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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 29, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

• (1005)

[*English*]

DECORUM

The Speaker: I would like to make a brief statement concerning some events that transpired yesterday at the end of the sitting. Those present in person witnessed behaviours that went against the normal expectations in terms of decorum. The last vote, in particular, was characterized by disturbances; some members shouted and others made gestures, with the presumed objective of eliciting reactions. Some members were particularly unruly, and the Chair was obligated to intervene during the taking of the division to remind members to remain calm so that we could allow the clerks at the table to continue with the roll call.

[*Translation*]

As stated in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at page 643, “During the taking of a vote, no Member is permitted to enter, leave or walk across the Chamber or to make any noise or disturbance from the time the Speaker begins to put the question until the results of the vote are announced.”

[*English*]

The Chair hopes this will serve as a good reminder to all members of the expectations in regard to decorum during divisions. I understand that some votes are the subject of strong disagreements, but it is still expected that all members comport themselves appropriately.

Finally, I also wish to take a few moments to address another situation that occurred after the vote. After the result was announced and Bill C-78 was adopted, I recognized the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, who caught my eye on a point of order. I understand that the member for London—Fanshawe was also on her feet on a point of order, presumably in relation to the division that had just taken place. The government House Leader then moved that the House be adjourned. The motion was deemed adopted, with the result that our proceedings for the day ended.

Obviously, this prevented the member for London—Fanshawe from raising her concerns in a timely manner, and I apologize for this situation as I should have recognized her. That said, I am ready

to hear her or one of her colleagues now, if she still wishes. Others might also want to intervene. I thank all members for their attention.

I see the hon. member for London—Fanshawe is rising on a point of order.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the apology. However, I will be taking this back and reflecting upon your words. I cannot say that I find your words satisfactory, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the requirements or the repercussions that need to come from them, and I will reserve the right to speak to this further.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order.

I witnessed the situation. It was not just the member for London—Fanshawe who tried to take the floor. Another member from the same party also wanted to do so. Obviously, everyone knows that it is not over until it is over. Nothing was finished. Everyone had already risen. The House leader wanted to speak.

However, I would like to talk about the fact that we are unable to hear what is being said in the House. Once again, I will speak on behalf of the francophones, because it is always more difficult for us when there is heckling. Because we are listening to the interpretation, it takes longer for us to hear what is being said, and that is to be expected. However, we often do not even get to hear the end of sentences. We do not even get to hear the speeches because people are yelling and heckling so much. We are looking at each other and wondering what was said. We have no idea. That happened yesterday, but it also happens during question period and on many other occasions. We are missing out on some of the content of what is being said because people are heckling. That is the first thing.

The second thing is that we have to be careful for the interpreters' sake. If the heckling bothers me, then it must be really hard for them to do their work. I would not want them to feel pressured and think that they have to try to work faster to make sure the francophone members can understand. I would like members to pay attention to that.

I understand that people can be happy or upset about the results of a vote or during question period, but out of respect and collegiality, there needs to be some consideration for those who do not necessarily speak English or who do not listen to the debates in English. They too would like to have access to quality debates and get all the necessary information to be able to participate.

Privilege

The Speaker: I thank the two members for their interventions. I especially want to thank the member for Manicouagan for raising this point. It is very important, especially for those who use the interpretation services to understand what is happening in the House of Commons. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to listen when there is a lot of heckling in the House. That is a very important point for the Chair to consider.

I encourage members to behave respectfully toward one another so that everyone can fully participate in the business of the House of Commons.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[English]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from November 28 consideration of the motion, of the amendment as amended and of the amendment to the amendment.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are two months into the longest privilege debate in House of Commons history and Canadian history. It has been two months of Liberals running from accountability after the Speaker's ruling, in agreement with the opposition parties, that the government must produce the documents. Of course, it is a constitutional power that we have in the House: The House can compel the order of documents, persons or papers. This was ruled, but the Liberals have been working very hard for two months to avoid their real obligation to the House. They are working to circumvent their constitutional obligation after a ruling in the House to bring forward documents on a \$400-million green slush fund.

Of course, we know that it was 400 million taxpayer dollars that Liberal-appointed board members used to enrich themselves. In fact, there were 186 conflicts of interest over a number of years by those Liberal-appointed board members. This was happening every other day at this board; members would vote on how this money would be spent for their own financial benefit. The Liberals are withholding all the documents from this. They have provided some that have been redacted, but they have not released all of them. They have not provided them unredacted. We are saying that they need to provide them to the police.

This is such a significant scandal: \$400 million. Far less has brought down Liberal governments before for their scandals and corruption, but \$400 million is not nothing. The last time I spoke in the House, I talked about how 400 million taxpayer dollars, which individuals voted to enrich themselves with, represents about 22,000 Canadian families working an entire year and paying federal income tax. They did this just to afford \$400 million going to Liberal insiders.

