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# House of Commons Debates

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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, September 27, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## ORDERS OF THE DAY

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

### PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from September 26 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, there are critical moments in the life of a democracy, and today is one of them.

The government has once again demonstrated how inconsistent it is through its blatant incompetence in managing public programs and its inability to ensure transparent and effective accountability. It is not complicated. The total lack of robust oversight and accountability mechanisms within the current government make the problems that the government gets itself into even worse.

I want to tell the government representatives that they are political officials. They need to show that they are capable of clear and consistent accountability, whether in terms of public spending, tangible results or the assessment of objectives achieved. Government accountability is not limited to vague, incomplete reports, which, as we know, are often filled with technical jargon to cover up failures. What is worse, the lack of transparency makes it difficult to have confidence in democracy. Democracy around the world is struggling right now. We do not need to make things worse.

Ineffective accountability allows secrecy to flourish. It opens the door to abuse of power, corruption and the gradual erosion of democratic institutions. Instead of promoting efficiency and equity, poor program management leads to chaotic management of public resources, which plunges essential services into paralysis and prevents citizens, the taxpayers, from having their needs met.

Instead of talking about housing, inflation, lack of cell phone coverage—a major problem in Laurentides—Labelle, the industrial transition, the energy shift, increased benefits for seniors aged 65 to 74, we have been talking about the government's failings and se-

crets since yesterday. We are staring down the barrel of another scandal.

After the Liberals came to power, we saw the WE scandal. I have been here since 2019, and I have spent hours at the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. It ended with prorogation. There was the Prime Minister's vacation at the Aga Khan's island; the Trans Mountain pipeline purchase; the COVID-19 conflicts of interest; and the latest, ArriveCAN, which cost millions of dollars in public money.

While all that is going on, we are neglecting our people. That is unacceptable to the public. Because it holds executive power, the government needs to be accountable to the legislative branch. Of course, preserving, protecting and treasuring the separation of powers is important. These days, the line between these three branches is becoming increasingly blurred. We have to protect the separation of these powers. This must not be used as an excuse. The government is accountable to the House.

Parliament's authority to demand government documents is clearly established. The only limitation on the House's ability to demand information from the government as it deems necessary is the good judgment of the House, not the goodwill of the government.

• (1005)

We must avoid setting a bad precedent. The government does have the right to disagree. However, it must respect an order of this House. The government must respect Parliament and its members. It cannot simply carry on as usual. Can we set aside partisanship? That is what we are dealing with here. If there is one party that can speak out against partisanship, it is the Bloc Québécois. I urge my colleagues to show respect for our democratic institutions. In closing, I call on the government to get its act together.

[*English*]

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am a bit confused by the member's speech. She talked about preserving, protecting and valuing the separation of powers between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. She touched upon the lack of democracy across the world and the degradation of public institutions.

My question is on what we are trying to do here. With Parliament using the supreme power it has, are we not trying to interfere in the workings of public institutions like the RCMP? What is her position? It was not very clear. If she could elaborate on it, I would be happy.

*Privilege*

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Mr. Speaker, I think we need to go back to the beginning. When there is an order of the House indicating that the documents requested have not been produced and the House refers that obligation to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to shed some light on it, that does not mean recommending that the RCMP investigate. We said so yesterday. It is about respect for the institution.

The question of privilege was brought forward yesterday and was upheld. The government may not agree, but that is the privilege of the House.

• (1010)

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with the Bloc Québécois member's comments. According to the Auditor General of Canada, at least \$300 million was paid out in more than 180 instances where there was a conflict of interest. She said the Liberals were entirely responsible. On top of that, \$58 million was allocated to projects for which no environmental benefits were demonstrated.

Why does the Bloc Québécois continue to support this scandal-ridden government? Why are they not voting with us, the Conservatives, to trigger an election?

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Mr. Speaker, we in the Bloc Québécois are responsible, and it turns out that we are the adults in the room.

When I tell my constituents that, in her report on Sustainable Development Technology Canada, the Auditor General stated that in 90 cases, representing a total of \$76 million in funding, there were conflicts of interest and that the government must be held accountable, I think that is being very responsible.

[*English*]

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member started off with the litany of moral failings we have seen from the Liberal government. However, I cannot help but reflect on the fact that Canadians and Quebecers would be correct in assuming that they get a bit of the same thing regardless of whether they vote for Conservatives or Liberals.

We have seen a litany of problem with the Liberals. Yesterday in the House, I brought up challenges with the moral bankruptcy of the Conservatives. I think about Harper's Senate scandal, the Afghan detainees and the misappropriation of funds for the G8 when Harper was in power.

How does the member think we should propose to Canadians that there is a better path when, regardless of whether they vote Conservative or Liberal, they end up getting the same thing: corruption and moral failings?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Mr. Speaker, I am so discouraged. When we go out into the communities, people stop and talk to us and ask us what is going on, what is happening to our democracy. Our party has to shed light on this affair, denounce the secrets and ensure that the institutions are respected. Partisanship has no place in any of this. There is so much talk about elections these

days. Today, we are talking about an important topic and some people are trying to distract us.

I have said enough.

[*English*]

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for New Westminster—Burnaby. I appreciate the opportunity to share my time with him and to talk about this important issue. We agreed with and supported not only the original motion but also the ruling by the Speaker.

It is important because this gets to some of the essence of the principles of democracy and information related to SDTC, which is Sustainable Development Technology Canada, and the misappropriation of funds and information that took place there. In particular, it also brandished some very good companies that are being lumped in with this. I am disappointed in the Conservatives' not focusing any attention on protecting those organizations and companies that did nothing wrong and were sucked into what is basically a patronage system that was set up by the Liberals, along with Annette Verschuren and others on the board of directors.

The focus for the New Democrats has always been on the whistle-blowers; they have taken a hit with regard to loss of employment and loss of pensionable years. We had asked for them to be transferred to any federal public service agency they chose. They are going to an agency, NRC, which has an association and not a union, but at least it is a step forward. However, at the same time, many people have left, and they had to sign waivers and confidentiality agreements. We are now asking the government to rip those up, to make sure that those individuals no longer have that hanging over their employment record in the federal public service. It is unfortunate that this has not happened, and we will continue to request that.

We also want a third party to investigate and review the new model of SDTC, in terms of a working environment, because there has been some good work done there. Quite frankly, what the Conservatives also do not mention in this is that they actually have been the custodians of SDTC in the past, in large part. I would certainly like to see more light shed on what went wrong. Their simple analysis of it is that, basically, the Liberals picked their own people, who did not live up to their expectations. However, I can tell members that I have a long list of Conservative appointments that have never done the same.

What we would rather see is a better process that would actually be more robust and protect against this patronage system that continually rewards Ottawa insiders who have been close to those political parties in particular. It has been a carousel, at times, of appointments that are based upon not the merits of one's contributions to the general public and to an issue but the merits of one's contributions to a political party, in my opinion.

SDTC has fallen into that issue, in the sense that it sucked in a number of different employees and companies that actually do good environmental work. I think there is an edge on this too. However, the Conservatives do have a point, in the sense that there was a motion moved to get the documents. On that, I also want to highlight the difference between the Liberals, the Conservatives and the NDP in all of this. We believe in more open, accessible, transparent government, which is actually coming up across the planet, especially with the other G7 nations that we are part of.

I am talking about Crown copyright, where information, studies and other types of documents are more readily accessible to the public. Our original law was crafted in the early 1900s, and it has not been substantially overhauled since then. Can members imagine if we still drove around in vehicles that were originally crafted in the 1900s and never substantially overhauled to this day? At the same time, the United States and other nations have opened up their information-sharing systems quite significantly differently.

This has allowed us to protect these so-called independent associations, but for the taxpayers, as well as in terms of the Conservative and Liberal strategies on how to deal with these issues, it is important to note how they create these agencies. This one was created to be independent from Parliament and the minister, but the government stocks it full of appointments when they choose. Later, when there is a problem, those in government claim they had nothing to do with it, because it was an independent process. They say this even though the association reports wholly to the federal government and the employees are actually 100% federally funded.

As such, the employees do not get the whistle-blower protection they should. They do not get the union representation they should.

● (1015)

At the same time, when their friends either get sloppy or enter into practices that allow this type of malfeasance to take place, then they can claim that they are at arm's length, which gives them the ability to basically try to punt on this. I will talk a little about a particular number of things that took place at the boardroom of SDTC. There is no reason whatsoever that the Conservatives could not have changed this situation in the past. They had such industry ministers as Maxime Bernier, Tony Clement and others who behaved scandalously as well and who were perhaps not interested in addressing the fact that SDTC had an opening to allow this to take place.

People are wondering what took place at these corporate boardrooms. We can imagine that, if we were in a boardroom of a not-for-profit charity or a municipality, we would have to declare a conflict of interest on things that are financial or personnel matters. There is a very prescribed system. However, what happened is that, a number of times, this was not followed. The Auditor General even points this out.

I asked this of the witnesses who came forward, such as board members, chairpeople and so forth: Were the rules provided? They said that, yes, they were, but at the same time, they were not followed. Nobody could really explain the next part. They do not know why they did not follow the rules; they just did not. Therefore, there was a lazy corporate boardroom culture there.

### *Privilege*

I asked the following questions of a couple of witnesses but never had a straight answer: Were they socializing together? Were they doing things outside the workplace? I suspect they were. In this country, we saw in the past how many deals were cut on a golf course somewhere at the expense of consumers, the rights of people, and insider business and other businesses that were competing legitimately because they had the inner edge.

In this case, at SDTC, this was very much the case, which is why we are doing this investigation. Therefore, in the motion that was put forth, we requested procurement of more of those documents. We gave a time plan and, in fact, studied and talked about this at committee. I would point out that Conservatives also did so. However, it is hard to understand some of their strategy on this because they have smatterings of it across several committees. It is almost as though they are not even interested at getting at the final, real, good result, because it is being put in three different places. One would suffice to get to the bottom line of all of this at the end of the day, instead of shopping around and having us do different parts here and there.

At any rate, we asked for more documentation to be provided to us because we want to make sure that there is accountability as funds are restored to the program. The program was suspended by the Minister of Industry for a brief period of time and then reinstated. Therefore, there is a legitimate concern about what happens next, especially because we still do not know the full oversight that is going to take place with the NRC and so forth. Thus, we asked for those documents and gave them sufficient time, but we have not received them to the fullest extent. That is why we are here today.

It is important to note that this is unnecessary in terms of House time, which could be spent on other significant issues. There is the Israeli issue with Lebanon that is taking place internationally right now. We also have the issue that I have been working on in committee to try to advance the credit card rates. We are getting a study on that, but the Conservatives brought forward another motion that we had to deal with; if we do not watch it, we are maybe going to lose some time with regards to that study. However, in all fairness, some answers are deserved here, and the motion has merit.

*Privilege*

To wrap up, as we send this issue back to committee, we have to be very careful about how we handcuff committees, if we are going to do that. Those are some of the questions that we still have to answer as we go forward. At the same time, we need more open, accessible government. There are better ways to do this. This is a situation arising from a structural flaw in our current Parliament. It has been done before with other issues, for example, the detainees in Afghanistan. Therefore, again, I would call for a better process in Parliament. However, I have a lack of faith at the moment because the two political parties that have been in control of Canada have wanted to control access to information for their own political reasons, depending upon the political time, versus actually exposing it publicly and letting the public come to its own conclusions.

• (1020)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the potential blurring of the independence of the judiciary and our system here.

I am sure the member is aware that we are asking for a collection of information that would then be handed over to the RCMP. That is what is clearly being indicated, which raises a concern about that potential blurring. Could the member provide his thoughts with regard to the fact that the Parliament of Canada has phenomenal power and authority? Does he have such concerns?

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, that was a good, relevant question.

I guess the backstop for me about that issue is that we still do not control the RCMP or tell it what to do. The RCMP will get the documents and come to a decision from their own deliberations, investigations and so forth. The RCMP is similar to the Auditor General and the Competition Bureau. Suggestions can be made to those bodies, but it is up to them to decide whether they should go farther with the information and do the next part.

For those reasons, I still feel comfortable with that process. I appreciate the question, though, because it clarifies one of the misconceptions out there, which is that we are directing law enforcement. We are not. They are going to be able to look at the information and make their own independent decisions.

• (1025)

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has been an active participant at parliamentary committee hearings on this scandal, both at the industry committee and the public accounts committee.

In addition to the respect that we all have for the whistle-blowers who started this process, could he comment a little more about how he felt about the testimony of the chair, Annette Verschuren, in defending the 24 conflicts that the Ethics Commissioner revealed in testimony at committee?

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question; the hon. member has done extensive research on this file and has been very engaged with it.

We saw the indifference of Annette Verschuren and other board members. As the member knows, I sometimes called out some of the organizations and recipients of funds who were more concerned

about getting their funds than they were about the whistle-blowers. It was very alarming. This is why I hope that, at some point in time, we can actually enhance the necessary protections for whistle-blowers. It is also why I believe they need to be within the public service alliance to get better protection than what they are currently getting from their association.

This is one of the things that I think was lost in the equation. All 24 conflicts took place and were significant. It is just unbelievable. They have real consequences for the actions of the workers, who often gave different advice from what the board followed.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in 2005, the Auditor General published a devastating report on these federal foundations.

Today, 19 years have gone by, including 10 years under the Harper government. The Sustainable Development Technology Canada foundation, or SDTC, still exists and there is still no control over its funding. Does the hon. member agree with me that the SDTC case is indicative of a generalized cancer, that of federal foundations without any oversight?

[*English*]

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with a symptom of the illness that has taken place. That is why the NDP has proposed real, concrete modernization techniques for an open, accountable government. That is what separates our party from other parties with regard to having that, in terms of not only what we say but also proposing it through legislation. That is quite different from what we see at the table.

This is just going to rear its head again. It has become a battle between the Conservatives and Liberals as to who thinks they have better patronage appointments. I can tell the House that none of them are better. What we actually need is a better process and better transparency to ensure that taxpayers are protected.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I sometimes feel that I am the only one left with a good memory. I am so glad that the hon. member for Windsor West also recalls that the SDTC has done lots of good work. There were a lot of good firms associated with it. I want to give credit to the Hon. Gary Lunn, the former member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. That is unusual, I suppose. I have not mentioned his name here in a long time, but he was a member of the Harper cabinet whom I defeated to be elected here. He did a lot of good work in setting up SDTC. Groundbreaking renewable energy firms and others started receiving grants in that period.

In the years since, we have seen a steady deterioration of basic good practice within the Government of Canada, with outsourcing to Deloitte, outsourcing to McKinsey and outsourcing of the kinds of things that allowed the ArriveCAN app scandal to happen. I also see the same kinds of behaviour here. Does my hon. colleague from Windsor West agree with me, and could he comment on that?

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely correct on this. Some great work has taken place.

The challenge is what the Conservatives are going after. Is it attacking the environmental programs of everybody that has been involved and sucking in victims by accident or getting to the bottom of this and structurally changing it? I would like to structurally change it for higher accountability, but have the program function like it was supposed to, to combat climate change and the environmental challenges we face, and then reward the companies that face extreme competition from the United States and European countries that are massively subsidizing corporate entities and not-for-profits that we have to compete with.

These are some of the things that we face.

• (1030)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to follow my colleague from Windsor West, the dean of the NDP caucus, in this important debate.

As our dean just said, our caucus has always been concerned about government transparency. When we look at all the NDP governments across the country, we see that they have not only been transparent but also that they are much better financial managers than the other parties. I am not the one saying that. It is the federal Department of Finance, whose end-of-fiscal files show that, over the past 40 years, NDP governments, as a collective body, manage the public finances better than all of the other political parties. We are very proud of that. We are waiting for the NDP to have the chance to form the federal government, because then we will be able to put the fiscal house in order.

As my colleague from Windsor West just said, the NDP has always advocated for whistle-blower protection. It is extremely important, because protecting whistle-blowers means having the opportunity to get the real information and prevent scandals from happening. That is something we pushed hard with the former Harper regime. We are still pushing today. We think it is important to protect whistle-blowers to both avoid scandals and bring them to light. It is important that we enable workers to report the misuse of public funds to the public while being protected. We also want to strengthen the independent offices of officers of Parliament, such as the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer and the Office of the Auditor General of Canada. All of these elements add up to better protection for the public.

When we look at this Sustainable Development Technology Canada scandal, we see that the Liberal government's failure to strengthen these independent officers of Parliament has reduced their ability to expose the misuse of public funds. My colleague from Windsor West just mentioned this. It is clear in this case that Annette Verschuren, who was the chair of Sustainable Develop-

### *Privilege*

ment Technology Canada, handed millions of dollars over to companies she had ties to. Obviously, that was absolutely inappropriate, and we need to get to the bottom of it.

Every time we have had minority governments, the NDP has sought out the truth and has tried to get to the bottom of things. Whenever scandals were exposed in one way or another, the NDP always pushed to get to the bottom of things and pass on important information to the general public. As I mentioned earlier, the NDP has also highlighted the importance of implementing solutions to prevent scandals like this from happening again. The NDP is waiting for an opportunity to put all these protections in place, because we cannot keep going in circles as Liberal scandals give way to Conservative scandals that give way to Liberal scandals that give way to Conservative scandals. During the last two Parliaments, we have at least had an opportunity to expose and get to the bottom of every one of those scandals.

• (1035)

[*English*]

In a minority Parliament, because the NDP has more weight, we have been able to expose these scandals. The much larger scandals we saw under the Harper government were all covered up, because the majority Conservative government simply refused to put into place the protections that allow taxpayers to know money is being spent in an effective way.

What I found most reprehensible during the Harper regime was the fact that not only did Conservatives cover up these scandals, and I will come back to those in just a minute, but they also strangled the Auditor General of Canada and the PBO's office. They cut funding dramatically. They did that because, of course, when Conservatives are in power, they do not want independent officers of Parliament trying to get to the bottom of these many scandals. Under the Conservatives' watch, it was terrible. It was the worst financial management we have seen in a party's history. There were myriad scandals.

We can talk about the Senate scandals and the scandals through the PMO, but let us just talk about some of the Conservative scandals that were covered up by the Conservative government members when they were in power. Unlike now, where we have a motion that is being debated, that I am sure will pass and that will direct PROC to actually do its work, in each of these cases in the Harper majority regime, Conservative MPs simply slammed the door shut on any investigation of the myriad scandals of the Harper government.

*Privilege*

Let me just enumerate a few of them. First is the ETS scandal, which represents \$400 million. We talked I think quite legitimately about the misuse of funds around the ArriveCAN app, which was \$60 million. The ETS scandal was many times that, and yet Conservatives clamped down to make sure that no parliamentary committee could review it, no documents were exposed and there was no way for the public to ever know the truth of what was a misspending of nearly half a billion dollars. It is unbelievable.

