quebec and the provinces by promoting their autonomy when it comes to environmental protection.

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The purpose of Bill C-375 is to amend the Impact Assessment Act so that, in certain cases, the federal impact assessment process does not apply to a designated project. More specifically, it would substitute the federal process with the provincial one in the case of designated projects. I will give an example later. This would be done in a way that fully respects the rights of the province. This is not about exempting any project from environmental assessment. In any case, that is our analysis.

Without going into too much detail, I will touch on some of the conditions that must be met and are set out in the bill. Designated projects must be the subject of a written agreement between the minister responsible, the Minister of Environment and the government of a province. The process must also “identify mitigation measures for the adverse effects of the projects”. The bill also provides for public consultation, as well as ways to break the agreement, based on specific mechanisms. There are other elements in the bill.

From the outset, it must be acknowledged that the Impact Assessment Act is not trivial. It is anything but trivial. This is therefore our opportunity to ensure that the provisions set out in Bill C-375 provide the proper framework for the process of non-application of the Impact Assessment Act. It must also ensure that the rights and prerogatives of each level of government are fully respected.

The committee will have to begin by clearly sorting out what distinguishes the proposed amendments to Bill C-375 from the provisions that already exist in the act concerning the exemption from an impact assessment or its delegation to a provincial government. In addition to the questions and necessary verifications on this aspect of the bill, which the committee's study will give us additional guidance on, the Bloc Québécois has three reasons for supporting the bill before us.

We are pushing to have all projects, including those under federal jurisdiction, respect the laws of Quebec, as well as the municipal rules of towns in Quebec. Secondly, in Quebec, as we know, when they are conducted, the environmental assessment processes are more rigorous and better tailored to public expectations than the federal process. We feel that in a Quebec context, an environmental assessment could never be less rigorous than its federal counterpart. More rigorous assessments mean that we can better protect the environment and, consequently, better meet the needs and social aspirations of all Quebecers.

Finally, we need to avoid absurd situations. I have an example. Some projects undergo an impact assessment under federal legislation when they have already been rejected in a Quebec decision following a Quebec-led environmental assessment. The best example is the GNL Québec project. Quebec said it was over, it was settled and it was a no. The federal government then barged in and said it would do a little impact assessment.

Could Bill C-375 really protect Quebec from this type of decision? It remains to be seen. We will discuss it in committee.

When it comes to the environment, there is an important point that bears repeating. It has to do with the constitutional issue of jurisdictions and shared jurisdictions. Those jurisdictions are unclear

when it comes to the environment. First, we can all agree that any government must take responsibility and meet certain obligations, and that environmental protection is one of them. With that in mind, the Bloc Québécois is proposing that the Government of Canada take action in that regard, while being very careful never to act in a way that would contravene Quebec's environmental laws and policies.

The problem is that the federal government has assumed the right to circumvent Quebec's laws for activities that fall under its jurisdiction. Some activities and infrastructure are only partly covered by Quebec laws because they fall under federal jurisdiction. We could mention for example wharves, ports, airports, telecommunications infrastructure, federal properties and so on. That hurts Quebec.

We demand that the federal government respect the laws of Quebec when it comes to federal activities and federal projects throughout Quebec.

• (1345)

In so doing, we are defending what is known as Quebec's environmental sovereignty, in accordance with the unanimously expressed will of the Quebec National Assembly. More than two years ago, on April 13, 2022, to be precise, elected officials from all political parties represented in the Quebec National Assembly unanimously adopted a motion asserting the primacy of Quebec's jurisdiction in matters of the environment and opposing any intervention by the federal government in matters of the environment on Quebec territory. That is the definition of Quebec's environmental sovereignty. In 2018, I introduced a bill along the same lines in the House. The Conservatives and Liberals voted against it. I dare to hope that now, at least, the official opposition party will agree with our amendments.

I am going to talk about the port of Quebec and use it as an example of what I was saying earlier. Ports are under federal jurisdiction. The port of Quebec is emitting dust that is settling on the Limoilou neighbourhood. At one time, it was called the red dust on Limoilou, and it contained all kinds of things that my colleagues would not want to breathe. When the inspectors responsible for enforcing Quebec's environmental law visited the port to perform an inspection, they were told that it was federal land and that they had no business going there. That is the kind of decision we are challenging. That is the kind of problem we want to solve.

The Bloc Québécois's solution is the only one that would allow Quebec's environmental protection and land-use planning laws to apply throughout Quebec. We know the federal government is good at patting itself on the back and congratulating itself on its environmental actions, but at the end of the day, it is vital to recognize that regulations and legislation, which are the preferred tools for advancing environmental protection, must be respected. Too often, the federal government says one thing and does the opposite. I could give some examples, but I do not think I will have the time, which is too bad.