We have ordered the documents. The Liberals refuse to give them. For two months, the House has largely been at a standstill. Again, it is the longest privilege debate in Canadian history, so that just raises the question of what they are hiding in there. It must be

really bad for them to forgo anything else, and I will talk about some of the things that the NDP has allowed the government to get away with.

For two whole months, no government bills have been passed or really debated. This is a minority parliament; we could be in an election at any time. Time is of the essence if the Liberal government wants to accomplish anything in its dying days. However, for two months of that waning time, the government has been running from this accountability. It is very obvious. It is very clear that there is something serious in those documents, as we suspect. I think the Liberal corruption in this likely runs far, far deeper. Why else would they allow two months of none of their initiatives going forward? There is no other logical explanation for this.

I think what we are looking at is quite serious. Of course, we have seen a lot of this kind of behaviour over the last number of years: The Liberals prorogued Parliament to avoid scandals and called an election to avoid production of the Winnipeg lab documents. Members will remember that. In the middle of a pandemic, the Liberals called the most divisive election in recent memory, in which the Liberal Prime Minister pitted vaccinated Canadian against unvaccinated Canadian. They called that election to avoid releasing the Winnipeg lab documents, which involved two scientists connected to the People's Liberation Army in China.

In fact, for the first time in a century, an individual was brought to the bar to get the documents. However, the government fought hard to make sure they did not come to light. The Liberals called an election to avoid what was in them.

Of course the prorogation was in the midst of the WE Charity scandal, when they were looking to provide a billion dollars to what really amounted to quite a slimy organization: the WE Charity. It was also a sycophant for the Liberal Prime Minister's family. The government was promoting them and paying them to be in various speaking engagements and podcasts. It was really something.

We have seen this before: proroguing to avoid accountability and calling an election to avoid production of documents. Maybe one of those two things is coming. How far will the Liberals go to avoid having the RCMP look at these documents? Again, these are just the ones that we know about, which is not to say there are not many more conflicts of interest. However, after looking over just a portion of the billion-dollar green slush fund, the Auditor General was able to find conflicts 186 times. Every other day, Liberal-appointed board members were voting for taxpayer dollars to further enrich themselves. It is actually unbelievable how many people in this country had to work all year away from their families and had to pay federal income tax for \$400 million to be used to enrich Liberal insiders in conflicts of interest. It is quite shocking, and I just think that spending two whole months avoiding this, sacrificing their own agenda in the Liberals' waning days of government, means it must be really bad. There is no other explanation.

• (1010)

If we look at the Liberals' green initiatives over nine years, it is quite something. If we really peel back the layers, we find that they claim to have spent \$100 billion on climate change, but there are no meaningful results whatsoever. It is a shocking number. In fact, a news article on the environment commissioner's 2023 fall report said, "The report painted a grim picture of emission reductions in Canada over the past 20 years, saying that the only significant drops in emissions came during the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, which had little to do with emissions reduction policy." Therefore, in the midst of the pandemic, when we were all forced to stay home for weeks, not drive, not travel, not do anything, not really leave our houses or see anybody, was when emissions dropped. There was no other meaningful emissions drop in this country since the Liberals have been in office. In fact, the environment commissioner said, "Canada is the only G7 country that has not achieved any emissions reductions since 1990". Wow, we have spend \$100 billion and had no results.

The Office of the Auditor General reported that "Canada's greenhouse gas emissions have increased since the Paris Agreement was signed, making it the worst performing of all G7 nations since the 2015 Conference of the Parties in Paris, France." That was in 2021. Therefore, we are seeing all this money just flying out the door.

In fact, the Liberals brought forward something called the net-zero accelerator fund, but what I found interesting about this is that they proposed \$8 billion, and billions are just nothing to Liberals. It does not matter how long and how hard Canadians had to work to produce all those federal income taxes; whatever, they are going to spend billions as though it were chump change in the bottom of their pockets. Therefore, there was \$8 billion put towards this net-zero accelerator fund, and what is really interesting about this is that they found there was no accountability for the money to reduce emissions. They are just throwing billions of dollars to various companies with no measurables. There is nothing to show the public, such as that the government gave companies money, they committed to help lower emissions in one regard and the government is holding them accountable to that commitment for giving their companies billions of dollars from the taxpayer.

The same lack of accountability is seen across government departments. In fact, the Liberal government makes all of these big fi-

Privilege

ancial announcements, and it does not matter that we have doubled the national debt from half a trillion to well over a trillion dollars in nine years. The debt of almost 150 years of prime ministers combined was done in less than nine years by the Liberal government. The Liberals talk about all these billions, yet there do not seem to be any measurables. It is like a ribbon cutting in announcing all these billions, and then that is all they have to do. It is not really about what the actual impact of those dollars is. It is as if they think success is measured by how much money they spend, not by the outcome it produces. That is what we are seeing with a lot of this so-called green spending.