However, it is not just that. I think of the Conservatives putting in place the Phoenix pay system, which cost over \$2 billion. It is a scandal we are still seeing the repercussions of today. The Conservatives forced the Phoenix pay system to move forward, a system that had not worked in other parts of the world. It had not worked in Queensland, Australia and had been rejected by other governments that understood the importance of not saying yes to a pay system that was so clearly inadequate, yet Conservatives forced it through and cost Canadians billions. Even today, we are still paying for the repercussions of that.

Members will recall, of course, the Harper regime clamping down on the F-35 procurement scandal. We still do not know how that money was used. Fortunately, very good journalists were part of exposing the Harper regime and the Conservative scandals around the G8 funding, the gazebos and the money that was misspent. Up to a billion dollars was misspent around the G8, and again Conservatives clamped down to ensure that the public never knew the truth. On anti-terrorism funding, \$3.1 billion disappeared, could not be found, and yet Conservatives again clamped down to ensure that the public never knew the truth.

While we are having this important debate, while we are openly referring this to committee to ensure we get to the bottom of this scandal under the Liberal government, we cannot forget the fact that the Conservative government was absolutely reprehensible in shutting down any sort of parliamentary ability to get to the bottom of things, in clamping down to ensure that the billions of dollars that were misspent or could not be found were never gotten to the bottom of and to ensure as well that they would cut the funding of the independent officers of Parliament, who do such an effective job of ensuring that the public gets the information that is a vital part of democracy.

Transparency in financial affairs is an essential component, a foundation of our democracy. What we saw under the Harper regime was all of those rules being thrown out the window. Billions of dollars were misspent, could not be found, and the Conservatives would never allow any of those scandals to actually be exposed to Canadians.

This is a matter of relevance coming to a possible election, because of the preponderance of corporate lobbyists now on the Conservative national executive, and the fact that the member for Carleton's closest advisers are lobbyists. If the Conservatives were bad under the Harper regime, we can imagine how much worse they would be now. We need transparency. That is why we need an NDP government in this country.

● (1040)

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is a good example of where the NDP's fake stand on progressive values is ex-

posed. It talks big when it comes to progressive things like climate change. It fights against climate change except when that becomes politically inconvenient. When tough action is needed, when a tough stand is needed, NDP members run away. This is the same thing. They talk big when it comes to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and how privacy and confidentiality are important to Canadians. Again, when it becomes politically convenient, they do not mind joining hands with the official opposition in trying to throw a stone here.

Does the member not respect the division of power that is there between the executive legislature and the judiciary?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, there is a whole ton of rhetoric there and not any substance at all. I think this is the problem and why the Liberal government has become so unpopular. It is because of stands like the one my hon. colleague has just taken, regarding getting to the bottom of what is clearly a scandal. When we have somebody who is appointed by the Liberals to run an agency and we are seeing money then going to companies connected to that person, it requires getting to the bottom of.

I think the Liberals should have taken the NDP's response, rather than the Conservative response, which was to just tuck it under the rug. That was the problem under the Harper majority government and certainly under the Liberal majority government. Neither Conservatives nor Liberals ever respect independent officers of Parliament and ensure that public transparency on the use of public funds is paramount. This is why I think it is time to throw out Liberals and Conservatives and elect an NDP government.

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in 2017, the Auditor General did an audit of SDTC and gave it a clean bill of health, saying that it was being run effectively. That was under a chair appointed by the Conservatives. This has totally changed since the Liberals have interfered, putting in friends and contacts despite warnings not to do this. We have a total mess, with hundreds of millions of dollars wasted. There was conflict of interest.

This is not just a Liberal scandal. This is also an NDP scandal, because the NDP is propping them and is keeping them in power. What we lay on the Liberals, we also lay on the NDP.

Will the member not take responsibility for his party's participation in this scandal?



**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, my goodness, I do not know what is in the water in the House this morning, but these are very strange and bizarre questions. The reality is that this member was involved with the Harper regime, which cut the funding to the Auditor General, which is unbelievable, and yet no Conservative has ever apologized for cutting the funding for independent officers of Parliament, the Auditor General and the Parliamentary Budgetary Officer.

They are absolutely essential. They are foundation stones for transparency and democracy. The reality is that at no point during the Harper regime, in all of the scandals that I just enumerated when billions of dollars were misspent or could not be found, did Conservatives ever consent to actually getting the information to the public. That is shameful. I wish one Conservative MP would stand up and apologize for it.

● (1045)

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments. I am pleased to know that his party will not be supporting the government on this, because transparency is needed, and that can be achieved at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, of which I am a member. There is some good news.

My colleague seems to have a strategy, based on what he just said. His party wants to shed some light on this matter, but to some extent, it has also been involved for years now in this bungling and all the secrecy. What are they trying to hide?

I would like to ask my colleague whether this is another attempt to move a motion of non-confidence ultimately to avoid shedding light on this matter.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, we have always advocated for transparency. As the member well knows, the NDP has always advocated for protection for whistle-blowers. That is extremely important. The NDP has never changed its position on this.

We will keep pushing to get to the bottom of all scandals, whether Conservative or Liberal.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the House to adopt the following motion:

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

(a) Bill C-76, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act, be deemed read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole, deemed considered in committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at report stage, and deemed read a third time and passed; and

(b) If proceedings in relation to the debate on the motion in relation to the question of privilege standing in the name of the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle regarding the alleged failure to produce documents pertaining to Sustainable Development Technology Canada are not disposed of at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment later this day, it be deemed adjourned until Wednesday, October 2, 2024.

#### Privilege

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

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

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#### CANADA NATIONAL PARKS ACT

(Bill C-76. On the Order: Government Orders:)

September 18, 2024—The Minister of Environment and Climate Change—Second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development of Bill C-76, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act

(Bill read the second time, considered in committee of the whole, reported, concurred in, read the third time and passed)

\* \* \*

#### PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to deal with the ruling of the Speaker with regard to the production of documents ordered by the House on the scandal involving Sustainable Development Technology Canada, otherwise known as the Liberal billion-dollar green slush fund. The process, for those watching, was that the House ordered the production of the documents around the scandal, to the law clerk, and the documents could then be transferred to the RCMP for investigation.

As we know, the power of the House is greater than any one act, yet the Prime Minister's personal department, the PCO, decided to execute the order by telling departments to send in documents but redact them. As a result, that was, in our view and obviously in the Speaker's view, a breach of members' privilege, because the order from the House did not say "redact". As a result, we are here to discuss the issue today, and it has been referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs for further consideration.

In doing this, it is pretty important to understand that there are some objections from the government about some alleged breach of the charter. There is no breach of the charter, and here is why. If criminal activity is suspected in a company someone owns, say they are part of a bank management team and they discover that somebody who works for them has stolen the money of depositors, that company has the right and indeed the obligation to call in the police and to turn documents over to the police. Police are not required to go to court to get access to those documents. The owner of the company, or the management team, can supply the documents to the police to start the investigation.

### *Privilege*

Why does that matter with regard to this instance? There is a foundation set up in 2001 called Sustainable Development Technology Canada, with the purpose of providing taxpayer financial assistance to green technology companies before they are commercialized. Since the government was elected, the foundation has received a billion dollars of taxpayer money. The result of probing by parliamentary committees is that we found that in 82% of the funding transactions approved by the board of directors during a five-year sample period that the Auditor General looked at, 82% of those transactions were conflicted.

What does that mean? According to the Auditor General, that is \$330 million of taxpayer money that was given to companies where the board members who voted to give it to those companies had a conflict of interest. In addition, the Auditor General found that the same board approved another \$59 million in projects that they were not authorized to do; they were outside of the mandate of the foundation that the government and Parliament set up. It broke the SDTC contribution agreements, and the directors broke the conflict of interest laws of Canada as public office holders and broke the SDTC act.

How did they break them? What do the two acts say? They say that a Governor in Council appointment, a person appointed by the government entrusted to oversee taxpayer money, is not to personally profit from their work on a committee, as a GIC appointment, and neither is their family. However, that is exactly what happened. In a five-year period where there were 405 transactions approved by the board, the Auditor General sampled 226, so only half of them, and found that 186 of those 226 transactions were conflicted. That is the 82%. That is the \$330 million.

If the Auditor General looked at all 400 transactions, statistically that would probably mean the rest are just as conflicted. Those 400 transactions are \$832 million of taxpayer money. Therefore the Liberal, hand-picked appointees of the Prime Minister, from the chair on, got themselves into a position to benefit their own companies.

• (1050)

How did they do that and what were their conflicts? Every transaction, every bit of money approved by the billion-dollar green slush fund, every single dollar, had to be approved by the board of directors. The way the system worked was that beforehand, a note would be sent out of what transactions were on the board, and directors would declare a conflict. At the beginning of every board meeting, they would say, "Here is the list of transactions we are considering and the list of which directors are conflicted with which companies, so now let's go to work."

In some cases, the director would stay in the room, according to the minutes, while they were voting on their own project. In other cases, the director would get up and leave the room while the others voted on it, and then that director would come back into the room, and the next director would get out of the room for their project. It was a nice little tidy conspiracy of conflict of interest to enrich themselves and the value of their companies.

One director was particularly aggressive at this. She was appointed in 2016 by the Prime Minister. Her name is Andrée-Lise Méthot. She runs a venture capital firm called Cycle Capital, in green technologies. Andrée-Lise Méthot's companies, before and during her

time on the board, received \$250 million in grants from SDTC. Some of that was before, and I will talk about that in a minute, but while she was on the board, \$114 million went to green companies that she had invested in.

During her time on the board, the value of her company, Cycle Capital, tripled because getting an SDTC grant is a stamp of Government of Canada approval that allows those companies to raise other funds. The House will never guess who her lobbyist was, her in-house, paid lobbyist for 10 years before he was elected. It was the current radical Minister of the Environment. While he was lobbying for Cycle Capital, the current radical Minister of the Environment got \$111 million.

The minister, according to the registration of lobbyists portion of the Lobbying Act, lobbied the Prime Minister's Office and the industry department 25 times in the year before he was elected. For all his hard work, he owns shares in Cycle Capital. He still owns those shares. He has not answered how much the value of those shares has gone up since they have been granted and since the company got this kind of support.

If that were not bad enough, this particular director in 2022 left and went to the Canada Infrastructure Bank board, and the first thing she did was to vote \$170 million of infrastructure bank money for a company owned by the chair of the green slush fund, Annette Verschuren. Annette Verschuren also sought \$6 million for the Verschuren Centre at Cape Breton University because it was failing. SDTC said no when it went through the process, because there was a conflict.

However, in emails, it said it would help her find money from other government departments. Pretty soon after that, the Verschuren Centre got \$12 million from ACOA and the ISET program. Her other companies got \$50 million from Natural Resources Canada, and then of course there is the Infrastructure Bank one.

This is the story we hear. Nine directors, according to the Auditor General, accounted for the 186 conflicts. That is why the CFO of the industry department, when the whistle-blower called on him and sat down with him, said that this is way bigger than the Chrétien government sponsorship scandal, which was \$42 million of taxpayer money going to advertising agencies and friends of the Liberal Party. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Why we are asking for the documents is that every time there is a witness at committee, every time we ask a question, new information comes out.

• (1055)

The government has opposed us at every step of the way in getting those documents, and we know why. With just a scratch of the surface by the Auditor General, which is a small part, we see that \$390 million has gone to Liberal insiders. That is what Liberals are trying to hide. That is why they are opposing this production order, for documents to be turned over to the RCMP. That is why the Prime Minister's personal department, the PCO, defied the order of the House to produce these documents and ordered departments to redact all the sensitive information. Surprisingly, they used a lot of black ink and went through a lot of toner in photocopiers when they printed the documents, because they are all blacked out. What are Liberals hiding?

What they are hiding is more malfeasance and abuse of taxpayers' money. We know the little bit we have seen, the 226 of 400 transactions identified by the Auditor General, is just the tip of the iceberg, and that is \$390 million. Apparently, that does not concern Liberals, for some reason. It does not concern them that this happened. It does not concern the Minister of Industry, who has not had a single meeting with the new acting board or the NRC, where he is proposing it.

With the new transparency that the minister talked about in June, Liberals are giving out money again, and not a single bit of information is available anywhere on the website. The SDTC used to put out a quarterly report on every company. It no longer does. It is silent. It is hidden. The corruption of this organization and the nine Liberal directors abusing taxpayers' money in this way is beyond anything I and many members of this House have ever seen.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue in enlightening the House after question period.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1100)

[English]

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada and the world will soon observe the first anniversary of the October 7 massacre carried out by Hamas terrorists against innocent Israeli citizens. For almost a year, the Liberal government has turned a blind eye to numerous pro-Hamas rallies that incite violence and hatred. Jewish-owned Canadian businesses have been vandalized, schools and synagogues shot at, and people assaulted. Even my wife was stalked, and our home targeted with posters falsely claiming that I support genocide. I support the rule of law.

### Statements by Members

However, hate promoters like Samidoun, an entity outlawed in Germany with its leader banned from the EU, are free to have a rally in Vancouver to celebrate a terrorist act. Other rallies will also be held to support Hamas. Thanks to U.S. intelligence, Canada thwarted one terrorist attack being planned on Canadian soil by a foreign national to mark the anniversary. Does someone have to be killed before the Liberal government acts to keep Canadians safe in the lead-up to October 7 and beyond?

\* \* \*

### GAY COOK

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour the memory of Gay Cook, a cherished figure in Ottawa who passed away on September 11 at the mighty age of 93.

Gay was more than a food journalist; she was the heart of Ottawa's culinary community. Gay together with her sisters Jean Pigott and Grete Hale formed the legendary Morrison sisters. Gay's influence as a food professional, mentor and friend was far-reaching. Known for her enthusiasm and her smile, she was a constant source of kind encouragement to those who shared her love of the food world. She always reminded me of the importance of eating a healthy breakfast.

As I speak, Gay's family sit in the gallery and I extend my deepest sympathies to them. Their mother's and grandmother's generosity of spirit will continue to inspire us all. We know that her impact was profound. She will be deeply missed but never forgotten.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### LIBERAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians keep saying enough is enough. Nine years with this Liberal government in power is enough. Quebeckers are fed up with this centralizing and inflationary Liberal government that has no respect for taxpayers or provincial jurisdictions.

Our common-sense leader moved a non-confidence motion over this devastating government that has doubled the debt, doubled the cost of housing, triggered the worst inflation in 40 years and forced people to turn to food banks while living in communities plagued by chaos and crime.

*Statements by Members*

The Premier of Quebec is clear. He is calling on the Bloc Québécois to stop supporting and encouraging all these Liberal follies. The Bloc Québécois is the worst negotiator in history. It is betraying Quebecers and selling its soul to the Liberals. It is not getting anything for Quebec in return, not even the cancellation of the Liberal order that is threatening to kill 1,400 forestry jobs in Quebec.

The problem is that the Bloc Québécois does not exist in Ottawa. I tried to look, but day after day, all I can find is a “Liberal Bloc”.

\* \* \*

[English]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, thousands of Lebanese Canadians call my community of Windsor-Essex home. It is a proud, peaceful and vibrant community and one of the largest in Canada. That community has been shaken by missile attacks and explosions carried out by Israel's government that have killed hundreds, injured thousands and forced countless Lebanese to flee their homes. How much more suffering must the people of Lebanon endure?

Members of my community fear an escalation of this terrible conflict and their hearts are wrenched about the safety of their families. This week I met with the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Canada-Lebanon parliamentary association. Canada must continue to press Israel and Hezbollah for an immediate ceasefire, demand that innocent civilians be protected and demand that both parties end this suffering and end this war.

\* \* \*

• (1105)

**JOHNSON REDHEAD**

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today we honour the memory of Johnson Redhead, the little six-year-old boy from Shamattawa First Nation who went missing and, tragically, after days of searching, was found deceased. Johnson was loved by his family and community. Many rallied from communities across our region to look for him. We all mourn his shocking death.

As has been said, Johnson's tragic death did not just happen. His family and advocates are calling for an inquiry. We must be clear on how Canada, in particular, failed Johnson Redhead through a lack of coordinated care and safety protocols to help children with complex needs on first nations, the chronic underfunding of education and health, and the persistent third world living conditions in a community like Shamattawa with an acute housing crisis and acute poverty. Shamattawa is the same first nation that will be at the Supreme Court next month fighting Canada for its right to clean drinking water.

As we approach the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and we wear our orange shirts and state that every child matters, we honour the memory of indigenous children forced into residential schools, survivors and their descendants, like Johnson Redhead, whose lives matter, and we call on Canada to act now for justice.

[Translation]

**20TH ANNIVERSARY OF GROUPE CONVEX**

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Groupe Convex, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary. Groupe Convex brings together several social enterprises that provide laundry, moving, carpentry and packaging services, as well as recyclable sorting and storage. Groupe Convex does all this by offering employment and skill development opportunities to people living with a disability.

I want to thank the founding members, including Raymond Lemay, Normand Charette and Caroline Arcand, who not only put long hours into ensuring that Groupe Convex became a reality, but who also had the vision to fill an unmet need in our community, while providing meaningful work for a vulnerable population. I also want to thank Éric Drouin, his team and all the employees of Groupe Convex, who continue to provide excellent services. I wish this organization continued success.

\* \* \*

**NOÉMIE O'FARRELL**

**Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to congratulate Noémie O'Farrell for winning her first Gémeaux award for best female lead in an annual drama series for her portrayal of Agnès Sullivan in the hit show *Sorcières*.

This award is a testament to the top-notch training she received at the Quebec City and Montreal conservatories, combined with her immense talent. She is a rising star on screens big and small, not to mention the stage and other media.

Noémie is our pride and joy. Everyone who watched her grow up in Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, and in Sainte-Claire especially, along with people across Quebec, applauds Noémie. This is far from her first award of excellence, but now she has won this prestigious industry award acknowledging her magnificent performance.

We are very proud of Noémie. I am sure that her accomplishments will inspire other young artists to follow their dreams and realize that they can make a living from their art.

\* \* \*

[English]

**WORLD TOURISM DAY**

**Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is World Tourism Day. People from around the world visit Canada every day. Through tourism, we share our culture and natural heritage with others.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

Tourism brings us together and creates jobs in our communities. That is why our government is investing in tourism in every region of Quebec and Canada.

In August, together with the Minister of Tourism, I announced a \$520,000 contribution to Tourisme Laval to help it develop its tourism offering and market it outside Quebec.

[English]

This funding will strengthen Laval's position in international markets while stimulating the region's economic ecosystem.

In 2022 alone, 1.4 million tourists visited Laval, seeing the Cosmodôme, le Musée de la santé Armand-Frappier, le Centre de la nature, illuminati and much more.

Our government is investing in tourism businesses and people. It takes pride in sharing with visitors what we offer to the world.

\* \* \*

**GENDER EQUALITY WEEK**

**Ms. Lisa Hefner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as Gender Equality Week wraps up, I want to highlight why we have so much to be proud of here in Canada.