Perfection is not their forte, but one thing is clear: Canada has no business dictating to us or lecturing us on how to protect the environment. Quebec's legislation on environmental policy is far more stringent than Canada's. Quebec's Environment Quality Act, which has been in force since March 2018, is the primary environmental protection law in Quebec. It enables Quebec to move forward responsibly for everyone's benefit by creating a modern, clear, predictable, optimized environmental approval system that meets the highest environmental protection standards. In addition to being accompanied by other, more specific legislative measures, our law "makes it an offence to impair the quality of the environment or to emit pollutants or contaminants". What is more, this legislation:

provides recourse to residents affected by any offence that compromises the quality of the environment, its protection and the protection of living species; requires that an environmental impact assessment be conducted to carry out an activity that could present a high risk to the environment; creates a special access to information regime; governs projects or activities that could have an impact on wetlands and bodies of water; and provides criminal penalties for individuals who contravene the law.

I think that everyone will agree that that is fairly comprehensive. The use, planning, development and protection of land all fall under the responsibility of Quebec's regulatory authorities and its municipalities. The same goes for the other provinces of Canada.

The Bloc Québécois notes that the bill before us is perhaps a bit narrow in scope. We think that there are some provisions missing. We welcome the process that will follow, but we certainly have no illusions about its potential to get the federal government to respect the laws that are in the best interests of Quebec and the provinces. In closing, such an objective, that of respecting our jurisdictions, would be a true sign of enlightenment coming from a state that is always trying to infringe on our jurisdictions with no regard for its own Constitution.

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## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment of the next sitting be 12 a.m., pursuant to order made Wednesday, February 28.

[English]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to an order made on Wednesday, February 28, the minister's request to extend the sitting is deemed adopted.

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● (1350)

## PHARMACARE ACT

BILL C-64—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the second reading stage of Bill C-64, an act respecting pharmacare.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to

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allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

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[Translation]

## IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-375, An Act to amend the Impact Assessment Act (federal-provincial agreements), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to this bill.

The issue of impact assessments and environmental studies is significant, given that Quebec, Canada and the entire world are going through an extremely intense environmental crisis, biodiversity crisis and climate crisis.

I was a bit surprised by the speech by the member for Repentigny, who is a Bloc Québécois member. I would like to remind her that, unfortunately, pollution and greenhouse gases do not recognize provincial borders. What is happening in the Prairies, out west or up north has consequences on the lives of Quebecers.

I would also like to take this opportunity to give a bit of background, because an important report was released by Environment and Climate Change Canada this week. The report indicated that Canada's greenhouse gas emissions increased by 10 megatonnes between 2021 and 2022. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change was very pleased about that. To quote a well-known film, I could say, "and he is happy". That is mind-boggling, because he is saying that at least the numbers are better than they were in 2019. They are better than they were in 2019 because something happened in 2020 that had a pretty major impact on our greenhouse gas emissions. It was the pandemic. COVID-19 is saving the current environment minister's statistics. Had it not been for the pandemic, there would be no reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Let me put things in context. What we have also learned is that, from 2005 to 2022, Canada's overall emissions decreased by a measly 7%. That decrease is mainly attributable to the pandemic, which all but wiped out economic development, trade, travel and so on. The economy had to be put on pause for there to be a significant drop in greenhouse gas emissions. If we factor out the pandemic, the Liberals' plan is not working.

The Liberal government's current target is a 45% drop in emissions by 2030. Emissions have dropped 7% in 19 years. There are five and a half years left to do the rest, that is, to reduce emissions by 38%. We have barely managed to reduce emissions by 7% between 2005 and 2022, and that included the pandemic period. Now they would have us believe that we are going to cut emissions by 38% in five and a half years. This makes no sense, unless we have a pandemic every year. It is our choice. It has to be one or the other.

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All this is happening while the Liberals are running hot and cold. They are incapable of really taking on the big polluters and big oil companies who are largely responsible for the current situation. That is because of all their projects, including the Trans Mountain project, the pipeline they bought with our money to the tune of \$34 billion.

What we found out through the work of journalists at The Globe and Mail was that the Liberals were about to impose a special tax, a special tax on the excessive profits of oil and gas companies, but at the last minute, under lobbyist pressure, they backed down. It disappeared from the budget. That is what The Globe and Mail is reporting. It just goes to show how much sway the oil lobby has over the Conservatives or the Liberals.