In some cases, the government did not know whether the accelerator fund would lead to any emissions reduction. In fact, at the environment committee, the environment commissioner gave the following testimony: "We also found that the department did not always know to what extent GHG emissions had been reduced by those companies that took part in the [net-zero accelerator] initiative, or whether the funding provided would lead to reduced emissions." Again, how could the Liberals disregard the hard work it took for Canadians to provide that money to the federal government and just throw it out the window with no follow-through, over and over again?

It is not just on the greenhouse gas emissions that we are not seeing any meaningful action, despite nearly \$100 billion spent, according to the Liberals; it is also in all different departments. In fact, we can look at the economics of this country, and all the billions. Again, the Liberals measure success by how much money they are spending and not on the outcome. If we look at the outcomes, what have we seen? We have one in five children in Canada living in poverty. The Salvation Army reported that one in four parents is cutting back on their own food intake because they cannot afford enough for all of their family. They are eating less so that their children can eat. This is supposed to be a G7 country, one of the wealthiest countries on earth. We are the second-largest geography on earth. We are blessed with natural resources that almost every other country would envy. We have an educated, hard-working, kind population, yet we have one in four parents cutting back on their own food intake, one in five children living in poverty and two million people visiting a food bank every month. Actual breadlines have returned after nine years of the Liberal government.

Privilege

● (1015)

It is just unbelievable what we are seeing, yet the government has spent so much money, with the promise at every single announcement that it was going to make the difference. It has just made things worse. What has the government spent on housing? Was it \$80 billion? Housing prices and rental prices have doubled in the nine years that the Liberals have been in power, despite \$80 billion spent on housing. All that taxpayer hard work was spent on housing, only for housing to double in cost. Actually, rent has more than doubled now.

What is it, two-thirds, of millennials who will never be able to afford a home? The hallmark of Canadian freedom and prosperity was the promise that somebody could work hard, get married, have a family, buy a house and retire in dignity, things that were true for generations because of the hard work of the earlier generations in this country, built on their blood, sweat and tears. It was the promise of Canada to provide prosperity. Now, two-thirds of our young people, despite the fact that they are the most educated generation in history and are hard-working, with big dreams, will never be able to afford a piece of property.

Canada's geography is the second-largest on earth. We have trees that abound. We have all the materials we need and all the space required to build homes, and there has been \$80 billion of so-called investment from the Liberals, yet housing prices have doubled. The dream of home ownership has evaporated for two-thirds of my generation after nine years of the Liberal government.

All this says nothing of the crime and the dysfunction in our criminal justice system. There has been a 50% increase in violent crime, a 116% increase in gun crime and a 75% increase in sexual assault, of which we know the vast majority affects women. At every opportunity, the government pats itself on the back for its feminist policy, yet in nine years there has been a 75% increase in sexual assaults in this country and a 120% increase in sexual violations against children in this country. The government has brought forward subsequent pieces of justice legislation that have had a serious influence and have resulted in a lot of the crime.

We have heard from police associations across the country and from premiers of every political stripe, who are saying that bail reform is needed in this country. That is what we hear time and time again, yet nothing happens. The government brought forward a measly seven-page bill that received royal assent over year ago now. It obviously had zero effect.

People are still being shot and killed by people who are out on bail and who have been out on bail, probation and parole their whole life. Somehow they were just let out on bail again with a promise that they would obey the rules for the first time in their life, and yet they have proven to be a danger to society over and over again. It is madness.

People deserve to feel safe in this country. They deserve to ride public transit without the threat of being stabbed by someone who is out on bail. They deserve to have their car in their own driveway and know that it is going to be there in the morning. It used to be like that in Canada. There used to be a time when we were not concerned about things like this. It just seems to be getting worse.

Thousands of homeless encampments have popped up all across the country, which is of course a clear indicator of the poverty and the economic vandalism that are a result of bad government decisions from the Liberals for nine years. There is a lot of dysfunction, and the crime is a big deal.

In the last 13 months, there has been protest after protest, certainly as a result of the Hamas terrorist attack on October 7, 2023 in Israel, when hundreds of people were taken hostage; well over a thousand people were brutally and barbarically murdered; women were viciously and violently raped, tortured and killed; children were burned alive and shot; and elderly people were abused, beaten up and killed.

I remember seeing some of the videos. I will never in my life get the images out of my head of the barbaric nature of the attack. I have seen what has happened in our streets subsequently and I have heard the words that have been spoken about our Jewish community. There has been mayhem and a targeting of Jewish businesses.

It has escalated to such a point now that there were riots in Montreal the other day, where someone was caught on camera yelling that “the final solution” for the Jewish people “is coming”. This was in Canada in 2024. That is what is happening in this country. That is what has been permitted to transpire over the last number of years.

Jewish Canadians do not feel safe in their own country, in Canada, in 2024, they do not feel safe to identify themselves. They do not feel safe in their businesses. There have been protests at their seniors care homes. Their synagogues have been lit on fire and vandalized. Their children's schools have been shot up.