Our feminist government has maintained gender parity in cabinet, passed the Pay Equity Act and created a department dedicated to women and gender equality. It is boosting women's economic power with programs like the national child care plan, the menstrual equity fund and the women entrepreneurship fund. All of the above were opposed by the Conservatives.

Recently, as parliamentary secretary, I participated in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. I was often moved to tears by people who approached me to say how much they respected and admired what we have in Canada and that they want similar woman-friendly programs in their countries, like our commitment to gender-based analysis plus in all government legislation and initiatives, and our 10-year action plan to fight gender-based violence.

When women have access to equal pay and support systems, our whole society benefits.

\* \* \*

● (1110)

**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in the last session, the Prime Minister made two comments politicizing the just concerns that parents have for their children. He outright told them that they were spreading “angry, hateful rhetoric” for simply voicing that they want to know what is happening in their children's lives. Comments like these are divisive and unacceptable.

Conservatives believe the thousands of Canadians who affirm that parents know what is best for their children. Petition e-4753 calls on the Prime Minister to stop meddling in these provincial issues and to apologize for insulting Canadian parents.

When will the Liberals start standing with Canadian families and demand an apology from the Prime Minister?

\* \* \*

**RAIL SAFETY**

**Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, millions of Canadians use our railways every year. Railways make the transportation of essential goods possible. They are the backbone of our supply chains and the backbone of our economy. However, tragically, every year far too many Canadians are seriously hurt or killed on railway tracks.

This week is Railway Safety Week here in Canada, an initiative led by Operation Lifesaver. Our government is dedicated to ensuring the highest levels of safety and security on our railways to prevent tragedies. That is why, through our rail safety improvement program, we have invested in making over 1,000 rail crossings across Canada much safer.

This is a moment to remind everyone to remain careful near the railway tracks across this great nation.

\* \* \*

**GOVERNMENT CONDO PURCHASE**

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal government is not worth the cost or the corruption.

At a time when Canadians are facing a cost-of-living crisis with surging rent and mortgage payments, the Prime Minister awarded his bought-and-paid-for media ally Tom Clark with a \$9-million luxury condo, courtesy of the taxpayer, on Billionaires' Row in New York City. By no coincidence, the purchase of the condo occurred immediately after the Prime Minister visited Clark in New York. Following the visit, the Liberal government purchased the condo using new special powers granted by the Prime Minister with absolutely no oversight.

There is no justification whatsoever for this outrageous purchase. It is a total abuse of the public purse and emblematic of the culture of cronyism and entitlement that is a defining feature of the corrupt Liberal government.

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**CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT**

**Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have an unforgiving carbon tax on food, gas and home heating, one in four skipping meals and two million lined up at food banks. Last year, the Calgary Food Bank saw demand surge by nearly 35%, a record level.

*Statements by Members*

Families are crying for help and where is the NDP leader? Well, in the worst sellout of all time, he ripped up his coalition papers only to tape them back together. He keeps the Prime Minister in power to protect his pension.

Canadians have no confidence in the Prime Minister or his carbon tax. To the sellout NDP leader, Tuesday is coming. What will it be, prop up the Prime Minister again and hike the tax by 61¢ a litre, or call the carbon tax election Canadians need today?

After nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION**

**Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation approaches, may we all reflect on the 94 calls to action that call for creating awareness of our shared history, addressing past wrongs and, most importantly, supporting healing for indigenous people.

Advancing reconciliation is a journey that we must all take together as a country. While more than 85% of the calls to action are in process or complete, half of them need long-term and stable funding that will require a non-partisan approach over generations.

Over the past few years, we have seen important legislation passed, including on child welfare, UNDRIP, indigenous languages and, most recently, an independent truth and reconciliation committee to ensure that the federal government will be held accountable in the future.

I ask all Canadians to take time to listen to the survivors of Indian residential schools and consider what action they can take to advance reconciliation.

\* \* \*

• (1115)

**NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION**

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, September 30 is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, or Orange Shirt Day. This is a day to reflect on the genocide that was committed through the residential school system and the ongoing impacts it has on survivors, family members and communities.

For more than 150 years, over 150,000 children were kidnapped from their families and communities and placed in residential schools. Many never made it home.

Despite irrefutable evidence supporting this history, many people, including some parliamentarians, continue to deny or downplay the impacts of this genocidal system. That is why this week, I tabled Bill C-413 to end residential school denialism and protect the stories of survivors.

This Orange Shirt Day, I send my love and support to all survivors of residential schools, their families and their communities. May they be wrapped in love and tenderness on this very important day.

[Translation]

**NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION**

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I rise today to mark the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

It is about truth, because there can be no trusting, strong, lasting relationship between people, between indigenous and non-indigenous people, between nations, without shining a light on history in order to banish the shadows from every dark corner, to ensure that no one experiences the secrecy and pain of those lies ever again.

It is about uniting, because, although this day is based on the principle of reconciliation, I believe that this call for remembrance and hope extends beyond the word “reconciliation”. In the truest sense, it means reuniting two things that were once joined. Today, we should instead be talking about creating and strengthening a bond.

First and foremost, we need to reach out to one another, get close to one another, really get to know and understand each others' souls. We must become one, as though we all have the same blood running through our veins. Only after shining a light on history will we be able to open the door wide to our common future.

We must remember this every day.

\* \* \*

[English]

**BIAS IN THE MEDIA**

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, CTV News aired a segment that deliberately misrepresented comments made by the leader of the official opposition. On the eve of a confidence vote, CTV edited together out-of-sequence phrases to create a lie to protect its massive government subsidies and to protect a failing Prime Minister. CTV manufactured a false narrative about the common-sense Conservative confidence vote. It desperately tried to avoid reporting that the vote was about the urgent need for a carbon tax election.

Canadians deserve fairness, accuracy and accountability in news, but CTV showed a complete disregard for basic journalistic integrity and ethics. This was not an accident or a misunderstanding. This was another example of the media's shameful anti-Conservative bias. Just look at the excuses made by the heavily subsidized PMO stenographers at the Toronto Star.

They should take note that deliberate misinformation and lies will be called out and condemned. After nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up for the bought-and-paid-for media bias.

## NATIONAL MEDIA OUTLETS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the Conservatives, we recognize that mainstream media is a fundamental pillar to Canada's democracy. We have the leader of the Conservative Party and his puppets talking down mainstream media. This is of great danger, and Canadians deserve a more accountable official opposition. They now say that they are going to boycott CTV and they discredit CBC all the time, two national TV networks, all in favour of spreading their misinformation through social media.

I say shame on them for not representing Canadians through our national media outlets. What do they have to hide? It is the Conservative agenda. That is what this is all about. It is misinformation, and it is to the detriment of all Canadians.

• (1120)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before we move on, I just want to say that “puppets” is one of the words we tend not to use. Earlier, we heard “sellout”. A number of false titles have been used, and I want to make sure that everybody stays away from false titles today during question period.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

### CARBON PRICING

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the Liberal-NDP government, taxes are up, costs are up, crimes are up and time is up.

The Prime Minister is not afraid that his carbon tax scam made Canadians poorer. He is not even afraid the carbon tax scam does nothing for the environment. He is not afraid that the carbon tax scam will blow a \$34-billion hole in our GDP.

If the Prime Minister is so sure about his carbon tax scam, why is he so afraid of a carbon tax election now?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the ridiculous comments continue.

As I have said many times, eight out of 10 Canadian families get more money back. It works directly inverse to income, so the most vulnerable get much more money back than they pay. That has been validated by 300 economists in this country. I have invited the Leader of the Opposition to talk to those economists. He has steadfastly refused because what he is doing is simply making up facts.

He has no plan to address the climate crisis. He has no plan for the future of the economy in Canada. It is an enormous shame that the official opposition cannot do better than that.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister is reading selectively. If he had read the PBO's report and flipped a few pages over, he would have seen that a majority of Canadians pay more into this tax than what they get back.

Here is another fact for him: The Liberals have a push-people-into-poverty plan, because two million Canadians are going to a

### Oral Questions

food bank in a single month, with a million more projected for this year, a third of whom are children. For the first time, one in four Canadians is skipping meals in this country.

How is the Prime Minister okay with starving kids with his carbon tax scam, but too scared to call a carbon tax election now?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the hon. member is using false facts. I would be more than happy to sit with him to walk him through the PBO report and the report of the 300 economists.

Beyond the fact that—

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I could not hear any of that exchange. I want to keep the noise to a minimum today. That would be great.

The hon. minister can start from the top.

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson:** Mr. Speaker, again, there are false facts being put forward. I would be very happy to sit with the hon. member and walk him through the PBO report and walk him through the report by the 300 economists, which show that eight out of 10 Canadian families get more money back.

Beyond the misleading statements in this House, the hypocrisy is amazing. Every member on that side of the House, in the election, ran on putting a price on pollution. Many of them, including the Leader of the Opposition, in 2008 under Stephen Harper ran on putting a price on pollution. The member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge was working for the B.C. government when it put a price on pollution. The hypocrisy—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister is more interested in sitting with politicians than sitting with Canadians, who will tell him that his carbon tax scam is sending them to food banks. The Liberals' own department shows that 25% of Canadians are going to a food bank, and their radical plan is to quadruple the carbon tax scam. Can people imagine what the food bank lines are going to be like when that happens?

Before the Prime Minister starves even more Canadians and quadruples his carbon tax scam, why does he not show some balls, call a carbon tax election—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am going to ask the hon. member to retract that last comment.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:** Mr. Speaker, I retract the last comment.

*Oral Questions*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a disservice to Canadians to say things in this House that are simply not true, and that is what the hon. member is doing each and every day.

Eight out of 10 Canadians get more money back. It is the most vulnerable in our society who are much better off because of the price on pollution, while we fight climate change. It is the most vulnerable who the member is targeting. He is looking to make poor people in this country poorer. Shame on the Conservative Party of Canada.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

**Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the world is upside down. The Bloc Québécois saved the Liberal government's skin after calling it every name in the book. It voted for \$500 billion in spending by this government, for 100,000 more public servants to be hired and for hunting rifles to be banned. It supports the government, which wants to kill 1,400 forestry jobs.

We are offering the “Liberal Bloc” a chance to redeem itself and vote in favour of our non-confidence motion in order to dissolve Parliament. We want Parliament to be dissolved.

• (1125)

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this feels like déjà vu. The member and I have already had this exchange.

This time, I am making a solemn request: that the member be clear about the Conservative Party's hidden agenda, which is to fire or lay off tens of thousands of public servants in my community, in her community and in communities across Canada. I would like her to be clear and specific about the number of cuts that the Conservatives intend to make.

**Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois and the Liberals are fighting the same fight and have the same track record. The debt has doubled, 50% of young people aged 18 to 43 are living paycheque to paycheque, and nearly three-quarters of them believe the previous generation had a better chance of financial success than they do. The cost of housing has doubled. Two million Canadians are using food banks, and violence is rising at an alarming rate. That is the Liberal-Bloc track record.

Will the Liberal government give Canadians the chance to make their voices heard by calling an election right now?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member is well aware that calling an election could result in the election of a government whose only policies right now involve insults, contempt and austerity. The Bloc Québécois will make its own choices.

That being said, a few minutes ago, we were talking about carbon pricing. It is not hard to understand why eight out of 10 fami-

lies get more back than they pay. The wealthy are paying more. The poorest Canadians are paying less. The proceeds are redistributed to all families. That means that the poorest Canadians and middle-class families are paying less than they receive. The opposite is true for the wealthy.

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**SENIORS**

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** The Bloc Québécois has issued an ultimatum on behalf of seniors. October 29 is the deadline to stop depriving seniors aged 74 and under of 10% of their OAS. That is the deadline for finally treating all seniors fairly and ending age discrimination. That will mark the end of two classes of seniors, or it may mark the end of the Liberal government.

Will the government finally correct this injustice and increase OAS for all seniors?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the beautiful riding of Manicouagan, there are 7,800 seniors who are eligible for the Canadian federal dental plan, yet the member voted against it. At least she is consistent, because she also voted against increasing the GIS and lowering the retirement age to 65. At least she is consistent.

Can she explain why she systematically votes against seniors?

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals should know that retirees do not consider their pensions a laughing matter. To engage in partisanship with old age security is to play politics with seniors' standard of living. The Liberals are wrong if they think they are going to win support from seniors with attacks in the House. If they want to bring seniors onside, they need to restore fairness to pension amounts. This is a serious issue that demands a serious answer.

Will the government increase old age security for seniors aged 74 and under?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it does not stop there. Everything that our government has done to reduce poverty among seniors was accomplished despite considerable resistance from the Bloc Québécois. Every effort to help our seniors, many of them among the most vulnerable in Canada, ran into systemic opposition.

Let me give another example. We provided 50,000 housing units reserved for seniors and put \$1.5 billion on the table through the Canada rental protection fund. The Bloc Québécois voted against it.

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[English]

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, indigenous peoples across Canada are still dying at the hands of the police and RCMP. Just this week, a first nations man from Saskatchewan was killed and, instead of acting, the government wants another study on policing. Studies will not save lives. We need action now, such as an indigenous-led crisis response team. The Liberals need to stop delaying.



Why does the government refuse to act to save indigenous peoples' lives?

• (1130)

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, obviously, any death by police is tragic and the systemic racism that indigenous peoples face in the criminal justice system is also a tragedy. This is something we know. We are putting together and have worked on a number of measures. There is definitely more to do.

I appreciate the suggestion that the member has made, and we will continue to work on this to ensure that everybody is safe.

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, with the rise of residential school denialism, survivors, their families and communities need protection, especially when members of Parliament, including the leader of the Conservative Party, fundraise with residential school denialist think tanks such as Frontier Centre.

Willfully promoting hatred against indigenous people through residential school denialism has no place in Canada, so will the Liberal government support my bill to end this hate and protect the stories of survivors?

**Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when I think about my family members who attended the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, knowing full well that one in 25 children who went to residential schools did not come home, I think it is shameful that anyone would deny that the residential schools happened and the impact of that on Canadians.

Our government is going to continue to create awareness. Our government is going to continue to support healing. Our government is going to continue to address past wrongs. We are committed to that.

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### CARBON PRICING

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this NDP-Liberal government, we know that taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

David Eby has flip-flopped on the carbon tax in time for his provincial election. This means that both parties contending for government want to axe the tax before winter. Just as it has with so many provinces, the NDP-Liberal government will simply impose a federal carbon tax on British Columbia.

The NDP should end its costly coalition with the Prime Minister and vote non-confidence on Tuesday. If he is so confident about a 61¢-a-litre tax, why would the Prime Minister not call a carbon tax election?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said a number of times, eight out of 10 Canadian families get more money back than they pay. It works directly inverse to income. I would be more than happy to sit with my friend across the way to walk him through the 300 economists who validate that assertion.

### Oral Questions

With respect to Premier Eby, I agree with his concern around affordability. He took a bunch of the revenue and used it in general revenue, which is not something the federal government does. We return the money to Canadians, and eight out of 10 get more money back. It is an affordability measure and an efficient way to fight climate change.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I like that the minister dumped on David Eby, but they just do not get how much more expensive everything in British Columbia has become under David Eby and this NDP-Liberal government. Food is up 29%. Transportation is up 23%. Natural gas is up 49%. Gasoline is up 45%. Rented homes are up 23%. Owned homes are up 29%.

British Columbians need a change. If it is truly the people's time, as the federal NDP leader likes to say, the NDP must end its costly coalition with the Prime Minister so we can have a carbon tax election. Why are they so afraid of a carbon tax election?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I find it very interesting that the Conservative Party of Canada is campaigning on behalf of Mr. Rustad and the Conservative Party of B.C. I guess its members share his views on anti-vaccination and his denial of climate change, along with a range of other things, including very ludicrous stories coming from the Internet about eating bugs. This is something that has perhaps infected our friends across the way.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal coalition has failed Saskatchewan. Scott Moe is right. Besides the heavy cost of the carbon tax on consumers, the NDP-Liberal carbon tax will be costing Saskatchewan's health and education systems \$380 million by 2030. That is money that could be used to get more teachers, doctors and nurses in our province.

The NDP is delusional if it does not end its costly coalition on Tuesday. The Prime Minister knows his carbon tax plan is a failure, and Canadians want him gone. Is that why he is so afraid to call a carbon tax election?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, this is an affordability mechanism where eight out of 10 families get more money back, and it is the poorest, the most vulnerable, who actually get the most back.

### Oral Questions

However, I would encourage the member across the way to have a conversation with Premier Scott Moe, who actually said, when he looked at the price on pollution and the alternatives, that all of the other alternatives are too expensive. Scott Moe's solution, which I guess is the Conservative Party's solution, is essentially to do nothing to fight climate change.

• (1135)

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

I am proud of our Premier Scott Moe for standing up to the NDP and Liberals as they attack Saskatchewan, stripping \$6 billion out of our economy over the next six years and reducing our GDP by 1.5%. I agree with Moe. This NDP-Liberal coalition must go.

The Prime Minister knows that his carbon tax plan is a complete failure. Is that why he is so afraid to call a carbon tax election?

**Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity here to point out that tomorrow is International Safe Abortion Day, and to reaffirm that, on this side of the House, we always stand up for a woman's right to choose. We are investing in reproductive health across this country, unlike the Conservatives, who are, to this day, still green-lighting candidates who want to make abortion illegal in this country.

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### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

After nine years, violent crime is up 50% and sexual assaults are up 75% in Canada. A serial rapist in Edmonton was released on day parole only four years after he sexually assaulted five women. Earlier this year, a child sex abuser was allowed out on bail. A warrant was issued for his arrest and, at that time, he allegedly sexually abused another child. Bail and parole in this country are ruined under the Liberals and their NDP supporters.

When will the Prime Minister call a carbon tax election and finally put the rights of victims first?

**Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, gender-based violence has always been a problem. Many women in the House know this viscerally.

When the Conservatives were in power, many sexual assaults were considered unfounded. They were not even counted, and that has changed. We listen to women now, and on this side of the House, for the first time ever, we have a government finally doing something about it. We have got a national action plan and half a billion dollars rolling out across the country. The Conservatives oppose these measures. Their hidden agenda is not so hidden.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that member voted for Bill C-5, which allowed house arrests for sexual assault. They also supported Bill C-75, which made it easier

for repeat violent offenders, including rapists, to get bail. That is their record, which the NDP has supported every step of the way.

When will they call a carbon tax election so we can finally stop the crime in this country?

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is incredibly disturbing to see the member opposite talk about violence against women and then bring in their "carbon tax election" slogan. It just shows how disingenuous Conservatives are when it comes to violence against women.

If they truly care about protecting women, then they should support our position on moving forward to get guns that were designed for the battlefield off our streets. As we know, women are disproportionately affected by gun violence, and it is a shame that Conservatives serve the gun lobby ahead of women.