Before I tackle the bill specifically, I would like to point out that the oil and gas sector has the highest share of GHG emissions, at 31%. It is the fastest-growing sector, the sector with the fastest-rising environmental impact and the heaviest polluter. We all know that the best way to stop this insanity is to cap oil and gas sector emissions.

The Liberals and the Minister of Environment, the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, keep promising that they will do this, but we are still waiting. Today, during question period, we found out that they have promised to publish draft regulations. Wow, we are going to get draft regulations. We are going to get the beginnings of an outline for some regulations that may or may not materialize someday. If that is not the government dragging its feet and straining people's credulity, I do not know what is.

The issue is urgent. We need a cap on oil and gas emissions, but the environment minister thinks it can wait a while longer.

This cannot wait. The Alberta government said a few weeks ago that the forest fire season had already started. It is expected to be even worse this year than it was last year. My NDP colleague from Victoria said she never thought she would ever see forest fires start in British Columbia before winter was over. That is the new reality.

• (1355)

If people breathed in smoke last summer, they had better brace themselves, because this summer will be even worse. It is possible that last summer will be the best summer we will have for the next 10 years. I take no pleasure in saying that. People are getting sick and dying from air pollution, from forest fires and from fine particles in the air. That is the reality.

We need legislation on the impact assessment process for major projects to ensure that we meet our Paris Agreement targets, uphold our commitments on biodiversity and our treaties with indigenous peoples in the spirit of reconciliation, and show respect for local communities through proper consultations.

I understand where the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent is coming from when he says that we need to avoid redundancy. One process is better than two. I am just saying that we need to be careful. The federal government has specific responsibilities, particularly when it comes to biodiversity and wildlife. I think that it is important to have a process for ensuring that projects comply with our international treaty obligations, particularly the Paris Agreement, and

that we meet our specific responsibilities toward indigenous peoples and species at risk, in terms of biodiversity. If the government steps back from the process as this bill suggests, it will give some provinces the opportunity to unilaterally approve projects that will have a major impact on all Canadians. The NDP is worried provinces may rubber-stamp projects, speeding up the approval process to say yes to everything, which will increase the negative impacts on our environment and ecosystems. This is an important issue for us. We voted against Bill C-69 because we did not think that it went far enough, because it did not have enough teeth and because we were concerned that it gave the minister far too much discretion.

However, it has already been used. This law was used to delay an expansion of the Vista coal mine in central Alberta after civil society groups and activists fought hard for an environmental assessment of the project and for a number of their concerns to be addressed.

Given the ongoing environmental and climate crisis, the NDP is very reluctant to give up a tool that can effect change. We cannot simply say that if the province is doing it, everything is okay, without taking a look. As we see it, this would mean certain Conservative provincial governments could approve some projects that will have a major impact on everyone and that will not comply with our international agreements. We believe in strong, firm measures. The federal government needs to be present, watchful, and capable of shouldering its environmental protection role and going after big polluters like the oil and gas sector.

The Impact Assessment Act is an important tool for keeping our air and water clean and ensuring a healthy environment and healthy surroundings for everyone.

In closing, I would say that we cannot overlook the fact that, as far as greenhouse gas emissions and pollution are concerned, borders, provinces and countries do not exist. We believe in taking responsibility and keeping watch for the sake of our future and our children's future.

[English]

**Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to support my dear friend, the Conservative MP for Louis-Saint-Laurent. His private member's bill is timely and would inject some badly needed common sense into how we conduct environmental impact assessments in this country.

The goal of this legislation is rather straightforward. It would allow for a single environmental impact assessment for each project, to avoid unnecessary duplication. It would make the system more efficient, more co-operative and more predictable, all things that no one in Canada could ever possibly say about the current environmental assessment process.

The legislation proposes the creation of a mechanism of agreement between the federal and provincial governments to reduce duplication of federal and provincial environmental assessments. It speaks volumes that a prairie boy from Manitoba and a distinguished parliamentarian from Quebec can see eye to eye on such an important issue facing our country.

In our Conservative caucus, we work together on ways to bring our country together rather than tear us apart. We understand that a rising tide lifts all boats. We do not go looking for fights with premiers or infringe on provincial jurisdiction. Now, under the Liberal government, of course, that has not always been the case. We have seen ministers, and even the Prime Minister, pit east versus west and rural versus urban. It should not be this way. It is dangerous and it is short-sighted. No wonder there is more division and anger than at any moment in my life in this country.

I view this legislation as a first step in rebuilding that trust and respect among our regions and our provinces. It would provide a pathway for all levels of government to sit down and work together to actually get projects off the ground. As the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent so eloquently said during his speech, the bill strives for “collaboration, not confrontation”.