● (1020)

Jewish members of Parliament have to be under around-the-clock security. They are in fear of their lives just for standing up for Jewish Canadians and their principles on Israel. Threats to their lives have happened. What has there been from Parliament? There has not been any action on it. There have not been any firm stances taken by the Liberal government in the 13 months since the attack.

The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security of Canada is tasked with dealing with public safety and national security issues. Jewish Canadians, representing less than 1% of the population, are the most-targeted population in this country, particularly in the last 13 months, and nothing has transpired at the public safety and national security committee.

Liberals have stopped motions or tried to water them down every single step of the way. We can watch the footage. Conservatives have repeatedly tried to bring the issue forward at the public safety committee. What has been happening to Jewish Canadians in this country as a result of what happened on October 7, 2023 is obviously an issue of national significance about public safety and national security.

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If we do not think that some of the most vile elements of the protesters have been emboldened by the fact that Hamas applauded a Liberal government decision to side with them, and that it has had an impact, we are deluding ourselves. There are serious problems in this country across the board. Jewish Canadians have been worse off by far in the last 13 months, and yet the Standing Committee of Public Safety and National Security of Canada refuses to have a concrete look at this issue specifically.

I have not even mentioned the multiple thwarted terrorist plots against the Jewish community. There have been two, maybe three, just in the past year, targeting one community just for being Jewish. In December 2023, there was a rally on Parliament Hill in support of releasing the hostages. The Leader of the Opposition was there and the deputy leader of the opposition, who is Jewish, was there. A number of other members were there; in fact two Liberal members of Parliament were there.

Apparently unbeknownst to attendees, since no one found out about it publicly until 10 months after the fact, there were two terrorist-affiliated young people, teenagers, who had been deeply involved in plotting a bomb attack on the rally on Parliament Hill. A bomb attack was planned on the heart of our democracy, targeting Jewish Canadians for being Jewish, right here on Parliament Hill.

Does the public safety and national security committee of Canada really not think that is something we should be looking into? How is it acceptable that the committee tasked with the issue, out of all committees, does not think it is a priority to focus specifically on the threat of anti-Semitism, the terrorist plots and extreme violence that have been escalating toward the Jewish people? The public safety and national security committee is not doing its duty.

Conservatives will continue to push, because we believe that what has been happening is completely and wholly unacceptable. We feel that the government has not taken it seriously and has not sent a very clear message to the vile people who are calling for “the final solution” for the Jewish people. Where is the robust response? Where is the solidarity with Jewish Canadians and their families in Israel, who obviously have the right to defend themselves in the face of the worst attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust?

I recently spoke to CJPAC about the issues. Two women came to me afterward, and they were quite emotional. Again, it is 13 months after the attack happened. They were grown professional women, but I could tell they were having a tough time. They told me that since that day, they feel so alone. Jewish Canadians in Canada feel alone, as if the government had abandoned them, turned its back on their families in Israel, turned its back on their needs and on the fact that there are terrorist-affiliated people in this country trying to bomb them to smithereens and massacre them.

I am vice-chair of the public safety committee, and the Liberals will not allow us to focus on the issue. What kind of signal does that send to people who want to do harm to Jewish Canadians? Shame on the Liberals at committee for doing that. We should be studying the issue and we should be studying it now. Conservatives are going to continue to stand up for Jewish Canadians at the committee, and we are not going to stop.

• (1025)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the very nature of the member's speech does not surprise me, and here is why. All one has to do is take a look at what the leader said when he addressed his Conservative caucus just before coming back into session.

This is part of what the leader said in his opening remarks to his Conservative members of Parliament: “There would be mass hunger and malnutrition with a tax this high...our seniors would have to turn the heat down to 14 or 13 C just to make it through the winter. Inflation would run rampant and people would not be able to leave their homes or drive anywhere.” How ridiculous that is.

Then we hear speeches of the nature of the one by the member opposite. It was gross exaggeration. I have news for the member and for the Conservative Party of Canada: Canada is not broken; it is still the very best country in the world to call home.

Shame on the Conservatives for their attitudes and for how they continue to put their political self-interest ahead of the interests of Canadians. We see it every day, and a good example of it is when we wanted to give Canadians a tax break yesterday. What did the Conservatives do? They voted against a tax break. How will the member opposite and Conservatives justify their vote yesterday to not support tax relief?

• (1030)

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, let us talk about last night's GST tax trick. Again, one in four Canadian parents is eating less, just to afford food for their kids. One in five Canadian children is living in poverty. There have been two million people at food banks every single month in Canada in 2024. There has been nine years of Liberal government, and literal breadlines have returned. I will remind the member for Winnipeg North that his community in particular has been impacted by poverty because of the economic vandalism after nine years.

Do Liberals think that these things just happen to people and that the Liberals are not responsible at all? If they are not responsible, what are they doing in government? It is time to get out of the way and get a Conservative government in power that is actually going to relieve Canadian taxes, actually going to cut the carbon tax, which is a tax on everything. We will cut it forever.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I agree with part of my colleague's speech: Canada is doing a very poor job of reducing greenhouse gases. It makes sense though, because producing more oil requires more oil exploration and development projects, which produce more greenhouse gas emissions.