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[Translation]

### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we have issued an ultimatum for supply management. That date is October 29. Yesterday, senators once again took our Bill C-282, which protects farmers, off their agenda. The Senate has been stalling on this bill for a year and a half now, even though all parties voted for it. The Liberals should ask themselves whether they want to put their fate in the hands of some unelected senators.

Will they be making any calls to the Senate to send a clear message that if Bill C-282 is not passed, an election will be called?

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have made some calls, and I would encourage my colleague to make the same calls. Our government has always defended supply management, but imagine what would have happened if the Conservatives had still been in power in 2018. They wanted us to kneel down before the American negotiators. We stood up for dairy farmers. We stood up for poultry farmers. We will always stand up to protect supply management.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, every party should be speaking out about the fact that senators are acting like elected members and obstructing the will of the House, which is to protect farmers. The Liberals should be even more motivated to do so because their fate is on the line. These unelected senators believe they have the right to decide for the Liberals. This is our appeal to the Liberals and the other parties as well.

Are they going to pressure the Senate to respect democracy and finally pass Bill C-282?

• (1140)

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would encourage my friend, once again, not to spend his time trying to convince us. We are already convinced. He should spend more time on the phone making calls to the other place.

Our government has always defended supply management and it will always defend it. Indeed, we gave \$5 billion to protect our dairy farmers, to ensure that our poultry farmers have a future here in Canada. Our government has always defended supply management and it always will. I encourage the Bloc Québécois members to make calls to the other place.

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[English]

**CARBON PRICING**

**Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

According to Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe, the carbon tax will cost the province's education system \$204 million and the health care system \$175 million. That is because schools and hospitals need heat and electricity during the cold Saskatchewan winter.

When will the NDP-Liberals break up their costly coalition and call a carbon tax election?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, just like the Conservative Party of Canada, Premier Moe in Saskatchewan has no effective plan to address climate change and no effective plan to build an economy that is going to be strong in the future.

We have designed the price on pollution in a manner that addresses affordability concerns and helps with affordability concerns with those most vulnerable in our society. We have built the most comprehensive climate plan in the world. We are on track to achieve emissions reductions. This is progress. At some point, the climate-denying Conservatives on the other side need to get with the program, recognize the reality of climate change and embed that in environmental and economic policy.

**Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan hospitals, schools and municipalities are struggling to provide services to people because the NDP-Liberal government keeps raising the carbon tax. In fact, the Government of Saskatchewan estimates the carbon tax will take \$6 billion out of the province's economy by the end of the decade. That is money that could be used to hire doctors, nurses and teachers.

Why does the Prime Minister not call a carbon tax election?

**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, it is sad to see Conservatives denying the need for climate action, given that businesses are hurting right now. Climate damages are leading to economic losses of \$25 billion per year and will quadruple by mid-century. That is real incentive to act, and industry and businesses demand it. The Conservatives can no longer deny the economic realities of climate change and hide behind their fanciful, little, empty, self-serving slogans.

**Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine painful years of the NDP-Liberal government, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up, time is up and we are all fed up. While the NDP-Liberal government claims the carbon tax impact on Canada's economy is minimal, the Parliamentary Budget Officer reveals the true cost to the economy will soar into the billions by 2030. It is time the NDP end its costly coalition with the Prime Minister on Tuesday.

If the Prime Minister is so convinced his carbon tax is good, why is he so afraid to call a carbon tax election?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would commend the hon. member on actually getting the various tag lines correct. I am sure the gold star will actually be on the board in the Conservative Party office.

At the end of the day, I would invite folks on the other side of the House to actually look at the facts. There are 300 economists in this country who have validated the fact that eight out of 10 Canadians get more money back, and we have seen that putting a price on pollution is an effective way to reduce emissions. Carbon emissions are down in this country. We are on track to achieve our climate goals, and we are moving forward to build an economy that will be strong and create economic opportunity for Canadians in every province and territory.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this Liberal government, young Quebecers are suffering. The cost of living is horrendous. Half of young people are living paycheque to paycheque and are unable to save any money.

The Bloc Québécois can no longer justify keeping this centralizing and inflationary Prime Minister in power. They are not being fair to Quebecers and they are not helping young people, quite the opposite.

Will the Bloc Québécois finally start serving Quebecers instead of forcing them to live in misery to benefit the Liberal Prime Minister?

• (1145)

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely looking after Canadians, which is why we are bringing in various measures to help them get through these slightly more difficult times. Take, for example, the Canada child benefit, which can put up to \$7,000 more in the pockets of families per child under the age of 6 and up to \$6,000 more per child between the ages of six and 17. That is \$350 more than last year.

We will continue to be there to support families.

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[English]

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, indigenous people make up 5% of Edmonton's population and, yet, between 55% and 65% of unhoused people are indigenous. Instead of building homes to solve the crisis, the Liberals are delaying action. Not one single home has been built under the urban, rural and northern indigenous housing strategy. The Liberals have been delaying action, and we know that the Conservatives would just cut these crucial programs and give the money to luxury developers.

Why are the Liberals denying indigenous peoples a safe place to call home right now?

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, decades of underinvestment and discrimination means that there is a tremendous lack of safe, affordable housing and housing supports for indigenous peoples across this country. We have taken action to support indigenous peoples in urban, rural and northern communities to build strong, healthy communities.

In our efforts to close this gap, we have increased our funding for on-reserve housing by 1,300%. We have supported the construction, renovation and retrofit of over 36,000 homes with 23,000 completed.

We will not stop. We are focused on results, following the lead of indigenous partners that is creating tangible, lasting, indigenous-led solutions to close this gap.

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, toxic drugs continue to kill people's loved ones in northern B.C. at an alarming rate and first nations' families are disproportionately affected. In Terrace, the rate of death from toxic drugs is the second highest in our province. The Northern First Nations Alliance has been pushing for years for more detox and treatment capacity so that people do not have to travel to the Lower Mainland for services.

The alliance has urged the Liberal government to help. Why has the government not acted?

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no community that has been left untouched by the illegal toxic drug supply. It has been a tragedy for so many communities that are losing their loved ones. We know that indigenous communities are disproportionately affected. We have answered that call, after listening to communities, in budget 2024, with the emergency transfer fund. It will be launched shortly to work directly with communities to address the overdose crisis.

We know that communities need help. We have been there for them with over a billion dollars in investments to date and we will continue to do the work.

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**FISHERIES AND OCEANS**

**Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, owner-operator rules for Canada's Atlantic fisheries are a bedrock institution as they once were for the west coast before the Conservative Party eliminated them in favour of big corporate fishing fleets. These rules protect independent fishers and the livelihoods of fishing families.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard inform this House and fishers on the government's commitment to protecting the owner-operator policy from those in this chamber who would gut this policy?

**Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend for his advocacy for protecting owner-operator policies in Atlantic Canada and Quebec.

Our government remains firmly committed to strengthening Canada's owner-operator rules as part of the mandatory review of the Fisheries Act. This week, the Conservatives struck at this review and left us wondering whether they have a secret plan for gutting owner-operator once and for all.

Let us be clear. We will not stand for that. We will not let schemes, scams and hidden plans work. The Conservatives are out of time on this one.

## HOUSING

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. The federal housing agency's latest report proved again that the Liberal photo op housing policy is not building homes. The report shows that housing starts are declining in major cities like Vancouver, Toronto and Ottawa. We see it with more tent encampments and more people sleeping on the streets.

On Tuesday, the NDP-Liberals must end their costly coalition with the Prime Minister. Will they?

• (1150)

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in fact, the member ought to look at the CMHC report that she just referenced a bit more closely. In major cities, like Montreal, for example, rental construction is up by 106%. I would also point out that the reason for that is the waiving of GST on the costs for rental construction. That is, as we speak, putting more supply into the market. In order to bring costs down, we need more supply, but the Conservatives are not in favour of that measure.

The member talked about encampments. The Conservatives oppose everything this government has done to lower the number of encampments in this country.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week, the NDP voted to declare a housing crisis and, yet, the NDP continues to vote confidence in the Liberals. After nine years, housing costs have doubled. It now takes 30 years to save for the average home. There are thousands of tent encampments. Chronic homelessness has increased 38% since 2018 and veterans are living on the streets. There is nowhere near the number of homes being built to bring back housing affordability to Canadians.

Next Tuesday, will the NDP-Liberals let Canadians decide on a carbon tax election?

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member talks about increasing supply of housing. I point out that the housing accelerator fund, which is the signature program of this government to increase supply, incents zoning changes at the local level. Restrictive zoning is the single-biggest impediment to getting more supply on the market.

What did this government do? We have put forward funding for housing and infrastructure. In exchange, communities need to make zoning changes. Almost 200 have done exactly that. That member voted against it, not just in general terms, but for her own community of Kelowna. On top of that, she has voted against homelessness funding for her community in Kelowna. She is not serious.

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[Translation]

## FORESTRY INDUSTRY

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 280 forestry workers learned yesterday that they will be losing their

## Oral Questions

jobs a few days before Christmas. They include 160 workers in the Mauricie region and 120 in the Outaouais. Our thoughts are with the families who are being so brutally tested by this financial and social tragedy.

In the meantime, what is happening here in Ottawa? We have a Liberal government that is being honoured with the confidence of the Bloc Québécois but is still insisting on its threat of issuing a forestry order.

Is there a minister here who can stand up and say it is a good idea to issue an order when the industry is suffering right now?

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to anyone who loses their job. We are extremely disappointed that the U.S. Department of Commerce has significantly increased its unfair and unjustified duties on softwood lumber from Canada. These unfair and unfounded U.S. duties on softwood lumber unjustifiably harm consumers and producers on both sides of the border. This latest measure will have a negative impact on workers and their communities.

We will always stand up for the lumber industry here in Canada and Quebec.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** He says they are standing up, Mr. Speaker, but what has that accomplished? What are the results?

I cannot believe that the Bloc Québécois is renewing its confidence in the government again this week, and probably will next week. It is even giving the government the benefit of the doubt. Will it ever realize that the government is running straight into a wall, and that forestry workers are the ones suffering right now? There are 1,400 people at risk of losing their jobs because of the Liberal's forestry order.

Is there anyone in the House who thinks it would be a good idea to pass this order when Quebec's forestry industry is hurting?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is asking the Bloc Québécois why it hesitates to support the Conservative Party. It is obvious. Most Quebecers, at least those in my riding, dislike the Conservative Leader's insults, contempt and cuts approach to politics. They want none of it.

My colleague, the member, will have to explain to the Bloc Québécois why it should join forces with a party that lets people travel around the world to undermine women's rights, that denies climate change, and that questions the importance of supporting the middle class with housing and child care, for example, during difficult times.

*Oral Questions***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the distribution of asylum seekers has been the subject of a lot of political games recently. Everyone needs to get their act together on this.

Quebec has exceeded its integration capacity. Our public services are overwhelmed. More and more asylum seekers are living in inhumane, precarious conditions every day. Any government that refuses to do its part to help with the distribution of newcomers is contributing to the humanitarian crisis. The federal government promised that it and the provinces would do their fair share.

What is Ottawa going to do immediately to resolve the impasse?

• (1155)

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, immigration requires collaboration and co-operation. We live in Canada. We carry Canadian passports. Clearly, the Canadian government must play a collaborative role in immigration.

The good news is that things are going well and getting better. We urge Mr. Legault to get his act together. He was too quick to speak out in the past few days, saying that no measures had been taken in recent weeks, which is not true. Three announcements were made in less than a month. A letter was sent to his minister, Mr. Roberge, with all the details on the progress that has been made and the collaborative work that remains to be done.

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, while everyone is passing the buck, Quebec continues to add tens of thousands of asylum seekers every month to its overloaded system.

While the federal government lacks leadership and the provinces lack humanity, in Quebec the problems are getting worse. For years Quebec has been welcoming a disproportionate share of asylum seekers in Canada, while Canada completely dodges its responsibilities. Quebecers are sick of being the only ones making a contribution.

When will Canada get to it?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is an example of something that needs to be corrected.

First, the volume of asylum claims from Mexico dropped by 75% in the span of a few months. Second, the number of asylum claims at Pierre Elliott Trudeau airport has dropped by 70% since February. Third, the number of asylum claims in Quebec has dropped by 42% since February. Fourth, the share of asylum seekers in Quebec compared to the rest of the country has gone from 40% to 29% since February 2024.

Those are the types of statistics that everyone must absolutely know.

[English]

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

**Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal government has failed Canadians when it comes to wildfire mitigation. In Jasper, a third of the town went up in flames. Thousands are now left homeless with close to a billion dollars in devastation. Even with that result, the radical environment minister had the audacity to call it a success. People in Jasper are demanding answers for how this happened under the minister's authority.

Was it negligence, incompetence or both?

**Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are seeing that Canada is warming five times faster than other countries. The damage from extreme weather events in Canada is more than \$175 million per year, but our environmental plan reduces emissions and puts more money in the hands of eight out of 10 Canadians. Climate change is real, and the Conservatives do not have a plan. It is shameful.

**Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I guess blaming climate change is easier than admitting to incompetence. In 2017, the former MP for Yellowhead gave warnings. For years, the mayor and forestry experts warned that a devastating wildfire in Jasper was inevitable without action. The radical environment minister knew it was coming and still chose to do nothing. Now, a third of the town is gone, thousands are homeless and there is nearly a billion dollars in damage.

Will the minister personally apologize to the people of Jasper for his failure?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, not only, as my colleague said, does Canada actually have a comprehensive plan to address and mitigate carbon emissions that cause climate change, but we have also invested significantly in climate adaptation to ensure that we are taking the steps to do what we can to prevent significant impacts from the climate change that is already with us. Certainly, Parks Canada has been a part of that. It is a leader in the context of managing parks on a climate adaptation basis.

I think it is just reprehensible that the member is throwing the officials from Parks Canada under the bus.

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, an email obtained from the environment minister's department revealed a senior official was questioning the political optics of forest management practices that prevent wildfires. The email stated, "At what point do we make the organizational decision to cancel planned prescribed burns in Western Canada?" "...political perception may become more important than actual prescription windows."

Why were the political optics more important than forest management to the minister months before the Jasper wildfires?

*Oral Questions*

• (1200)

**Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what the members opposite are doing is absolutely shameful. As the Minister of Environment explained to this House yesterday, they are taking an email out of context, and now that official is facing death threats.

What happened in Jasper is a national tragedy, but it is a result of climate change. If the members opposite want to get to the bottom of this, they should start by recognizing that climate change is real.

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*[Translation]***TOURISM INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, not only is tourism a driving force of economic development, but it is also a matter of pride, pride in sharing our beautiful and magnificent country with the entire world. Tourism exists in every community in the country. It is therefore not surprising that it contributes \$43 billion per year to our GDP, while creating two million jobs.

Can the Minister of Tourism tell us how our government is encouraging tourism in order to support those who work in the industry?

**Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, World Tourism Day is an opportunity to—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I must interrupt the minister.

*[English]*

We were doing really well up to that point, and we are only a few questions away from the end of question period.

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am standing up. When I am standing up, hon. members are supposed to be listening to the Chair.

*[Translation]*

The hon. Minister of Tourism.

**Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada:** Mr. Speaker, World Tourism Day is an opportunity to celebrate the pride we take in sharing our home with the world, as well as the industry's contribution to the economy.

Last week, at the G20 on Tourism, we talked in particular about the major challenges facing the tourism sector. What are they? Climate change, for one. Unlike the Conservatives, who do not believe in climate change—we are seeing proof positive of that right now—we believe not only in supporting tourism growth, but also in fighting climate change, because it is very real.

*[English]***FINANCE**

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after nine years under the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. Now carbon tax Carney is waiting in the wings, advising the Liberal leader and getting richer with every new Liberal policy announcement, such as the Liberals' recent increase on mortgage insurance limits. Higher limits will not build houses, but they will increase profits for mortgage insurance companies, such as Sagen, whose parent company's board is chaired by Mark Carney.

When will the government force Carney to disclose his conflicts of interest?

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there they go with the personal attacks. What do people say about those who engage in personal attacks? It is that they have no meaningful ideas to offer.

Conservatives should talk to the insurance sector, talk to the mortgage sector and talk to the homebuilding sector about the challenges facing the country and what the government has done. The recent changes that the member raises on mortgages are meaningful. They will add to supply. We have measures to increase supply more generally. We are working with municipalities and not-for-profits to lower the number of encampments in this country.

We will continue to work, and they will continue to say nothing.

\* \* \*

**CANADA REVENUE AGENCY**

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when Canadians have problems with their CRA My Account online, they have no choice but to contact the ministry by telephone. Here is what typically happens: When they call the CRA's toll-free number, more often than not, they are greeted by a recorded message telling them the line is full and to try again later. When they do get through, they are frequently put on hold for as long as four hours, which can then end when the phone line simply goes dead. Several entire days can be consumed in this stressful exercise.

This problem was identified by the Auditor General in 2018, but, if anything, it seems to be getting worse. Why is it not being fixed after six years?

**Ms. Lisa Hefpner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the hard work that CRA employees do every day, day in and day out.

We will get back to the member on the specifics of his question.

*Oral Questions***CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA**

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is why I filled out a late show form in advance.

To provide advice on how best to reopen the prison farm at Joyceville, near Kingston, the Correctional Service of Canada appointed a prison farm advisory panel. The panel's advice was to add a cow dairy program. One result of this advice has been the purchase of cattle from members of the very same advisory panel. Another result has been the construction of a \$16-million taxpayer-funded barn to house them.

This is such an obvious conflict of interest that the minister owes us an explanation. Why did he allow the purchase of cows from members of the advisory panel?

• (1205)

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is not a surprise that the member opposite does not believe in training programs for inmates, which we know reduce recidivism. It is pretty clear that not everybody comes from a position of privilege, and not everybody is able to access education and training. However, we know that, when it comes to keeping communities safe, it is providing education and training for inmates that will keep our communities safe into the future.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, the leader of the Conservative Party called out our pharmacare plan as “radical”. He has continued to downplay the significance and impact of the Canadian dental care plan. So far, it has already helped over 750,000 Canadians, and it is projected to help nine million people by the end of 2025.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health please explain why it is so important to maintain public health care?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the only radical thing about the opposition leader's ideas is his plan to cut Canadians' pensions and health care. He has shown his true colours again and again.

He will not stand up for protecting universal health care for all Canadians. What does the Conservative leader mean when he says “radical pharmacare”? It means he does not want to see universal health care protected in our country. It means that he would stop nine million women from gaining access to free contraceptives, he would take away dental care from uninsured Canadians and he would cut coverage for 3.5 million people living with diabetes.

We will not let him do that.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as we witness the tragic escalation of violence in Israel, Gaza and now

Lebanon, Canada has abandoned decades of world leadership to sit on the sidelines.

Now, with thousands of air strikes on Lebanese civilians; hundreds killed, including two Canadians; and thousands wounded, what will it take for Canada to find the courage to stand up to Netanyahu?