The “Ottawa knows best” approach is what is dividing our country. We only have to look at the Supreme Court’s decision on Bill C-69, which found certain elements to be unconstitutional. It was a naked federal power grab that infringed on provincial jurisdiction. While it was unfortunate that it took the Supreme Court to determine this once and for all, it provides all of us a reminder that even the federal government can be humbled. Even the most powerful and sanctimonious are not exempt from the Constitution.

There was once a time in this country when we got things built: the railway, which forged a nation together and connected east and west; the St. Lawrence Seaway, which opened the country to the Atlantic Ocean; the TransCanada pipeline, where western energy fuelled the major cities of eastern Canada. These projects provided the foundation of our economy, and without them, we could not get our products to market. I simply cannot imagine what our economy would look like today without them, and they are still contributing. They are still contributing wealth and prosperity to our country. They create countless jobs and contribute the taxes that pay for our schools, our health care and our highways.

This brings us to the bill we have in front of us today.

Canada is now a place where undertaking a project has become so risky that companies would rather take their money elsewhere, anywhere for that matter, and the proof is in the pudding. The number of natural resource projects completed between 2015 and 2024 has declined by 36.4%. According to the government’s own numbers in its annual inventory, it shows a steep decline in major projects that are under construction or planned in the next 10 years. In 2015, the inventory held \$711 billion in major projects, but by 2023, that had dropped to just \$572 billion.

The reality is that, over the years, governments have made it so incredibly complicated, layered with various departments and agencies, that navigating the environmental assessment process is simply too daunting for people and companies to want to do. Now, I

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would be remiss not to point out that various politicians, such as the current Minister of Environment and Climate Change, view this regulatory nightmare as a success, because it stops certain projects from ever getting off the ground in our country. However, do not take my word for it. In a previous lifetime as an environmental activist, with a bit of a penchant for getting arrested every now and then, our Minister of Environment was quite proud of his efforts to derail the energy east pipeline.

● (1400)

The reality is that activists will never agree to certain projects, regardless of the process, the conditions or even their purpose. There is no lithium mine that could be used to build electric batteries in this country that would good enough for these activists. They will move on from one argument to the next until something sticks. They believe that if they could bog down the entire process, inevitably it will scare off the proponent of that project.

It is disingenuous, as almost all of these activist organizations, many of them, if not most of them, being foreign-funded, have no intention of trying to make sure certain projects are built in the most environmentally conscious way. They want them stopped, no matter what and at all costs.

Now, unfortunately, the fox is in the henhouse, running the Department of Environment and Climate Change Canada. It is no wonder Canada cannot get anything built any more.

The truth is that these activists will use every tool at their disposal, including hijacking the environmental assessment process, to advance their own ideological goals. That is their right. We do live in a democracy. People are entitled to their opinions, and they are entitled to speak out as they see fit.

What people are not allowed to do is to violently attack pipeline workers, like what has happened in British Columbia. The fact that radicals, armed with axes, attacked their fellow citizens just because they were working on an approved pipeline speaks volumes to how radicalized some people have become in this country, with no thanks to the Prime Minister and to the current government.

How did we end up in a place where extremists threatened fellow Canadians, vandalized and destroyed property and defied court orders? How did we become a place where activists can just barge in to a room and violently disrupt an energy board hearing?

The reality is that even when governments think they are creating the conditions to get a social license, it will never appease these activists. They are not interested in the facts. They do not care about the evidence. They just want to stop projects from being built in this country.

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I challenge any one of my fellow MPs to ponder these questions: In the year 2024, could we have built the Canadian Pacific Railway through the Rocky Mountains? Let us think about it. Does anybody believe that we could have actually built that railway in this current process? Could we have built the TransCanada pipeline through the Canadian Shield if this project started in 2024?

It is a frightening thought experiment, but it underscores how precarious our situation is, currently. Whoever would have thought that the federal government would have spent billions of dollars to nationalize a pipeline just to get it built in this country?

As we look to the future and to the incredible deposits and the wealth of natural resources and critical minerals that our nation has been blessed with, will Canada seize the moment, or will it just be yet another wasted opportunity?

Sadly, under the current Liberal government, it has not only failed to capitalize on that opportunity, but it has made it that much more difficult to get a mine up and running. In fact, under its watch, we have seen a decline of 36.4% of completed mines and a 55% drop in total value of proposed mining projects. At the time when these critical minerals are needed to build our electronics, our batteries and our solar panels, do we have an impact assessment process that will get these mines operational?