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She did not say anything about the biggest investment in Canadian history, the \$34 billion spent to buy a pipeline. The Conservative party does not talk about that.

I would like my colleague to explain a few things. First, does her party actually recognize that climate change exists? Second, without criticizing anyone else, what is the Conservatives' plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and truly fight climate change?

[*English*]

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, certainly we are very blessed in this country to have the natural resource sector. The hydrocarbon sector ensures that transfers to various provinces are possible. It ensures that health care in this country is possible. In fact, given the new Trump administration coming in, thank God we have the energy sector, because the Americans depend on that energy; in fact it makes their gas cheaper. If only we would have had a government in the last nine years with the commitment and the drive to actually fully develop these resources and that had not tried to stop them every step of the way.

The only reason the Liberals had to buy the pipeline is that the regulatory regime they brought in was so toxic that we could not get private industry to do it. It left, high-tailed it out of Canada, because the government has made it so difficult to get anything built in this country so that this country can actually use its blessed natural resources to pay for all these wonderful things. Thank goodness we have the natural resource sector, because it might just be the thing that is going to save us from the 25% tariffs.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I rise knowing that today is International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. I have heard that there are Jewish people who are in solidarity with the Palestinian people, especially with respect to the genocide that is happening in Gaza. I wonder whether the member can speak to the voices she has heard of Jewish people who support the call for the end to the genocide in Gaza.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, what I have heard from the Jewish community is that they want those hostages released and to be able to bury their dead with dignity, which they have been denied for 13 months. Many of the hostages are still alive, from what we understand. They need to be released and they need to be released now. That is what needs to happen.

The NDP supported that GST tax cut yesterday, which amounts to breadcrumbs thrown on a few things decided by the Liberal government, which picked and chose what Canadians deserve a so-called tax break on, which is really just a trick because it is only a couple of weeks of some items not having a little bit of tax on them when what we need is a long-term tax cut. We need to axe the tax to give long-term relief, because if the Liberal government is going to stay in power until April and continue to raise these taxes, and it has committed to raising the carbon tax, we are going to see it go up to 61¢ a litre. That is the “nuclear winter” from, as the member for Winnipeg North shared with everyone, our leader's smart comments on that. That is coming if the Liberals stay in power.

• (1035)

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for pointing out throughout her speech the hypocrisy that exists with the government by spend-

ing money and not delivering results. Unfortunately, and it refutes the member for Winnipeg North's comment earlier about where we are in this country, the Stats Canada data just out today indicates that our per capita income has shrunk for six consecutive quarters. The per capita income in this country is back to what it was before the current government was elected. Everything it has done over the last nine years has taken us backwards, not forwards, despite doubling our national debt.

I would like the member to comment on what a government could do, especially a future government, with that money, versus just throwing it away. I am not going to use the other term I was going to, about something in the wind.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, it has never been more critical that we get a Conservative government that cares about economics and tax relief for Canadians. For years, our party's leader has repeatedly talked about the disparity between doing business in the United States and doing business now, the regulatory and tax burden Canadian businesses have to deal with, the carbon tax being one of the number one contributors to businesses and investment fleeing to the United States because it does not have that kind of tax on energy. They can hire more workers and do more innovation. It is cheaper for businesses to operate in the United States and quicker for them to get up off the ground.

Over the last nine years, hundreds of billions of dollars of investments have fled from Canada to the United States. If we think that is going to get better with the incoming U.S. administration, we have another thing coming. We need a government that prioritizes regulation cuts, prioritizes tax cuts and genuinely, as a primary focus, wants to grow the economy, and not on the backs of future Canadians with all these deficits but with actual economic innovation and growth from the Canadian people.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today is the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Like the member, I too agree that we need all the hostages released, and all the remains of the hostage problems should be cleared. Along with several Jewish Canadians, there are many Palestinian Canadians who have lost their families among the 43,000 people killed in Gaza, the vast majority of whom are women and children.

I would like to ask the member whether she has any tears or consolation for the Canadians who have lost their family in Gaza.

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, yes, I do. The last 13 months have been horrific in the Middle East. We support Israel's right to defend itself and we hold Hamas responsible for all this destruction and for the terrorist attacks of October 7. This is on Hamas. What we are not hearing is a clear denunciation of that from the Liberal government. We feel that when a terrorist organization is happy with the position of the Liberal government, there are serious problems there.

What impact does that have on motivating the most vile elements in Canada to hurt Jewish Canadians here? I think it certainly has an impact.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the remarks we just were entertained with are quite interesting. It is really important that people understand what the Conservative Party is. It is not the traditional party. People who follow the debate on the economy, on social programming and how it is that Canada is doing, I want them to understand this is not the traditional Conservative Party.