Parliament has called for a ceasefire. It has asked to stop sending arms to the region and to help all those displaced with assistance. When will the Liberals take action to save lives instead of spewing empty words?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member's question gives us an opportunity to recognize two Canadians who were innocent, who were killed trying to flee from violence in Lebanon. I particularly name Hussein Tabaja and Daad Tabaja.

It is a tragedy that is ongoing in the whole Middle East. Canada has continually called for a ceasefire between Hezbollah and Israel and between Israel and Hamas. We will continue to do everything diplomatically possible to work with allies and like-minded countries, and to express Canadians' concern about this tragedy, which is ongoing.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, a year ago, the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of Quebec proudly announced record multi-billion dollar subsidies to Swedish company Northvolt.

More and more Quebecers and Canadians are concerned as a result of announcements that the company is facing serious hardship, following the loss of more than 1,600 jobs, the financial liquidity crisis and the halting of expansion and development projects.

Can the Prime Minister tell us how much taxpayers' money is at stake? Does the federal government, unlike Quebec, have any guarantees protecting us in the event that the project in Quebec's Montérégie region does not see the light of day?

[*English*]

**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, our government is very proud of the anchor generational investments that we have helped to incentivize and bring into the Canadian economy.

The Northvolt project is one of many, and it is an important one. I can assure the member that no federal funding has gone out, as the minister has made clear, and that there is flexibility with Northvolt. We know that the Northvolt project is important.



We look forward to the revised plans and ensuring that the project continues and contributes to the EV supply chain here in Canada.

• (1210)

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, during members' statements today, the member for Calgary Heritage used a personal insult towards the leader of the NDP.

Members are doing it again. Insults and name-calling are clearly against our rules. Yesterday, the Speaker made a ruling to that effect and has called on the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw and to apologize for similar comments. Not only is the Leader of the Opposition ignoring the Speaker and disrespecting the entire House of Commons by doing so, but also the lack of meaningful consequences has now given licence to other members to follow his lead.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that you did bring up a comment after the fact, but the statement was read in full and has made it into the Hansard. The member needs to be asked to withdraw and to apologise.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. member. I did not catch it. I am not perfect. I did mention that using false titles is not allowed in the chamber. We will go back and look at it to see exactly what words were used and come back.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### PETITIONS

#### DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present e-petition 4938, which has gathered more than 9,500 signatures from people across the country. The petitioners call on the House to oppose the portion of the Liberal Bill C-65 that would move the election date to one week later.

This seemingly innocent change would guarantee pensions for current members of Parliament who were first elected in 2019 and who are still serving, even if they choose not to run again or if they run and do not win the next election. The petitioners think that this is an irresponsible use of taxpayer dollars. I agree with that. I congratulate them for working on this petition, and I am happy to present it.

#### NATIONAL FIELD OF HONOUR

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a certificate for an e-petition that has gathered 1,263 signatures. The petition asks that the Government of Canada consider making a full public commitment in 2024 to assuming oversight, management and funding of the Last Post Fund's National Field of Honour, in view of the cemetery's unique national significance, as called for by the Last Post Fund itself.

#### OPIOIDS

**Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of presenting a petition signed by over 1,500 people who identify three key things: that harm reduction strategies have failed to decrease opioid use; that such strategies have fos-

### Routine Proceedings

tered illegal drug resale, increased crime and encouraged youth addiction; and that safe injection sites threaten public safety in host communities, with some being placed next to schools and public parks. They call for two things from the Government of Canada: to reform or abolish the safer supply strategy and safe injection sites; and to focus federal funding on strategies that actually break the cycle of addiction and support community safety. I thank all those for their ongoing advocacy to make sure that our kids and our communities are safe.

### TAXATION

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition today from residents in my community and surrounding area. Petitioners reference, after nine years of the government, Canada going through the worst decline in living standards in the last 40 years. It references the government's high tax policies and the job-killing taxes that are affecting many Canadians, creating smaller paycheques.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to, first, overhaul the tax system to make taxes low, simple and fair; second, reduce the share of taxes paid by the poor and middle class; third, cut tax-funded corporate welfare and crack down on overseas tax havens; and, last, cut the paperwork and bureaucracy in the tax system by at least 20%.

\* \* \*

• (1215)

### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

### POINTS OF ORDER

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order in relation to the point made by the member for Winnipeg South Centre after question period yesterday.

*Privilege*

The member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes heckled me, asking if I received a thank-you letter from Hezbollah. Members of the Conservative Party in the House have repeatedly maligned me personally, using unparliamentary language, over the past several days. As a Jew and as an Israeli Canadian, this is abhorrent. I, like many Canadians in this country, am witnessing the war in the Middle East and watching my loved ones being impacted on both sides of the border. To make such disparaging personal comments while my family and so many, on either side, are suffering and who are under constant threat of rocket fire during this horrific war is beyond shameful.

I have dedicated my life's work to bridging between peoples, to bring peace into the region and to bring a pathway so that people can live in safety and security in the Middle East, particularly Israelis and Palestinians who live in the region. We come to the House every single day to do the work for Canadians to make their lives better and be a force of good on the international stage.

The member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes diminishes himself. He diminishes the House. I am requesting that he withdraw his comments from question period yesterday and apologize. The House and Canadians deserve better than this. They do not deserve bullies like this in the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for the intervention. We will look at that and come back to the chamber as quickly as possible.

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## ORDERS OF THE DAY

[English]

### PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Motion

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will resume and summarize where we are. We are debating the Speaker's ruling on the privilege motion on the Prime Minister's department, the PCO, redacting documents against the House order to provide documents regarding the Liberal green slush fund to the law clerk to be transferred to the RCMP for investigation.

Where I left off was in the middle of discussing the various conflicts of interest of the various directors. Members will recall I was talking about the director, Andrée-Lise Méthot, who owns a company called Cycle Capital. Her companies have received \$250 million, before and during her time on the green slush fund board, and her lobbyist, before he came to the House, was the current, radical Minister of the Environment.

In his time as the lobbyist for Cycle Capital, when he lobbied 25 times in his last year before entering the House, the PMO and the industry department gave over \$100 million in green slush fund money to Cycle Capital. Shockingly, the minister still owns shares of that, even though, as a cabinet minister of government, he partic-

ipated in discussions that gave the green slush fund another \$750 million, of which over a quarter has gone to that company. He still owns shares in it. He has not disclosed what they are worth. I know he is familiar with orange jumpsuits, but I think this needs to be explored more by the RCMP, and hopefully the documents will show that when they are transferred.

I will speak also about another board member handpicked by the Prime Minister, Guy Ouimet, who has admitted in committee that \$17 million of green slush fund money went to companies he has a financial interest in. He said that it is a small amount of money. It may be a small amount of money to him, but it is not to most Canadians, and that amount of money, he admitted, had gone up 1,000% in value since that investment was made in 2019. It pays to be a Liberal insider.

I will bring our attention to another director, a fellow named Stephen Kukucha from British Columbia. Stephen Kukucha was a political staffer to former Liberal environment minister Anderson, and he was the organizer for the Liberal Party for the Prime Minister in British Columbia. As a reward, they put him on the green slush fund board. Surprisingly, we have another Liberal on the board in whose company he had a financial interest. In his time on the board, the companies he had a financial interest in received almost \$5 million from the very board he was serving on. He said they were small amounts of money, but in committee, unlike Mr. Ouimet, he did not have the courage to say how much the value of his investments had gone up. That is why these documents need to be produced and why these directors need to be investigated.

We all know about Annette Verschuren, so let me talk a bit about one of the processes that they established. They established something called accelerators, and those accelerators were outside organizations that the board hired to vet proposals and make recommendations to the board. One of those was an organization called the Verschuren Centre at the University of Cape Breton, which is in the name of and was set up by the chair of the green slush fund.

There is MaRS Discovery District at U of T. Members probably know that. Can members guess who chairs MaRS? It is the chair of the green slush fund, Annette Verschuren.

Companies would be screened through board member-controlled organizations, and shockingly, their companies got recommended to the board for funding. That is just a pure coincidence. With 82% of the transactions that they approved, nine directors were conflicted. These directors do not represent 82% of the green technology industry in Canada, yet their companies got 82% of the funding. It is strangely a pure coincidence with these hand-picked directors from the Prime Minister.

• (1220)

We are debating the issue of systemic conflict of interest and corruption in this green slush fund. We only know right now about \$390 million because a forensic audit has not been done by the Auditor General. The Auditor General did a sampling of things.

The Ethics Commissioner has not investigated any of the other directors, other than the one my colleague from Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes asked to be investigated. When I asked the Ethics Commissioner if he had the power to investigate anyone who is a GIC appointment, he said yes. When I asked him why he had not investigated the other eight GIC appointments put out in the Auditor General's report as having conflicts of interest, where money flowed to companies they had an interest in, do members know what the Ethics Commissioner said before a committee? He asked what the point would be in investigating GIC appointments of people who are no longer on the board. That is what the Ethics Commissioner of this institution said. I said that because the taxpayers pay him to discover and expose conflicts of interest of GIC appointments, appointments by the Liberals, of featherbedding insiders funnelling money, perhaps he should do his job for a change. He is not doing his job. He was shocked that anyone would ask him that.

Why is all of this important? Every one of us was sent here to be very careful when spending the hard-earned money Canadians make that we are privileged to oversee. That is an essential part of our job. This organization stuffed its own pockets with taxpayer money, yet the Liberals are fighting it. They say it is not their role. Taxpayer money that we oversee was authorized by this Parliament and the Minister of Industry is responsible. For 40 months, he sat there, with an ADM in every meeting, the current Minister of the Environment, and did absolutely nothing until it made it into the press.

This is corruption like we have never seen in Canada. This is why we have asked for the documents, because the Liberals are hiding documents. This is why they are resisting and hiding the documents, because they know there is more corruption there with their hand-picked directors. If we were a private sector institution, we would be turning those documents over to the police to investigate. That is our job. No, it is not just the job of the police to go to the courts to seek that. It is our job to expose the corruption in the things we have authorized money for in this Parliament. It is our job, and it is time the Liberals started caring about it.

• (1225)

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie):** Before moving on to questions and comments, I would like to inform the House

*Privilege*

that the volume of earpieces will now be reset. Members using their earpieces at this time will have to readjust the volume.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, contrary to the false impression that the member tries to give, there is a blurring of judicial independence here. He needs to recognize that the House of Commons, which has the supreme authority or power, is now saying that it wants to get this information in order to hand it over to the RCMP.

Even the Auditor General and the RCMP have issues with the direction the Conservative Party of Canada is taking today. If we were to use the same very principled arguments the member is attempting to get across, can members imagine what would have happened with the Conservative ETS scandal of \$400 million, which is, from what I understand, in part still going through the court process?

The Conservative Party is directly trying to interfere in a dangerous area and violating the Charter of Rights, amongst other issues.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Mr. Speaker, why am I not shocked that the Liberal member for Winnipeg North wants to cover up the corruption by saying it is somebody else's responsibility? It is our responsibility. I know he has spent most of his life in public office, so he may be unfamiliar with how a company works.

A company works like this. When it discovers there has been malfeasance by employees, its job is to turn that over to the police and to let the police investigate. It does not have to go to court; it calls in the police. We own this company, the taxpayers. We funded this company. The member and the Liberals do not seem to accept that it is our job to call in the police when we see corruption with respect to appointments by the Liberals in something that is funded by Canadian taxpayers.

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from South Shore—St. Margarets noted that the minister had to have been aware of this corruption over the months he has been in office, during which millions went out the door and there were conflicts of interest. Last week at the public accounts committee, there was bombshell testimony from the whistleblower, who characterized the minister's conduct in this matter, among other things, as corrupt and deceitful.

*Privilege*

Would the member comment on the testimony of the whistle-blower and on the whistle-blower very specifically pointing the finger at the minister?

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Mr. Speaker, that is a great question. Two whistle-blowers, in fact, have been very brave individuals who came forward to expose this. A year and a half ago they got absolutely no response from the industry minister but did get a response from the CFO's department saying this was huge. The minister did nothing until it was public. That minister, the current minister, had a senior assistant deputy minister in every single board meeting, where 82% of the time they were voting for money for their own companies.

It is beyond credulity, beyond believability, that the minister claims, in a *Hogan's Heroes* Sergeant Schultz sort of way, "I know nothing". He had a senior official in every meeting. That official is obligated to report to the deputy minister and the minister. I do not believe the minister knew nothing. I believe the minister was incompetent and enjoyed the featherbedding of his Quebec colleagues on the board.

● (1230)

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for laying out just how deep this corruption is and how implicated the current minister is. Because I think he understands more of the historical context of how far back this goes, to even the former minister of industry Navdeep Bains, and how the PCO and PMO were warned about these potential conflicts, I wonder if he could explain to Canadians just how far back this goes and how deep this corruption is with the current Liberal government.

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Mr. Speaker, the Harper government cleaned this up and put in a new chair, Jim Balsillie; hired a new CEO; and got a clean bill of health from the Auditor General and Treasury Board in 2017. Then the chair, Jim Balsillie, started to criticize the government in public on its lack of action on the surveillance economy. Guess what Navdeep Bains did. He said Balsillie had to go because he would not shut up about criticizing the government.

The Liberals tossed Balsillie out and put in a chair who, they were told repeatedly by SDTC, should not be in the position because she was the first conflicted chair in the history of SDTC. Even a former PMO staffer, who did communications and was in SDTC, phoned her colleagues in the minister's office and the PMO and said this person was conflicted. Guess what former minister Navdeep Bains said. By the way, he is the guy in charge of the highest cellphone rates in the world at Rogers now. Former minister Navdeep Bains said the government would manage the conflict. They sure managed the conflict, with \$390 million of taxpayer money going to conflicted directors.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am stunned that my colleague said somehow the Harper government had cleaned up messes when we had so many cases of corruption that the Harper regime refused, shut down Parliament on, so we could not get information. There was the \$3.1 billion that could not be found around anti-terrorism activity. The G8 fund, and a gazebo, was a billion dollars, and the Harper regime shut it down so we could not get to the bottom of it. There was the F-35 procurement scandal. The Phoenix pay system that we are still afflicted

with today cost \$2.2 billion, and the Harper government refused to have any sort of inquiry on it. There is the ETS scandal, which is \$400 million, and again, the Harper government shut it down.

Why did the Harper regime shut down all of the inquiries into all of these scandals? Do Conservatives finally admit they were wrong to refuse to get Parliament to get to the bottom of these incredible, atrocious Conservative scandals?

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the NDP House leader missed the news that his boss, his party's leader, ripped up the deal with the Liberals. He does not need to use the PMO talking points anymore. He can be independent and maybe support the position of the member for Windsor West on this, rather than undercutting his own party's member.

On that issue, why is the member issuing PMO talking points to bury the corruption in SDTC? Why is it that he is deflecting onto other things and will not talk about the issue before Parliament today and the parliamentary privilege breach of the government? The House leader should be concerned about parliamentary privilege breaches. Apparently, he is not. He is more interested in spewing PMO talking points.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the extreme discomfort the Conservative Party is causing the Auditor General and the RCMP would potentially compromise them. However, the member says, "It's okay. It's our job". That is the response he gives. I wonder if he could indicate if it is also the Conservative Party's job to deal with the issue of foreign interference?

We found out, earlier this week, that in not one but two Conservative leadership campaigns there was alleged foreign interference. Is it not "our job" to find out and get to the bottom of that? Was his current leader impacted by foreign interference? Is that what killed the leadership ambitions of Erin O'Toole? Should we not do our job and get to the bottom of that too?

● (1235)

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member is part of a government that did not want an investigation into foreign interference. He is a member of a party that refuses to release the 11 names of parliamentarians who have been compromised. He does not believe in that. He is deflecting from the issue of the supremacy of Parliament.

I know Canadians did not give you a majority, and you are sad about that; you will not be getting it next time either. However, a majority of people in the House, representing Canadians, said these documents need to go to the RCMP. Why do you not listen to the people?

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie):** I would like to remind the hon. member that he must address his questions through the Chair.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, can the member indicate if the Conservative Party, in his perspective, is compromising in any way or making it uncomfortable for the RCMP and the Auditor General?

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Mr. Speaker, we are doing what responsible parliamentarians do. Any responsible business, when it uncovers corruption in its own organization, turns it over to the police. Why will he not let it be turned over to the police?

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on your finding of a prima facie question of privilege arising from the Liberal government failing to abide by a clear and unequivocal order of the House, namely to turn over documents relating to a massive scandal involving Sustainable Development Technology Canada, more accurately known as the Prime Minister's billion dollar green slush fund.

On June 10, a majority of the House, not only Conservatives but also New Democrats and Bloc Québécois members, called on the government to turn over all relevant documents to the RCMP to shine a light on the self-dealing conflicts, corruption and law-breaking that have mired the SDTC foundation, or again, better known and more accurately described as the green slush fund. For three months, the Liberal government has obstructed that order of the House, and in so doing, it has once again demonstrated its utter contempt for the House and the supremacy of Parliament.

It is all part of a pattern of cover-up by the current minister to protect Liberal insiders who got rich by ripping off Canadian taxpayers. The level of scandal and corruption at the green slush fund is truly staggering. It was laid bare in the Auditor General's report issued last June. The Auditor General found, among other things, that \$400 million in taxpayer dollars went out the door improperly at the green slush fund. That is \$400 million out of the \$800 million in the green slush fund.

I should note that was just based on the sample by the Auditor General because the Auditor General did not do a full audit of SDTC. Even with that sample, she found \$400 million. If a full and complete audit had been undertaken, it is almost a certainty that she would have identified tens of millions, if not hundreds of millions, of dollars of taxpayers' money that improperly went out the door in addition to the \$400 million that she identified. Of the \$400 million that went out the door, the Auditor General found that a staggering \$330 million involved conflicts of interest of board members.

In some instances, board members voted to funnel money into their own companies. In fact, the Auditor General found 186 cases

### *Privilege*

of conflict. Essentially, just to provide Canadians with a picture of what was going on at this Liberal green slush fund, board members were appointed by Navdeep Bains and the minister. These were board members who all had various financial interests in green tech companies.

Funding decisions would come up at board meetings. A board member would say they had a conflict of interest and step outside the door, while all the board members knew that was that board member's company, and the board would then approve the money to go into that board member's company. The board member would then come back in, and another funding decision would be considered. Another board member would say they also had a conflict of interest, they would walk out the door, and the board would then approve funding to that board member's company. Then that board member would come in and another board member would step out and on and on it went, rinse and repeat. Talk about a total racket.

● (1240)

This went on 186 times since 2017 according to the Auditor General. The times that board members walked out the door were instances where, arguably, compared to other conduct at the green slush fund, they acted ethically. In 90 cases, the Auditor General found that board members actually sat in, deliberated on and voted on funneling monies into companies that they had an interest in or had a conflict of interest with. There were blatant conflicts of interest in 90 cases. I would submit that is not only a conflict of interest, but that is out-and-out corruption and out-and-out theft.