At a time when the Beijing regime has cornered the critical minerals market, which puts our manufacturers and our entire supply chains at risk, do we have an impact assessment process to free ourselves from the whims of a dictatorial country and to become a reliable supplier to our allies in an increasingly volatile world? At a time when our European allies are desperate to rid themselves of Russian energy, do we have an assessment process to build infrastructure to get our LNG to port?

These are the questions that we need to be asking ourselves. Do we want to be a nation that not only upholds stringent environmental standards but also excels in actually getting things built, or do we want to be a nation that stifles every opportunity at every turn while our adversaries and other nations around the world take advantage of their wealth of natural resources?

Let us work with our provincial counterparts to make government efficiency the standard practice rather than the occasional experience. Let us respect the Constitution and provincial jurisdiction. Let us stop the adversarial legal and political battles preferred by the high-priced lobbyists and lawyers. Let us transform Canada into a place where the foremost talent in environmental sciences, engineering, biology and scientific research actually works together, rather than at odds.

Let us get Canada working again.

● (1405)

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent for his right of reply.

● (1410)

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all my colleagues who took part in this debate. When legislation is introduced to move things forward for the

country, it is quite moving to see so many people working together. I am very honoured.

I would like to briefly address some of the comments made by my colleagues from the other parties. First, my colleagues in the Liberal Party oppose this. That is unfortunate. This bill is about collaboration, not confrontation, and is meant to speed up the process, because we need green energy now more than ever. Unfortunately, the current process slows things down by requiring two studies to be done for every project. There should be only one study per project. My Liberal colleague pointed out that there was no mention of first nations in the bill. My understanding is that, since it falls under federal jurisdiction, the legislation included first nations when it was drafted. If, by some mistake, that is not the case, I would welcome an amendment from anyone, whether from the Liberal government or another party, to ensure that first nations are treated fairly in this bill. That is how I understood the bill when it was drafted. If that is not the case, we will gladly correct it.

Now, I also want to thank my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois for their support. I want to thank the member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia for the speech she delivered a few weeks ago, as well as the member for Repentigny who spoke earlier. In my haste, I did not properly identify a colleague for whom I have a great deal of respect, the member for Rivière-du-Nord. I quoted a statement made at a committee meeting. He said that amendment G-4 seemed like something the Bloc Québécois would write.

I have a great deal of respect for the member for Rivière-du-Nord. In this specific case, however, he made a mistake and we all know what happened next. I also want to say that the members of the Bloc Québécois had concerns about who would ultimately make the decision. Let us not forget that an environmental assessment is a scientific assessment and that science has no political affiliation. Science relies on facts and realities. However, jurisdictions apply, but then again, jurisdictions would have to be respected, and environmental assessments would have to be done.

Why am I bringing that up? My friends at the Bloc Québécois will be mad at me, but what can I say, facts are stubborn. The most polluting project in the history of Quebec, McInnis Cement, was authorized by the most polluting environment minister in the history of Quebec, the current member for Beloeil—Chambly. He did not even get an environmental assessment for that project. He went around the BAPE, the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement. Those are the facts.



By the way, I want to thank my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his comment. Unfortunately, the NDP has politicized and branded science. Again, environmental studies are scientific studies and should not be politicized. When my colleague says that he is almost afraid that a Conservative government will move quickly on this, I disagree. Edmonton's scientists are just as good under Ms. Smith as they were under Ms. Notley. Scientists in Quebec City are just as good under the current premier as they were under previous ones. Ottawa scientists are as good under the current Prime Minister as they will be under the next prime minister, which will be very soon, we hope.

Science is science. It has no political affiliation and is partisanship-free. Ultimately, it is the government that gives the green light or not. Ultimately, it is a government that will decide whether to go ahead or not, but all matters that fall under federal jurisdiction will be analyzed in the process as planned. That is why I want to reiterate that we want to give green energy the green light, as our leader so eloquently put it in his speech in Quebec City last September. To meet the challenges of climate change, as he so eloquently put it, we need to speed up the process. We need to give green energy the green light. If we really want to tackle climate change, that means, among other things, acting pragmatically, not dogmatically, with concrete solutions.

Yes, we need to conduct environmental assessments. Yes, science needs to do its job. Yes, we must assess all situations, whether they fall under federal or provincial jurisdiction. However, there should

be just one assessment for each project. The world needs Canadian energy and Canada's natural resources now more than ever. We cannot start delaying green energy projects by requiring two environmental assessments that may contradict each other. We want to work together, and this bill proposes a collaborative approach rather than a confrontational one. Let us hope that this bill is passed.

• (1415)

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 8, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[*English*]

It being 2:16 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday, May 6, at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:16 p.m.)



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