This is what Kim Campbell, former prime minister of Canada, has to say about the leadership and direction of the Conservative Party today: "I've never joined the Conservative Party of Canada." She mentions Joe Clark, another Progressive Conservative prime minister: "I think Joe Clark expressed it that he didn't leave the party, the party left him. It is not the Progressive Conservative Party [today]."

We just heard a litany of issues downplaying Canada. As I have indicated, the leader of the Conservative Party and members of his caucus can go around Canada talking about how bad things are and saying Canada is broken. A vast majority of the things they are saying are absolutely not true and definitely misleading, whether it is the leader in the many town halls he has or through their social media or their emails. They send out millions of emails. Canada is not broken.

We think of the progressive nature the Conservatives used to have. They talk about poverty and so forth. When it came time to stand up and vote on issues, I listed just a few programs. There is the disability program. It is the first time we are establishing disability payments, the single largest budgetary item from the last budget, where \$200 every month will be going to individuals.

There is the pharmacare program. Millions of Canadians will benefit from it and it is a good step forward in developing a solid national pharmacare program, what we put into place. There is a child care program, a Canada child benefit program that no longer pays for millionaires and that supports even those parents who have a lower income. I made reference to \$10-a-day child care and the expansion of child care spaces. There is a dental care program in which well over a million Canadians have participated.

There is a national school food program. The member for Kildonan—St. Paul is talking about children in poverty, yet the Conservatives vote against a national school food program. They know absolutely no shame whatsoever; they really do not. She is criticizing us because of the GST break we are giving Canadians during the holiday season. The Conservatives voted against it last night.

Privilege

I need to remind each and every one of those Conservative members of Parliament that in the last election, they campaigned for it. It was in their election platform that they would give holiday relief in the form of a GST break for the holiday season. They said they would do it. What they voted against yesterday was their own policy. This is something their leader at the time, Erin O'Toole, the one they stabbed in the back because he was too progressive for them, supported. They ditched him, they got their shiny new leader and they reversed their policy on it.

I will remind the new leader of the Conservative Party that he supported what he voted against yesterday. They go around and say they are going to axe the tax—

• (1040)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I was listening to my colleague's speech, which is really quite interesting. He went over the whole history of different Conservative leaders over the years, but I do not see the connection between that and the subject we are discussing right now.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows that there is a lot of flexibility when it comes to speeches.

[*English*]

The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I understand you have stopped the clock. It is really unfortunate. Yesterday I stood up to speak and I was interrupted on numerous occasions by the Conservatives on points of order. I now get the coalition Bloc doing the same thing. It is disrespectful. I have a lot to share with Canadians through my comments. I would ask the Bloc and the Conservatives to contain themselves and allow truth to be told inside the chamber—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We will allow the hon. parliamentary secretary to continue his speech.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, what we witnessed last night was the Conservative Party voting against giving Canadians, during the holiday season, a tax break on the GST, even though Conservatives campaigned in favour of it. Their very own shiny leader also retweeted the idea of having a holiday tax break on the GST during the holiday season.

The only difference was that that theirs was four weeks. Our is for eight weeks. There is no hypocrisy there, right? They are going to say, "Yes, we are against that, but we are in favour of axing the tax." What do they mean by "axing the tax"? They are going to be getting rid of the carbon rebate.

Privilege

They do not care about the environment but they are going to get rid of the carbon rebate. A vast majority of Canadians get a net benefit with the carbon rebate. Not only are Conservatives going to take away a tax holiday, but they are also going to be axing the carbon rebate. Then they spread all sorts of misinformation on both of those issues. That is why I say they know no shame. They do not have a problem saying that.

Fast-forward to where we are today. Why is the Parliament as dysfunctional as it is? It is not because of the NDP, the Liberals, the Greens and, to a certain degree, the Bloc. It is because of the Conservative Party of Canada.

Here is the truth of the matter. Six or seven months ago, there was an order in which, yes, a majority of MPs voted that unredacted documents would be sent directly from the House to the RCMP. The government opposed that. We only have a minority of MPs. We opposed it. Yes, we did, and it is because we did not think it was appropriate to give unredacted documents to the RCMP. The RCMP commissioner has said he does not want those documents. The Auditor General of Canada has said she does not support the documents being given to the RCMP. Other legal experts have said likewise.

What happened? The Speaker ruled that the matter should go over to the procedure and House affairs committee. What does the Conservative Party do? Conservatives move a motion that says we are going to have this issue go to the procedure and House affairs committee. It is a Conservative motion.

We have now had over 200 speeches from the Conservative Party of Canada on its own motion because Conservatives refuse to allow it to come to a vote. As a direct result of that, which I would suggest is borderline contempt of the House, the Parliament has not been able to do the things it needs to do to support Canadians, to pass substantial legislation, legislation in part that they support. I could focus on the word “hypocrisy” but I will refrain from that because of the limitations on my time.

We have a Conservative Party, through its leadership, that is more interested in its self-interest than it is in Canadians. Canadians are paying the price. We have anti-harm legislation to protect children from predators on the Internet, and the Conservatives do not want to debate it. We have legislation converting sexual allegations and charges from military courts to civilian courts. Everyone supports it. Even the Conservative Party supports that one. Conservatives do not want anything to do with it because they want to continue their filibuster.