One person who was involved in voting to funnel money into her own company was none other than the chair, Annette Verschuren, who was hand-picked by the former corrupt Liberal minister Navdeep Bains. She actually said, to her credit, she had a conflict of interest upon Bains tapping her on the shoulder. However, Bains said it did not matter, that conflicts of interest did not matter to him or to the government, and they would manage the conflict of interest. Of course, that set the tone for the culture at SDTC.

*Privilege*

What did Annette Verschuren do? She actually sat in and moved two motions to unlawfully funnel \$38.5 million out the door in so-called COVID relief payments. By unlawful, I mean monies that went out the door in contravention of the contribution agreements that the green slush fund had with ISED or Industry Canada. Not only did \$38.5 million improperly go out the door in those so-called COVID relief payments, but \$220,000 was funnelled into her own company, a company in which she was the CEO, founder, majority shareholder and sole director. She moved a motion and voted on sending \$220,000 to her own company.

Ms. Verschuren is a sophisticated business person but it does not take a sophisticated business person to realize that when they are a shareholder, sole director and CEO of a company, it is completely unethical and improper to be sitting on a board, moving a motion and voting on funnelling \$220,000 to their own company. However, that is what she did and it is one example of many of conflicts, self-dealing corruption and law-breaking at the green slush fund. The Ethics Commissioner, last month, found Ms. Verschuren guilty of breaching multiple sections of the Conflict of Interest Act. I underscore that Ms. Verschuren's misconduct merely scratches the surface of self-dealing.

To that end, I would note that another bad actor at the green slush fund is Andrée-Lise Méthot, the CEO of Cycle Capital. This is someone whose firm has received, and the companies connected to her firm have received, more than \$40 million from the green slush fund. This is someone who sat on the board as tens of millions of dollars went out the door. The Minister of Environment happens to be a shareholder. He happens to have worked closely with Ms. Méthot prior to his election. We have a minister in the government who is profiting off the conflicts and corruption at the green slush fund. Perhaps that may explain the total lack of interest in getting to the bottom of the corruption.

• (1245)

It must be noted that, through all of the meetings involving conflicts and self-dealing, a senior official in the minister's office sat in on those meetings. This was not just any senior official. The assistant deputy minister sat in on 186 conflicts. In that regard, we have a government that turned a blind eye and was essentially, in so doing, complicit in the corruption at the green slush fund.

Members need not take my word for it. They can take the Auditor General's word. Paragraph 6.74 of the Auditor General's report reads, "an assistant deputy minister of the department regularly attended meetings of the foundation's board" and "that the assistant deputy minister's presence at meetings provided an implicit agreement by the department for any decisions that the board made." In other words, it was wink-wink, nudge-nudge. They were going to turn a blind eye to this corruption. That is the finding, essentially, of the Auditor General.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Edmonton Strathcona seems to think that \$400 million going out the door is a funny thing. Well, I certainly do not. I think it is a very serious thing. It is too bad that she and her party sold out time and again to prop up the corrupt Liberal government.

Be that as it may, we have that finding from the Auditor General. The minister says that he had no idea. Now, given that his assistant deputy minister sat in on each of those board meetings, it is beyond belief to accept that the minister had no idea.

In the unlikely event that the minister did have no idea, it does not really get any better for the minister because this means that there was either one of two scenarios. Either the minister knew and turned a blind eye to corruption, and was therefore complicit in the corruption, and I would submit that that is the likely scenario, or the minister had lost complete control of his department, in which case the minister is utterly incompetent. In either case, the minister has demonstrated himself wholly unfit to serve in the high office that he holds as minister of industry.

The minister's failures and complicity in all of this is not speculation. Last week, a whistle-blower appeared before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. His testimony about the minister's conduct in this entire matter was absolutely devastating. The minister would have Canadians believe that he only learned about this in February 2023 when a whistle-blower came forward. Essentially, in February 2023, it was going public, and the minister really had no choice politically but to act as though he was doing something.

Therefore, the minister appointed a firm to investigate, RCGT, and frankly, the scope of its investigation was inadequate. According to the whistle-blower, RCGT came back with an interim report in May 2023, which the minister blocked from being released. The minister blocked the release of the report. Not only that, but according to the whistle-blower, the minister tampered with evidence that was being considered by the RCGT report. He actively intervened and tampered with its investigation as he pushed for further delay and to water down the findings of RCGT.

• (1250)

Then, when the report was issued in the fall of 2023, despite it being a very damning report that identified many of the conflicts that had been confirmed by the Auditor General, the minister kept the corrupt board in place. He kept his corrupt Liberal friends, people he and Navdeep Bains appointed, in place so that they could continue to enrich themselves. At the very least, he did not see to any level of accountability and he, according to the whistle-blower, ignored the consensus within the department that this rotten and corrupt board needed to go, needed to be fired.

To that end, I would cite the testimony of the whistle-blower, who said at committee last week, with respect to the minister and with respect to the government, the following:

...I think the current government is more interested in protecting themselves and protecting the situation from being a public nightmare. They would rather protect wrongdoers and financial mismanagement than have to deal with a situation like SDTC in the public sphere.

*Privilege*

I would submit that this is a damning indictment of the minister. Further to that, the whistle-blower characterized the minister's actions, among other things, as corrupt and deceitful. The minister has a lot to answer for.

Let me again say that 400 million tax dollars were improperly spent from the green slush fund. That \$400 million is only scratching the surface of the corruption that likely took place beyond the conflicts that have been identified. So massive is this scandal that the former deputy minister of industry was recorded as saying, "It was free money. That is almost a sponsorship-scandal level kind of giveaway." That was before the report of the Auditor General. Based upon the findings of the Auditor General, the green slush fund scandal is significantly bigger than the sponsorship scandal.

In the face of corruption, self-dealing and conflicts, it is enough obstruction and enough delay. It is time for accountability. It is time to ensure that those who abused positions of power are held to account. To that end, as a step in doing that, it is necessary for the government to abide by the order of Parliament and turn over all relevant documents to the RCMP in the face of this corruption. It is long past due to call in the Mounties.

● (1255)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important to correct some of the misinformation being provided by members opposite. To try to give the false impression that the government does not care about tax dollars is simply wrong.

We have had direct ministerial involvement in resolving the issue, and we have not seen resistance at the committee stage, where we have seen even more accountability on the issue. We are working co-operatively with the Auditor General of Canada in regard to this.

What we are really dealing with today from the Speaker's ruling is the blurring between parliamentary supremacy and judicial independence. The Conservative Party of Canada believes that it can take any file, get information from it and hand it directly to the police, negating any responsibilities to the charter. Does the member have any issue with taking that kind of responsibility?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, when the member claims that the government has been co-operative all along, he is uttering a falsehood. I have been involved, along with the member for South Shore—St. Margarets, in trying to get to the bottom of the corruption, and every step of the way, the Liberals have voted to block and obstruct the ability of various committees to do their work. They have voted against every motion to produce documents, for example.

The minister failed to fire the board. The minister dragged his feet in finally taking any action. Only when the Auditor General released her damning report did he see fit to fire the board. With respect to the inaction of the government, do not take my word for it; take the word of the whistle-blower who called the minister's actions corrupt and deceitful.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the order of the House to produce documents was made on June 10. If I am not mistaken, today is September 27. That is a rather long time, and yet the principle is clear, is it not? The House can request any document that it deems appropriate to request.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks of a government that does not give the House the documents it should, when the government must be accountable to the House. If my colleague's party takes office one day, will it do the same thing or will it give the House the documents it requests?

[*English*]

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, what it demonstrates is the total and utter contempt that the government has for Parliament and for the supremacy of Parliament.

We have Liberal members challenging the validity of a Speaker's ruling. They are trying to defend what is tantamount to the blatant obstruction of a clear and unequivocal order of the House. I would note that it is not an isolated incident. This, again, is part of a pattern of the Liberal government, which, for instance, blocked the production of documents relating to the major national security scandal at the Winnipeg lab, forcing the Speaker of the House at the time to go to court.

It is part of a pattern of cover-up and corruption by a rotten and corrupt Liberal government.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that speech was a little rich coming from the member. This is a member who has shown to have very little moral authority. In fact, he is one of the only members in this House who has had to have his statements taken out of Hansard by a committee because they were found to be so offensive.

Realistically, he is part of a party that has been plagued by scandal after scandal. He talks about the release of documents, but when the Harper government was asked to release documents on the Kairos scandal, the Bev Oda "not" scandal, they prorogued Parliament.

From my perspective sitting in the NDP, I look at all the moral failings of the Liberal government, but I certainly do not see a solution with the Conservatives.

● (1300)

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, talk about pathetic. The member has exposed herself for propping up the Liberal government and proving how phony of a display it was when her leader ripped up the agreement and then turned around the next day and said maybe he would prop up the government. Then, sure enough, when he and the NDP had an opportunity to vote non-confidence, they propped up the government.

Here we have massive corruption involving \$400 million that improperly went out the door, and instead of holding the government to account, the member for Edmonton Strathcona has spent her time heckling me and is now using PMO talking points to deflect attention and protect her coalition friends, the Liberals.

*Privilege*

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, could the member elaborate on the level and scale of some of the issues that have been talked about in the House? Our colleague from Nova Scotia indicated in his speech earlier today that roughly \$330 million is being abused versus about \$42 million from the old ad scam days of the Liberal government. Could the member just put into perspective how much damage this has done to taxpayers' money?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, to break it down, the member correctly noted that \$330 million went out the door and involved conflicts of interest of board members. Not only were those cases of conflicts of interest, but in many instances, they were straight-up violations of the SDTC act, which provides that no board member shall in any way profit from the foundation. In addition to that, somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$70 million improperly went out the door in violation of agreements that SDTC had with ISED, which the Minister of Industry is responsible for overseeing and failed to enforce.

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my interest is the constitutional aspects of what is happening today. The RCMP and the Auditor General have expressed concerns about the blurring of the line in the separation of powers between the different branches of the government.

The hon. colleague is a lawyer by profession, if I am not wrong. With his legal background, can he tell us what our law enforcement agencies, like the RCMP, can do if they think they need a particular document? Is there anything that bars them from getting access to the document through a legal process?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, what the order of the House required the government to do was turn over all relevant documents to the RCMP. When corruption is identified, it is appropriate to turn over that evidence to the RCMP. The RCMP can do what it wishes and pursue what it wishes based on the documents, which should have been sent to the RCMP months ago but were not thanks to the government's obstruction.

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to note some of the testimony from one of the SDTC employees, who said at committee:

...I think the current government is more interested in protecting themselves and protecting the situation from being a public nightmare. They would rather protect wrongdoers and financial mismanagement than have to deal with a situation like SDTC in the public sphere.

Could my colleague elaborate on that testimony?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, the member is quite right. I highlighted the whistle-blower's testimony in my speech. Not only did the whistle-blower say that, but the whistle-blower said that the minister acted corruptly and deceptively, and that the minister was more interested in damage control. It demonstrates that the government and the minister were complicit in the corruption at SDTC and that the minister is wholly unfit to serve in the role that he carries.

• (1305)

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, here we go again. The NDP-Liberal government, after nine years, is finding itself in another situation.

I do not know if I hear the sound of a pager beeping, but maybe the member can quiet it—

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, that is a disgusting comment and he should be asked to retract it. It is clearly referring to the pagers that were used as weapons and took the lives of innocent people, including children. He should apologize for that, but he should also apologize for the slander he used in the chamber yesterday.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I heard a lot of debate going on while the hon. member had the floor. I will let the hon. member retract that last comment before he continues.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, it is withdrawn.

The NDP is desperate to cover up for the Liberals, whom it has been propping up. All the while, their friends have been lining their pockets. NDP members, like the member from Edmonton who cannot manage to keep her voice down, have done nothing to raise their voice for Canadians who are suffering after nine years of their support for the government, which has seen corruption time after time. The member from Edmonton has done nothing to advocate for the millions of Canadians who are now using the food bank, a third of whom are children.

We hear that the NDP is supposed to fight for the downtrodden and those who need a hand up, but we have seen it turn its back on workers, on Canadians and on the hungry, and the member from Edmonton has led the charge to prop up the government that has the worst record on standing up for vulnerable Canadians. It is absolutely shameful. This is a great example, what we find ourselves in the House talking about today as a result of the member's support for the government. The NDP is allowing for hundreds of millions of dollars to line the pockets of insiders.

What does the government do as soon as it is ordered by the House to produce documents? Of course, we find that the government is turning its back on its obligation to the sacred institution of Parliament, refusing an order to produce the documents. Why is that? Well, of course, the Liberals got caught stacking a board with their friends, like the chair of the SDTC board, a friend of the Prime Minister, Annette Verschuren. What did their friend do when she got put into this place of trust, a place of privilege? She lined her pockets and the pockets of her friends, and we see that there was a finding of guilt by the Ethics Commissioner.

It is like Groundhog Day every time we talk about scandals and corruption with the Liberals. The Liberal Prime Minister is the first in Canadian history to be found guilty twice of having broken Canada's ethics laws. It is unbelievable, but that is the state of the NDP-Liberal government. It is said that a fish rots from the head down, and that is what we have seen with multiple ministers in the NDP-Liberal government who were found to have broken the law.



When it comes to the office of the Ethics Commissioner, the Prime Minister's buddy, now the public safety minister, had been found to have broken the law. However, when given the chance, when the Ethics Commissioner's office was vacated, what did the Liberals do? They appointed his sister-in-law to take over the Ethics Commissioner's office.

Every single time they get the chance to do the right thing, and we can set our watch to it, they do the absolute opposite. There is the international development minister, who was the failed housing minister; the trade minister; and the former finance minister, and the conflicts of interest go on and on.

The Liberals' solution to the economic vandalism they have perpetrated on this country, after nine years, is that they find a buddy of the Prime Minister. It is not a buddy like David Johnston of the Trudeau Foundation, who was the Prime Minister's neighbour and ski buddy and whose reputation the Liberals wanted to use to whitewash their failures to call out, detect and disrupt foreign interference in our democracy, like they did with David Johnston. It is not that kind of friend; it is a friend like Mark "carbon tax" Carney, and we could call him conflict of interest Carney, but it is almost synonymous with everyone who associates themselves with the Liberals. The conflicts of interest just follow.

● (1310)

It was within just days of the Liberals' naming Mark "carbon tax" Carney as the de facto finance minister that the Prime Minister's Office had taken the named finance minister and Deputy Prime Minister and started strategic leaks about how they had lost confidence in her. However, instead of firing her, they just appointed some man who is a friend of the Prime Minister and who shares his ideological bent to tax Canadians just for the crime of trying to feed themselves, heat their home and put gas in their car to get to medical appointments and to their jobs.

Mark "carbon tax" Carney has a buddy who is the head of a company called Telesat. Within days of Carney's being named as the new economic adviser to the Prime Minister, his buddy at Telesat gets \$2.14 billion, tax dollars. One would say that is enough of a scandal to put an end to the latest conflicted appointment, and one would wonder why the conflicts of interest of Carney are not under the purview of the same rules that designated public office holders have.

They are paying him through the Liberal Party to avoid the necessary disclosure that would have also revealed to Canadians that his company, of which he is the chair, Brookfield Asset Management, is going to benefit substantially from changes to the mortgage rules that the government made a day after the last announcement it made that was conflicted, on Telesat.

The Liberals are going to put more burden on Canadians with their changes to mortgage insurance. They have a terrible supply problem in the housing market, but they did not announce some program to solve supply. No government has ever spent so much to achieve so little as they have on housing. What did they do? They decided to increase demand.

Why on earth would they take measures to increase demand in housing during a housing supply crisis? Of course, the company of

### *Privilege*

the Prime Minister's new economic adviser, Mark "carbon tax" Carney, stands to benefit financially from it. This is within just days of his being appointed. We have to wonder why the Liberals would not bring him under the umbrella of the conflict of interest regime. It is because everyone they bring under it gets found guilty of breaking it.

When we look to have audits in situations like the \$60-million arrive scam, let us canvass the government benches on how the Liberals voted on having the Auditor General investigate their scandal to support Liberal insiders' grift to the tune of millions of dollars from Canadians. I am not hearing the heckles now from them about how they all voted in favour of that audit, because they did not. They voted against having the Auditor General investigate. Shame on them.

What did we find out? There was no value for money; they wasted taxpayer dollars on an app that ultimately did not work and wrongly forced 10,000 people under house arrest for weeks. Then the Liberals' buddies, the two yo-yos from GC Strategies operating out of a basement, added no value for Canadians.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Are you going to defend the yo-yos?

● (1315)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, what we are witnessing is a litany of character assassinations on different fronts.

The issue is that the member is not necessarily being relevant to the issue of the production of papers. That is what we are supposed to be debating. We are not supposed to be engaging in the character assassination of everyone who comes to his mind who happens not to be a Conservative.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes has the floor. I would caution the hon. member to stay as relevant as possible.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, they would have to have character for it to be assassinated.

We hear from the parliamentary secretary always the full-court press to try to deflect from the failures of the government to exercise its fiduciary responsibility to Canadians. It is an absolute failure in that responsibility.

What is the connection between the Liberals' billion-dollar green slush fund, with which they allowed hundreds of millions of dollars to go out the door illegally, in contravention of the contribution agreement, and the \$60 million arrive scam, or the Prime Minister's being found to have broken the law, or the frontbench ministers over there being found to have broken the law?

*Privilege*

What is the connection to the WE scandal? What is the connection to conflict of interest Carney, Mark “carbon tax” Carney? What is the connection to the unwillingness of the government to recognize the will of Canadians? Of course the connection is that every time the Liberals are given the chance to do the right thing, they do the wrong thing, and that could not be more evident than it is with the motion we are dealing with.

My hon. colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable moved an amendment to the motion that the Liberals take great umbrage at, and it is very telling. They are telling on themselves when they do not support it. What is the partisan attack or the character assassination they are worried about? Let us read how mean-spirited the amendment is: “that the following witnesses be ordered to appear before the committee separately for two hours each”. Then it lists a series of government ministers.

They do not want the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry. They do not want the Clerk of the Privy Council; the Auditor General; the commissioner of the RCMP; the Deputy Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development; the law clerk and parliamentary counsel of the House of Commons; the acting president of Sustainable Development Technology Canada; or a panel consisting of the board of Sustainable Development Technology Canada.

Why do the Liberals not want them to testify? Are they afraid of what they are going to say? Are they going to learn from the parliamentary law clerk that Parliament absolutely has the unfettered authority to order exactly what it did, the production of the documents to be transmitted to the RCMP? That is what they are going to find out from the parliamentary law clerk, but they are terrified of it.

Are the Liberals going to find out from ISED that their minister and their officials did not actually take action on the corruption at Sustainable Development Technology Canada, the billion-dollar green slush fund, until after Conservatives initiated a full-court press against them? That is what we are going to hear.

We are going to hear recordings of one of their officials describing it as “sponsorship...level” of corruption. That brought down a Liberal government, so maybe that is what they are worried about, the corruption and scandals that have been identified by departmental officials in their own government. Corruption is the theme, and when the member for Windsor is looking for a new job, he can actually read the AG's report and see what they found out.