Yesterday we had to get the support of the New Democrats to be able to have a debate on giving tax relief to Canadians. The Conservatives forced us to bring in closure and then they criticized us yesterday for bringing in closure. How silly is that? Should we be surprised?

• (1045)

The leader of the Conservative Party today was the parliamentary secretary to Stephen Harper, the only prime minister who has ever been held in contempt of Parliament. His point man was the leader of the Conservative Party today. Does anyone wonder why the leader of the Conservative Party has no problem at all being in

borderline contempt on issues that are having such a negative impact on Canadians? The Conservatives should be ashamed of themselves.

This made headline news last week, about the Conservative caucus. The leader preaches to Canadians that we are going to have freedom. In fact, I actually brought a copy. I would like to quote what Conservative MPs are saying about the leader of the Conservative Party. They did not want to release their names, but a lot of Conservatives have gone to the media to express their concerns.

The headline is, “[The leader of the Conservative Party]’s office maintains tight control over what Conservative MPs say and do.” Here is the first paragraph: “After two years of [the leader of the Conservative Party] as their leader, many Conservative MPs say they are much less free now than they were before his arrival.” This coming from “the man who promised during his leadership run to make Canada ‘the freest country in the world’ maintains tight control over the actions of his caucus members.”

The article continues:

Conservative MPs’ words and actions are closely scrutinized by the leader’s office. Partisanship is encouraged. Fraternizing with elected officials from other parties is a no-no.

Those who follow these rules are rewarded. Those who don’t often have to suffer consequences.

Do people want to know the consequence? They can check with the member for Abbotsford. The article continues with, “Some elected officials feel they come to caucus ‘to be told what to do and what to think’”. It also states, “If the leader invents a new slogan, ‘we know we’ll have to use it’”. The Conservative source said, “If you repeat the slogans, you get rewarded,” and, “You are celebrated in front of the entire caucus for being a good cheerleader.”

Does anyone wonder why we get Conservative member after member standing up, repeating the slogans and the bumper stickers of the leader of the Conservative Party? They get a gold star for doing so. They think Canadians are stupid. They are a bit thick on substance, but they are a mile long when it comes to slogans. If we want a good sense of that, we can look at the propaganda and the garbage being sent from social feeds, which are consistently misleading.

That is the far-right Conservative Party today that is being conducted by the leader’s office. Members opposite know this. If a member comes to talk to me on the side, or to other Liberal caucus members, they are being watched. They are not supposed to be talking to us. If they say something that goes against what the party might be thinking and they have achieved gold stars, those gold stars are going to disappear. They need to stick to the script.

During the last political panels I was on, both CTV and CBC, there was no Conservative. Why? They do not support mainstream media, because the mainstream media wants to hold them to account for a lot of the silly things that they are saying. It is much like the general attitude of the leader of the Conservative Party. The leader of the Conservative Party believes he is not required to get a secure clearance. We have the leader of the Bloc, the leader of the Greens and the leader of New Democrats all saying foreign interference is a very serious issue in Canada. Individuals have been murdered. There has been extortion. There has been political interference. In fact, there has been political foreign interference in the leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada, which ultimately saw him elected as the leader.

● (1050)

Every other leader in the House has recognized the value of getting a security clearance, but not the leader of the Conservative Party. If one wants to be an intern for the Conservative Party, they are required to get a security clearance, but if one is the leader, forget that. The bogus excuses the Conservatives give as to why he is not getting the security clearance are a bunch of garbage. It begs the question why the leader of the Conservative Party will not get his security clearance. I will tell members why. It is because there is something in his past that he is hiding and does not want Canadians to know about. Canadians have a right to know.

What is interesting about foreign interference is this. Do members remember last year at this time? If we think about what the Conservatives were yipping about 12 months ago, they were standing up and talking about foreign interference. However, they piped down awfully quick when they found out that there were Conservatives involved who are directly connected to the leader's office. Let us stop here on that issue. We have to change the channel awfully quickly.

Instead of dealing with issues of consequence to Canadians, whether it is the economy or good, substantial policy, the Conservatives continuously vote against them. They try to tell Canadians they care. Here are just some of the things that we have done. We brought in the disability program, the pharmacare program, the child care program, the dental care program and the national school food program. We can talk about the cuts to Canada's middle-class tax brackets. We can talk about the substantial increases to the GIS. We can talk about the 10% increase to those age 75-plus. There has been a litany of things, including the infrastructure dollars we are spending. This is a government that understands that a healthy economy is good for all Canadians. It builds our middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it. Consistently, the Conservatives are voting against it.