They found out that they allowed it to happen, and I think about the hundreds of millions of dollars they said were for one thing but were really for another, which is the case with so many things with the current government. It is like their carbon tax, which does not reduce emissions but does increase poverty, and does not help our environment but does lengthen the lines at our food banks, their use having doubled after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government.

That is the legacy of the member for Windsor: record lines at food banks; Canadians' not being able to afford their mortgage, not being able to afford their rent and not being able to afford to put gas in their car; and food banks' having to extend their hours so people who have two jobs can come in between their two jobs to pick up food at the food bank.

• (1320)

It is shameful that when the Liberals have the opportunity to save a dollar by not letting it go into the pockets of insiders, they are too beholden to the Prime Minister, twice found guilty of breaking the law himself, to stand up and say they need to do the right thing; the documents need to be transmitted and sent to the RCMP. The RCMP has the option to investigate or not, which is its independent right, but why are they so afraid to send the documents?

The reason we know so much about this is that whistle-blowers came forward and exposed the corruption under the Liberals, who have been desperate to stop it from coming to light. It is not enough to have the Auditor General issue a damning report. It is not enough to have the Ethics Commissioner find the Liberals' hand-picked chair in a conflict of interest. That is not enough for them. Why? It is because it always comes down to helping Liberal insiders. It is incredible the lengths they will go to to protect those who need it the least instead of those who need it the most, Canadians, after nine years of the most unethical government in Canadian history.

Over the summer, any of the Liberals who were brave enough to knock on doors, and I am sure the member opposite was not, would have heard the same thing we heard, which is that Canadians are exhausted and see the government for exactly what it is. It is tired and costly. It has raised their taxes. It has seen crime run rampant. It has put the rights of convicted criminals ahead of those of bona fide victims. It spends more targeting those who follow the law, to the tune of tens of millions of dollars, while spending little on those who seek to engage in human trafficking, weapons trafficking and drug trafficking. That is the legacy after nine years.

There is good news, of course, which is that common-sense Conservatives have been doing their homework on the Liberals and the institutions they have corrupted, like Sustainable Development Technology Canada. Liberals will ask, “Wasn't SDTC started by Conservatives?” Yes, it was, and in 2017, it received an audit by the Auditor General and got a clean bill of health. What happened between 2017 and 2023? The Liberal Prime Minister and his accomplice, the leader of the NDP, allowed for Liberal insiders to ransack the place, push the organizational objectives aside and allow well-connected Liberal insiders to get ahead. That is not something we are going to abide. That is why we dug in.

We should look at the work that members have done to bring this to the House for a vote. However, the Liberals are so illiberal and undemocratic that when the House of Commons voted to order something to happen, the Liberals said they did not actually need to do it. What does that tell us about their respect for the rule of law, for Canadians and for the democracy that each of us has been elected into to represent Canadians here in this place? They certainly do not think much about it. They do not think much about the effect it is going to have on Canadians, unless of course those Canadians are their well-connected friends.

*Privilege*

The motion and the amendments that have been put forward are incredibly reasonable, as was the original production order. They fall entirely inside the bounds of what this House is allowed to do and must do to ensure the confidence of Canadians in our democratic institutions.

The NDP and the Liberals can flail and wail all they like, but common-sense Conservatives are going to continue to demand accountability and answers for Canadians. When we talk about stopping the crime, we are talking about stopping these guys, because life was not like this before the NDP-Liberals and it is not going to be like it after them.

• (1325)

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will take this opportunity to ask the member, since he is here and has unfortunately displayed that he is willing to diminish himself and the House with his language, if he will take the opportunity at this time to apologize and withdraw his comments levied at me yesterday that were completely unparliamentary. He has the opportunity to do the right thing.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, if ministers of the government are so ashamed of the praise and accolades their government gets, then they should not be members of that government. They should resign. It is shameful that the government's record is one that it was thanked by Hamas at a time when innocent civilians were attacked in the largest terrorist attack in modern history. That is a part of the legacy of the government. If any of those ministers are ashamed that Hamas sent them a “thank you” card, then they should resign.

**The Deputy Speaker:** On a point of order, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, you have taken the issue under advisement. I think the member should be made aware that the minister he is referring to is of Jewish faith and, given her background, how much of a personal issue this is. A simple apology would would put this to rest.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I ruled on this point of order earlier. When the hon. member brought the issue forward, I said we would go back and look at Hansard and come back to the chamber on it.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** There have been three points of order on it since I have been speaking—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have the floor. Let me finish talking, then I will recognize the hon. member.

I said I would go back and look at it. I allowed the member to ask that question. The member is answering the question that was posed to him. We are still going to go back and look at what is going on.

If the hon. member accepted that I allowed the question to be asked, then everyone should allow the answer to be given.

I cut the hon. member off before he was finished, so I recognize the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, on a point of order.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, since I have been on my feet, you have recognized three separate points of order on something you have already undertaken a point of order on. I am wondering if the Chair can let me know how many more points of order we are going to hear during my time. The minister asked a question and I gave an answer.

I will also note that throughout my speech, the same members persisted in audible interruptions so loud that you heard me respond to them multiple times, but you did not bring the House to order. The knife cuts both ways. Let us deal with the matter at hand, unless we are going to continue the never-ending point of order session you are presiding over.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I was giving the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes the full opportunity to answer that as he saw fit. I was not the one standing on points of order and stopping it. I allowed that.

In the House, when somebody stands on a point of order, I have to recognize them. It is in the Standing Orders. I can cut members off when I feel they are not points of order, which I did. I just want to move on.

I believe the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets is standing on a point of order.

• (1330)

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Mr. Speaker, since those were all points of order, I note that a minute and a half was taken off the question and answer period. I would ask that the clock on questions and answers be restored to 10 minutes for this member.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will give the minute and a half back to the hon. member, and we will go on to the next question.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is always good to refresh one's memory. It is particularly important because Quebec's motto is “Je me souviens”, or I remember.

In his speech on September 16, the opposition leader and member for Carleton questioned whether we could have confidence in our institutions' representatives, and that worries me. More specifically, he questioned whether parliamentarians should have confidence in the Auditor General of Canada. The Conservative Party has a peculiar habit of blaming everyone and pointing fingers. However, when it comes to finding solutions, it is none of their concern. That is not particularly inspiring from the people who want to take power and govern in the near future.

My question for my colleague is quite simple. His leader once demanded that the governor of Canada's central bank be fired because of inflation. Now, he is questioning whether we should have confidence in the Auditor General of Canada regarding the production of certain documents and access to them. Can my colleague tell me clearly whether or not he has complete confidence in the Office of the Auditor General of Canada in this matter?

*Privilege**[English]*

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, what we have seen from the Auditor General time and time again is that, after nine years, the NDP-Liberals cannot seem to manage the government. We do not think they could manage the finances of a lemonade stand appropriately, that is, of course, unless it was a Liberal insider running the till and jamming their pockets with the nickels of the neighbourhood children who tried to buy a glass, every time.

In this case, we are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars that the Auditor General uncovered as part of the grift and conflicts of interest that the government presided over and then tried to sweep under the rug. We kept hearing from the minister responsible that everything was fine and that the Liberals had the situation well in hand. However, after sustained pressure and the audit they never wanted to happen, they finally shut down the corrupted organization, only to shift all of its business, to hide it under the auspices of the very government that allowed that corruption to occur.

We thank the Auditor General for her work in helping to expose to Canadians the inability of the Liberals to properly manage the finances of our nation or any of the subsidiaries of the Government of Canada.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all of my colleagues who have been speaking on this corruption that has been exposed and that needs to be escalated. We are hearing from the Liberals, again, another cover-up, that they are trying to hide behind all sorts of excuses rather than turn these documents back over to Parliament, as has been requested and as has been ruled on in a question of privilege by the Speaker himself.

I would ask my colleague if he could talk to the fact that this is just another example of ongoing Liberal corruptions and cover-ups, like the WE scandal, the ad scam and the arrive scam. Why do they not just come forward with the information? Is it because there are actually people in cabinet who are benefiting personally from all of this cash that has gone missing in the hands of Liberal cronies and friends?

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, let us take a look at some of what the Auditor General found. We can draw some conclusions, of course, about whose pockets that money went into.

The Auditor General found that for 10 ineligible projects, it was \$58,748,613, and in 90 cases where conflict of interest policies were not followed, it was \$75,974. For projects without ensuring that contribution agreement terms were met, it was \$58 million. Another 96 cases, where conflict of interest policies were followed, was \$259 million. The numbers do not lie when we look at the corruption that was allowed to fester under the Liberals.

We have to ask ourselves what was in it for them. What was in it for the Liberals and their friends? Of course, it was their financial betterment, their personal enrichment. This was all about helping Liberal insiders while Canadians have been struggling to feed themselves. It is a shameful legacy, but it is one that, as the member rightly pointed out, follows on the heels of the \$60-million arrive scam or the \$1-billion WE scandal and, of course, the other cases where the Prime Minister was found to be outside of the law or to

have broken the law, just like the long history that includes the ad scam, of course.

I think that goes to the heart of it. The reason the Liberals do not want any sunlight or disinfectant to be applied here is because the last time there was a massive scandal of this scale, it brought down a Liberal government, a tired, corrupt Liberal government. What is old is new again. It looks like they have the very same concerns about this multiple-hundred-million dollar scandal.

• (1335)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can honestly say that, over the years, the member really has not changed. His priority has been to amplify the issue of character assassination and he has got it down to a fine art. I give full credit on that account. The issue I have is this: What about the Charter of Rights and our Constitution?

Does the member not recognize that what his party is calling for is information to be passed directly from here to the RCMP? We would go out and get the information and then we would hand it directly over to the RCMP. That is, in fact, what Conservatives are asking for. It does not matter what the charter says or if the RCMP or the Auditor General are uncomfortable with the request.

Does he not think he should at least have some support outside the Conservative Party, from agencies like the Auditor General and the RCMP?

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, I did not hear any sections of the charter cited for the parliamentary secretary's attempt to obstruct a parliamentary investigation into corruption in his own government. However, the documents exist and they belong to the Government of Canada. Therefore, if the parliamentary secretary is saying that what is required is a warrant by the police to kick in the office doors of cabinet ministers and the Prime Minister and parliamentary secretaries to get the truth for Canadians, we do not need to do that because the House has ordered the production of documents.

The member talks about what is legal. The legal authority rests with this place, and is unfettered, to send for people and papers. The requirement for those papers is very simple. They need to exist and they need to be inside Canada. If they belong to the government, we can get them. If they belong to a private corporation or a private citizen, we can get them.

Is it in the public interest that we do this? Absolutely, it is. It is hundreds of millions of dollars of corruption that the member for Winnipeg North has allowed to happen under the current Prime Minister, the only prime minister in Canadian history who has been found guilty of breaking the law, and that is the legacy after nine years of the NDP-Liberals. We make no apologies for getting the truth for Canadians about the government that has allowed the theft of Canadians' tax dollars to help out Liberal insiders. We are going to fight tirelessly to get accountability for Canadians, and we are not going to make any apologies for it.

*Privilege*

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in the really insightful speech from the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, who has worked very hard on this scandal, he mentioned the Auditor General who took a small sample of the transactions of the insider Liberal board members and found that 82% were corrupted.

The interesting thing is that for a year and a half we have had lots of studies and public hearings on this and yet, none of the main broadcast media, CTV or CBC, has had one story on it. I would like the member to comment about the ability or willingness of the media to do its job, which it does not seem to be doing. Why might it not be doing the job of covering this Liberal scandal and cover-up?

• (1340)

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, we have the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets, who has worked tirelessly to get answers and accountability for Canadians. We owe him a debt of gratitude for that. He is absolutely right. The numbers that I talk about are just a small sample of cases that they looked at with respect to the corrupted \$1-billion green slush fund.

It is interesting that the member brings up media. We had the case of CTV this week, which was caught maliciously editing a clip of the Leader of the Opposition to create a fake story about something that was not said. That shows something about priorities. We talk about other things that the government spends Canadians' money on. That includes, of course, massive media subsidies. People can draw their conclusions about why heavily subsidized Liberal media would not want to call out the corruption that has occurred after nine years of the current government.

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I stand here, proud to represent, stand with and stand for the people of Battle River—Crowfoot.

It is unfortunate that, after nine years of the Liberals leading this country, we are once again debating a scandal of unbelievable proportions. I want to talk a little about the circumstances that led us to the SDTC situation, and then I want to dive into why documents matter, what this violation of the privilege of members of this place is, and why that should be so concerning to Canadians.

On Sustainable Development Technology Canada, the Auditor General did a report that found that the Liberals, the Prime Minister and the ministers had turned it into a slush fund for Liberal insiders. A recording of a senior civil servant slammed the “outright incompetence” of the government, which gave more than 390 million dollars' worth of contracts inappropriately.

To put that into context, \$390 million is an astounding amount of money, especially at a time when Canadians are hurting. This year, we will see more than two million Canadians forced to visit a food bank. In my own constituency, I speak to many not-for-profits, hosted out of churches or community centres, and local food banks.

The actions of the government, such as the implementation of the carbon tax and the mismanagement of the economy, have led to increased inflation, among so many other things. Canadians, in record numbers, are being forced to visit food banks. I see some of the numbers provided to me by local food banks, often run by volunteers, and they are absolutely heartbreaking.

I have heard from some of the folks who run one of the local food banks, and they were stunned that it is not just folks who have fallen on hard times who are being forced to visit the food bank, and it is not just those who have lost their jobs who are being forced to visit the food bank. In some cases, it is people from around the community who simply have no other options. Their credit cards are maxed out, and they do not have anything left at home to feed their children. They were, in those cases, forced to visit a food bank. That is the legacy of the Liberals.

We have 25% of Canadians, according to reports, facing poverty-like conditions. What is the government's response? It is 390 million dollars' worth of contracts inappropriately given out, many of which went to well-connected Liberal insiders. It was \$390 million not going to help Canadians, and not going to grow the economy, but \$390 million, more money than most people could ever imagine, going to well-connected insiders.

The Auditor General found that SDTC gave \$58 million to 10 ineligible projects. The government talks big about the environment, yet it gave \$58 million to projects that were supposedly to help the environment. That was the reason this fund was created. However, it could not demonstrate that there would be an environmental benefit or the development of any green tech.

I know there are many Canadians watching because of the absolute corruption that has been normalized under the Liberal government and the Prime Minister, which has been supported by the NDP.

It is absolutely astounding that, in the midst of a time when the Liberals talk big about the environment, they are giving dollars to projects connected with Liberal insiders that did not even try to explain and did not even try to defend what they were doing as being good for the environment, even though that was why these programs were created. The Auditor General made it clear that the blame for this scandal falls on the government and the industry minister, who did not sufficiently monitor the contracts that were being given to Liberal insiders.

• (1345)

I hear often from members of that side of the House, and I hear from Canadians as well, asking what we would do differently. I am proud to stand as part of a party that takes governing seriously and that would fight corruption and incompetence, especially the sort of incompetence that leads to this type of gross mismanagement scandal to the tune of \$390 million being misappropriated.

### *Privilege*

I want to talk about why the finding of a violation of privilege is such an important issue. I believe that many people outside this place and in fact, certainly from some of the questions I have heard from members of other parties in this place, some in this place also, do not take seriously Parliament's constitutional role. Let me unpack that a little bit for the benefit of those watching and explain why documents matter.

It is less about whether or not there are physical documents we can read from; that is not the whole point here. The point is that there is an institution that is Parliament, which in our Westminster system of governance is the supreme authority of our country. As parliamentarians, we are that which makes up a Parliament. I believe that there are two Liberal vacancies with by-elections forthcoming, and at the rate at which the Liberals are losing seats, it will certainly be interesting to watch what those election results are.

The MPs who make up Parliament have unfettered access to call for documents and for people to come as witnesses. We talk about that a lot in the context of committee, and it is a key element of the constitutional role that this place plays in our country. We cannot dismiss the importance, because that is the cornerstone of the democratic system we have. It is this place, the only place in the country, I would add, that is truly representative of our country. Every square inch of the nation of Canada is represented in this place and only in this place. That is why Parliament is given such significant latitude to be able to do things like call for documents.

The government refused to be transparent and provide the documents in question. Its members gave a whole litany of excuses. In fact I found it very interesting that when the House leader was speaking very negatively about the Speaker's ruling that has led to this debate, quite astonishingly, she pivoted away from saying that she was disputing the ruling but said that she was dismayed at the ruling.

I would suggest that any member of this place who is dismayed at the constitutional authority of what Parliament is meant to be needs to go back and look at the history, the construction, of the constitutional reality and the traditions that make up what this place is. It has to come down to the very idea of where the buck stops. It stops with Parliament.

I want to highlight something in the context of what I have just described, because there has been, under the Liberals, a concerning trend of wanting to distance the executive function of government from Parliament. I understand that it is inconvenient that the Liberals do not have unfettered power to do anything they want; it is an inconvenient thing they are forced up against. I have seen, over the last close to five years that I have had the honour of serving in this place and serving the people of Battle River—Crowfoot, how the Liberals have been able to sign deals, have backroom handshakes and have the whole deal with other opposition parties in order to have a functional majority.

However, Canadians sent a minority Parliament to Ottawa in the last election, and this place has the ability to do things like demand documents; it has the full constitutional right to do so. It is outlined very clearly that this is in fact the case. When members of the government are making excuses and figuring out ways around this

place, it is deeply concerning and should cause concern to every Canadian, regardless of what political party they are a part of.

● (1350)

This is not a partisan issue; this is a Canadian issue.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, the member from Winnipeg seems to be laughing when I say that the very foundation of our institutions is not a partisan issue, and therein lies the problem. The very foundation of our democratic system is taken so flippantly by members who pursue their personal politics. As we have seen outlined in the course of this SDTC scandal, back in 2018, when former minister Navdeep Bains did not like that the chair of the board of SDTC was criticizing things the government was doing, the chair was replaced, contrary to advice from those within his own department. We have seen a continuation of that political manipulation since, which has led to this scandal. A very clear timeline has been laid out. The Liberals do not take seriously Parliament's role.

I understand that they would rather an audience than an opposition. They would rather have carte blanche to do whatever they want and pursue their personal, political, financial and other interests. However, that is not how this place works. MPs are sent here to represent their constituents.

I will speak to those on the Liberal backbench. They have an obligation to not simply prop up their Prime Minister. They are sent here as members of Parliament. We are on the ballot as members of Parliament. They will stand to be judged in the next election by Canadians as members of Parliament, and they will have to answer, just like the NDP and the Bloc, for supporting this type of corruption.

I would encourage them to take seriously the role that this place is meant to play, because as we have seen, there is a distancing. With the way the Liberals operate, they want unfettered control to do whatever they want, and they treat Parliament only as an inconvenience. That is truly a national scandal that is eroding the trust that Canadians have in their institutions.

As a proud Canadian, as somebody who has grown up in this country and spent a lot of time being involved as a volunteer and staff member, and as a passionate politico, I have watched and studied a lot about government and other institutions, such as United Kingdom's Parliament, and about the history of our democratic system, how like systems around the world have developed over the course of the last number of centuries and some of the history that goes much further back than that. As it used to be, while we may not have liked or agreed with the person in charge of the country, just as we may not like the current Liberal Prime Minister or may not have liked a previous Conservative prime minister or previous Liberal prime minister, we could respect the offices and institutions. It is troubling that, increasingly, I hear from Canadians that they are losing trust in the institutions we have. This is from the actions of the Liberals, who are bent on trying to keep the truth from coming out and, in this case, refusing to provide documents. Now it is the authority of the House and a violation of privilege that have led to the motion and amendment we are debating today, which I am proud to support. It comes down to that very simple choice.

Part of the challenge is that the erosion of trust and the normalization of scandal have led many Canadians to question the legitimacy of much to do with government, and that is going to take hard work to restore. I am so proud to be a part of a party committed to doing the hard work required to restore trust in our institutions and ensure that this place, Parliament, is respected. I would suggest that the very root of where we are today on this motion related to SDTC is these documents. These documents matter. The heart of our parliamentary institutions, our democracy, is at stake, and we have seen continual attempts by the Liberals to try to erode it.

• (1355)

This adds to a litany of scandals that is quite astounding. I talked about the normalization of scandals. As soon as the ruling was delivered yesterday evening, I went through and reflected on some of the scandals. I have been a member of the ethics committee for a significant portion of this and the last Parliament. We are, of course, debating the document production related to SDTC.

Prior to this, there was the arrive scam, with \$60-plus million on an app that was budgeted to cost less than \$100,000, and sole-source contracts. We are seeing a massive mismanagement of those contracts today. We see that they seem to be going to friends and insiders. As well, there is the fact that during a time of crisis, the government would, instead of working in the best interests of Canadians, choose to enrich its friends. It is absolutely shameful.

There was the WE Charity scandal. Again, in the midst of what was a national crisis, the government chose its friends over well-established protocols that could have easily been expanded. There is the Canada summer jobs program. Instead of using a program like that and expanding it, the government was going to give \$1 billion to its friends, who had given significant benefits and paid, to the tunes of hundreds of thousands of dollars, close members of the Prime Minister's family. I would remind the House that the Prime Minister went as far as to prorogue Parliament to keep the names and the amounts of those payments from coming out. I was on the ethics committee at the time.

### *Privilege*

Further, we have the SNC-Lavalin scandal, where the only reason that the RCMP did not lay charges against the sitting Prime Minister is because they determined it was not in the public interest of Canada. Imagine, there has been such a deterioration of our institutions that it has led to it being deemed in public interest that the Prime Minister should not be dragged in front of a judge.

There was the Aga Khan Island trip. There are the indigenous contracts, which I know are being studied at committee, as there seem to be Liberal insiders who are manipulating that process, taking money that should be going to first nations here in this country.

We have the massive growth of consultants. In fact, there have been some very interesting editorials of late that say that it has become a consulting capital and that the only way to get anything done is to hire the right consultants. That is not how a government should be run.

There have been billions of dollars in handouts. I cannot help but think of the ventilators that went to a former Liberal MP and ended up in a scrapyard, to the tune of, again, hundreds of millions of dollars.

Where does this leave us? Once again, MPs will be given a choice, to support accountability and, I would go further, support the very foundation of what our democratic system is supposed to be, the idea of parliamentary supremacy. To ensure that we can get the answers, not that Conservatives want, but that Canadians deserve, that's where the rubber hits the road.

I would urge all members, Liberal backbenchers, members of the NDP, members of the Bloc Québécois, and the few independents we have, every MP in this place, to think seriously about the role of Parliament, the principles of parliamentary supremacy, and ensure that we all do our part to combat the corruption and do the hard work required to restore trust in the institutions that Canadians need to be able to trust and look at with respect.

I would urge every member in this place to support this motion, to take seriously our democracy and ensure that that hard work can be done. Let me simply conclude with this, because I have my doubts after nine years of seeing exactly what the Liberal attitude is. When it comes to the hard work of restoring trust, I am proud to be a part of a party that has a plan and the energy.

• (1400)

When the leader of the official opposition, the member for Carleton, is the prime minister, we can do that hard work to restore the trust that is required in our institutions and work on behalf of Canadians, not on behalf of insiders.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my Conservative colleague's attempt to bring this debate into the realm of ethics. I would just like to point out that I taught ethics, political philosophy and democracy for 30 years.

*Privilege*

Let us be clear. The primary job of a member of Parliament is to hold the government to account, regardless of its political stripe. It makes no difference whether it is a majority or minority government. Our job is to hold the government to account. When the government has a majority, it usually tells us to take a hike. The fact that this is a minority government helps us enormously, because it means we can end up in a situation like the one we are in today.

Let us be clear. The government made a mistake. When the House votes to demand that documents be tabled, they must be tabled. An investigation will eventually be needed to get to the bottom of this. If the RCMP does not want the documents, it does not have to accept them. However, we need to have a say in the matter.

I have a question for my colleague. If there were an election tomorrow, the Conservative Party would form a majority government. In ethics, we say that a principle is a real principle when the choice is made to put it into practice.

If my colleague ends up sitting on the other side of the aisle, will he still stand up and staunchly defend the principle of tabling documents, as he is doing now, or will he play the Conservative government game and tell opposition members to take a hike?

[*English*]

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, his background and the context he provided. I would suggest that all members of this place, especially the Liberals, could maybe take lessons from him. Even though he is a member of a separatist party, he certainly has a better grasp on the role of a member of Parliament than the backbenchers of the Liberal Party. It comes to the very foundation of what we are as parliamentarians. I tell students who I speak with, and I speak with them on a regular basis, that it is one of the coolest things about Canadian democracy.

I would ask this question. How many votes, and I cannot say their names, but I would name the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, other MPs and myself as well, do we get to cast on election day? It seems like a trick question, but the answer is one. We all get to cast one vote as Canadians. Likewise, when somebody is elected, we get to occupy the honour of one seat in this place.

I ask this question. How many seats does the Prime Minister occupy, does the Leader of the Opposition occupy? Again, it is one seat.

It is the duty of every member of Parliament, regardless of their political background, regardless of their history, to take seriously that obligation, as MPs, to stand up for the people who sent them here, to be the Parliament, in this case the 44th Parliament, to stand up, regardless of one's political interests because that is the point.

• (1405)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is made up of a foundation of pillars. Democracy is supreme. The parliamentary proceedings that take place here are no doubt very much supreme, but so is justice. When we have an independent judicial system and independent institutions like the RCMP, those two are pillars that make Canada the country it is today. This Conservative motion, which says that we are going to start collecting information to hand directly over to the RCMP,

many would argue is a violation of our Constitution and our charter, which are part of our Canadian identity.

Does the member not recognize that there is a fine line that has been crossed by the Conservative Party of Canada? We could talk about Conservative scandals, or whatever kinds of scandals members want, but at the end of the day, the Conservative Party has crossed the line.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, the irony in the statement that the member just made is that he talked about Parliament being supreme but then went on to say how Parliament cannot do anything about this, how Parliament should not look for answers, how Parliament should not do anything to uncover the scandal, the corruption and the mismanagement of the Liberals. I find it troubling that the Liberals will, it seems, stop at nothing to cover up the corruption that is being led by the Prime Minister, the industry minister and members of the government.

We are not instructing the RCMP on what to do, but the Liberals are suggesting that somehow Conservatives' calling for documents is not part of our jobs as members of Parliament to get to the bottom of a scandal that has cost taxpayers to the tune of \$380-some million. I would encourage the member to ask his constituents whether or not they suggest that Parliament has a role to play in finding answers to where the money went.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, listening to the member for Winnipeg North, every time he gets up, try to cover up Liberal corruption and this scandal is just sickening.

I want to thank the member for Battle River—Crowfoot for his articulation on this. He laid out that it all started with Navdeep Bains, when he was the minister of industry, appointing Liberal cronies that then were able to line their pockets with taxpayer money while the current Minister of Industry willfully turned a blind eye. It looks like he also may have enriched the value of shares of the Minister of Environment, who has stakes in one of the companies that benefited from all the Liberal largesse and corruption.

One whistle-blower who gave testimony said:

I think the current government is more interested in protecting themselves and protecting the situation from being a public nightmare, and they'd rather protect wrongdoers and financial mismanagement than have to deal with a situation like this SDTC and the public sphere.

Is that not actually the definition for Liberal cover-ups and Liberal corruption?

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, my friend from Manitoba understands very well and has rightfully pointed out how the member from Winnipeg North is covering up the corruption. What we have is not Conservative accusations, but the fact that the Auditor General, an independent officer of Parliament, has found egregious mismanagement to the tune of 390 million dollars' worth of contracts given inappropriately.



Conservatives did not do the audit. The Conservatives have demanded that the audit be done. We saw the inconsistencies and how the chair of the fund was getting these contracts and whatnot, so we called in the auditors. The good thing about the Auditor General is that they take politics out of it. The Liberals may not like what the Auditor General found, but the fact is that the Auditor General found that \$390 million was mismanaged and went to Liberal insiders.

Whistle-blowers, in testimony, made it evidently clear that there were activities that would not pass the smell test. They went on to say that the Auditor General surely would find that the mismanagement was true. One whistle-blower suggested that it was a sponsorship scandal era type of scandal when it comes to mismanagement. I would like to quote one whistle-blower, who told the public accounts committee:

Just as I was always confident that the Auditor General would confirm the financial mismanagement at SDTC, I remain equally confident that the RCMP will substantiate the criminal activities that occurred within the organization.

Those are not my words; those are the words of a whistle-blower from within SDTC. That is what the Liberals are trying to cover up.

● (1410)

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

I am pleased to rise today as a member of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. We have the pleasure of working in this committee with our colleagues from the Maritimes to advance the development of new technologies and industry in Canada. We have had the opportunity to debate various issues with our Liberal, NDP and Bloc colleagues and we work in very close collaboration. We are truly trying to advance Canada's economy within this committee.

Today I am obliged to talk about what we discovered when we heard something rather alarming. We found out that there had been some misappropriation at Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC, regarding the green fund. Some people had been appointed to SDTC's board by the Liberals. Those people paid themselves knowing full well that they were in conflict of interest. This has been proven, and not by us.

The Auditor General was the one who discovered that these directors had given large sums of money to their own business, or to organizations they held shares in or had ties with.

I had the opportunity to speak with the former chairperson of SDTC, Annette Verschuren, who appeared before our committee not once but three times at our invitation. The last time I spoke to her, I told her that I had a high school diploma in auto body work. I am a guy who never enjoyed going to school. I graduated from high school with my mother's help and I am grateful to her. That high school diploma in auto body work got me into the workforce. Based on what I learned in school, I always knew that no one can take what does not belong to them, or acquire something through a conflict of interest that they are not entitled to. I always knew that no one should use their relationships for monetary gain or preferen-

### *Privilege*

tial treatment. I do not understand why such a smart, socially-active businesswoman like her could not grasp the position she was in. That is what I said to the former chairperson of SDTC.

This position was actually offered to her by the former minister of industry, Mr. Bains. Unfortunately, Mr. Bains now seems to be suffering from Alzheimer's, because he does not remember appointing her to that position. There was a conflict between these two individuals' different interpretations. Neither of them could remember what was said. No one could tell us how she ended up in that position. To make matters worse, before being appointed, Ms. Verschuren had already received funding thanks to her connections with the fund. She knew full well that by taking the appointment, she would be in a conflict of interest. When I asked if it had occurred to her that she could be in a conflict of interest, she admitted that it had crossed her mind, but that she had not withdrawn from consideration.

● (1415)

The fact that she is no longer sitting on this board of directors would mean that she is no longer accountable. That is interesting, because she and the other board members awarded themselves tens, if not hundreds, of millions of dollars. Those amounts were given to people who were in a clear conflict of interest. I am not the one saying that. It is the Auditor General.

As elected officials, we find ourselves in the House today because of non-compliance with a request that was made by all parliamentarians. Of course, I am talking about the members of the opposition parties, because the government did not want to co-operate in producing documents that would enable us to confirm and verify all these facts. In addition to the projects that these people approved for themselves, the Auditor General identified 10 ineligible projects worth close to \$60 million. On 96 occasions, conflict of interest policies were followed, but in 90 cases, they were not, which means that these people allocated money to themselves.

I want to come back to the fact that I just have a high school diploma and a diploma in auto body repair. I was 18 years old when I finished high school, but I already knew that this is not how things should be done. About 10 years ago, I took a course at the Collège des administrateurs de sociétés, Université Laval's college of corporate directors. The first thing we learned about governance was the importance of avoiding conflicts of interest. Imagine if we, as members of Parliament, gave ourselves public dollars belonging to Canadians, either from our MP budget or through other channels. That would be an absolute scandal. In fact, in the past, with the sponsorship scandal, we saw how the Liberals were scheming to help their friends. The same principle applies today.

*Privilege*

It is important that we have access to all the documents, because tens of millions of dollars were given to directors who were in a direct conflict of interest. This money may also have been misspent. The Auditor General actually said herself that \$60 million was allocated to 10 projects that were ineligible. Who were these people who received that money, and why did they receive money from that fund? People can apply for funding from any number of funds in Canada. What is the relationship between the people who received money and the companies in question?

All the documents requested were sent to us completely redacted for reasons of confidentiality. I heard my Liberal colleague say earlier that the documents could simply be handed over to the RCMP. In Canada, all of us here come before the RCMP. We are here to make laws and implement them. It is our privilege to receive these documents. They were requested on June 10. Today is September 27 and we are still waiting. It is a question of privilege.

This is not the first time that the government has concealed information. In 2015, the Liberals boasted that they would be the most transparent government in this country's history. I think it is fairly obvious that this is far from true. It is really unfortunate that we are still talking about this in the House of Commons even now, when, in fact, it is a question of parliamentary privilege.

• (1420)

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I assure my colleague from Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup that I do not have Alzheimer's. I have a very good memory. The motto in Quebec is “Je me souviens”, or “I remember”. I do not trust people who preach to others when things in their own party are not entirely above board.

I would remind my colleague about the G8 and G20 spending scandal. That was not even about people on boards of directors who might have been giving money to Liberal cronies. It was the minister himself who diverted public funds to run ads in his own riding. I am not making it up. We know it. It is in Sheila Fraser's report. She was the auditor general at the time. Thirty-two infrastructure projects were funded in Minister Tony Clement's riding. He is a former Conservative minister. We are talking about \$50 million to make tourist information signs and install public washrooms and build roads in unrelated areas, in connection with the projects for the G8 and G20 summit.

I would like my colleague to tell me how Quebeckers can feel reassured? When the Conservatives were in power, they dipped into public funds to divert money. That was also called out by the then auditor general.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Mr. Speaker, I am also a Quebecker, and my motto is also “Je me souviens”, or “I remember”. I will remember, as will all Quebeckers, that, as we speak, the Bloc Québécois is supporting a centralizing, spendthrift government. The Bloc supported spending hundreds of millions of dollars, billions of dollars, over the past nine years, and particularly over the past four or five. As a result, we now have two million people using food banks.

We will not take any lessons from the Bloc Québécois.

[English]

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague if he does not think that what he is trying to do is counterproductive. I understand that the RCMP wrote to the law clerk of the House of Commons in July saying that it is highly unlikely that any records that they receive through this process could be used in an investigation as it would affect the suspect's Charter of Rights. Does he not understand that the process that is being undertaken now is actually counterproductive to bringing any criminals to justice?

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Mr. Speaker, what is counterproductive is the fact that the Liberals do not want to co-operate and ask all the opposition parties that are here, that are represented in the House, to provide the documents in question. That is what we call counterproductive.

The privilege that we have to be able to access those documents is an extremely important parliamentary privilege. Unfortunately, the Liberals do not want to co-operate. That is very harmful to Canada.

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for highlighting the importance of this question of privilege in this case of conflict of interest.

I would simply like him to explain why transparency is so important to restoring public confidence in the use of limited taxpayer dollars.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and congratulate him on his French. I did not even know he spoke French. That is great news. We have another French speaker in the House of Commons. That is great. I would like to congratulate him. The Bloc Québécois will be happy; we have yet another franco-phone.

My colleague's question is very simple. We have the privilege of being in the House of Commons. We are here to keep an eye on things. As my Bloc Québécois colleague, who taught ethics for 30 years, said earlier, the primary role of parliamentarians is to ensure that the country is well governed. That includes knowing how the public's money is being spent. That is our role. Frankly, it is an absolute priority for the opposition to make sure that the government is doing its job and giving us the information in full “transparency”. I use quotation marks because, obviously, the current government does not know the definition of the word transparency.

• (1425)

[English]

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what the House is debating today is astounding, mind-numbing corruption under a Liberal government kept in power by the NDP.

*Privilege*

[*Translation*]

This government is also supported by the Bloc Québécois.

[*English*]

We are talking about the billion dollar green slush fund, known as Sustainable Development Technology Canada. It was set up in 2001 to provide financial assistance to green technology companies that were looking to be commercialized. This was a worthy objective, and Conservatives favour technological breakthroughs that help the environment. That is the way to do it. We do not support a carbon tax that hurts Canadian companies and Canadians. The carbon tax is a tax plan, not a climate plan. Conservatives have called for a carbon tax election, which the Liberals, Bloc and NDP have said no to, not just to us but to Canadians.

In 2017, the Auditor General produced a report and gave the SDTC a clean bill of health. The SDTC at that time was under the chair who was appointed by the Conservative government. Fast-forward to today. Thanks to whistle-blowers, who had access to information within the government and the SDTC, a web of corruption, of Liberal-friendly individuals and firms, has been exposed, totalling hundreds of millions of dollars. The Auditor General has released a new report examining 226 out of 405 transactions. She found, out of the 226, that 186 of them had conflicts of interest totalling \$330 million, or 82%. Extrapolating from the entire amount that was given out by SDTC, that equals about \$800 million of expenditures that were conflicted.

What do we mean by conflicted? It means that the people on the board who were appointed received personal benefits. Their companies received personal benefits from the transactions. It really undermines a lot of the expenditures that the Liberals make. We have to, as the opposition, as taxpayers, second-guess almost everything that they are doing. We start scratching the surface and wonder about the connection to a Liberal-friendly individual or company. We have seen it throughout. In 2019, the Minister of Industry at the time, Navdeep Bains, appointed a chair who, he was told, had a conflict.

I will continue on the next sitting of the House.

● (1430)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Having reached the expiry of time provided for today's debate, pursuant to an order made earlier today, the House will resume consideration of the privilege motion on Wednesday, October 2.

[*Translation*]

It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Tuesday at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)

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