In 2023, Canada had more direct foreign investment per capita than any other G7 country. In fact, if we compared Canada to the rest of the world, we were number three. People outside of Canada recognize how wonderful Canada is, whether with respect to going through the pandemic or the worldwide recession. They recognize that our interest rates are going down and that the inflation rate is under control, and are better than the United States. However, we would never know it listening to the Conservatives. Instead, they want to proclaim to the world that Canada is broken. In fact, the

Statements by Members

biggest cheerleader for the United States supporting its efforts on a trade agreement is the leader of the Conservative Party.

Before I move on to that trade agreement, members will remember that the last trade agreement we had was with Ukraine. The Conservative Party is the only political party that voted against that trade agreement with Ukraine. By the way, Russia is one of the foreign influencers that is spending millions to prop up the Conservative Party of Canada, if not directly, indirectly. Is it any wonder that the Conservatives voted against the Canada-Ukraine trade deal? Was it for suspicious reasons, and I am trying to be nice, or was it a red herring? Do we think the Conservative Party is in a good position to negotiate with Donald Trump? Forget that. We have a great team. We have done it before. We have the expertise.

● (1055)

The last time around, what did the Conservatives say? They capitulated. They said, "It does not matter what we have to cave on; cave and just sign an agreement." That is all the Conservatives wanted. We held back and we got a good agreement, and that is one of the reasons that Donald Trump wants to renegotiate. We will go to the table, but we are going to put Canadians first and foremost as we have done for the last nine years. Consistently, what we have witnessed from the opposition is no, no, no.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1100)

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today is the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. In 2021, I stood in the House and called on Canada to recognize the sovereign state of Palestine. Today, I renew that call with urgency. The New York Times columnist Thomas L. Friedman wrote, three days back, that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu is defending a Jewish supremacist apartheid vision in the West Bank and Gaza, yet the western nations that hold the levers of power and influence remain silent witnesses, allowing this catastrophe to persist.

Canada must take bold and active steps toward justice, not only as a gesture of solidarity, but also as a commitment to a just and lasting peace.

* * *

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Speaker, my dear mother was recently going through some old papers and found a poem from the late 1970s she had saved all these years. In those days, we had former prime minister Pierre Trudeau. I was shocked at the similarities between then and now. Here is the poem:

Statements by Members

The Prime Minister is my shepherd, I shall not work.
 He maketh me to lie down on park benches;
 He leadeth me beside still factories;
 He restoreth my faith in the Conservatives;
 He guideth me in paths of unemployment.
 Yea though I walk through the valley of soup kitchens, I shall still be hungry,
 For they are against me.
 They anointed my income with taxes;
 My expenses runneth over my salary.
 Surely poverty and hard living shall follow me all the days of this Liberal administration,
 and I shall live in a rented house forever!

After 45 years, nothing has changed. His son, our current Prime Minister, has dragged Canada into an even worse mess than his father did. Thankfully, there will be, once again, a new Conservative government to the rescue to fix everything the Liberals have broken. Let us bring it home.

* * *

TELEMEDICINE IN PIERREFONDS—DOLLARD

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am here to share an update from the West Island of Montreal. There was an exciting announcement made earlier this week in CLSC de Pierrefonds. Along with the Canadian Space Agency, CIUSSS de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal and David Saint-Jacques, the astronaut, we talked about and unveiled a pilot project that deals with telemedicine.

Telemedicine is a really innovative thing. It allows for health care to be delivered remotely and for physicians and health care professionals to make assessments of individuals, people, even though they are not face to face. It has real-world applications, but it was developed in outer space. This technology was made for astronauts, but it has now been applied here at home, within Pierrefonds, at the CLSC.

[Translation]

I want to thank Lisa Campbell, president of the Canadian Space Agency, and the entire team—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Hamilton Centre.

* * *

[English]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, today, November 29, marks the UN International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, so I offer to the House, and all Canadians committed to justice and peace, the following reflection:

Every bombed village is my hometown,
 And every dead child is my child.
 Every grieving mother is my mother.
 Every crying father is my father.
 Every home turned to rubble
 is the home I grew up in.
 Every brother carrying the remains
 of his brother across borders
 is my brother.
 Every sister waiting for a sister
 who will never come home

is my sister.

Every one of these people are ours,
 Just like we are theirs.
 We belong to them
 and they belong to us.

Stop the genocide. Long live Palestine. Long live Gaza.

* * *

[Translation]

90TH ANNIVERSARIES OF THE LACHUTE AND BUCKINGHAM LIONS CLUBS

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I had the pleasure of celebrating not one but two 90th anniversaries in my riding. The Lions Clubs of Lachute and Buckingham have both reached this important milestone in their history. The Buckingham Lions Club was founded on December 4, 1934, followed by the Lachute Lions Club a few days later, on December 11, 1934.

Lions Clubs are charitable organizations that help the less fortunate members of the community and young people. They improve the quality of life of the general population by supporting a wide variety of causes, including those providing support for blindness, deafness, health, education, youth and seniors. Their service is driven by such values as altruism, generosity, friendship, and commitment.

I want to congratulate all members of the Lachute and Buckingham Lions Clubs on their respective 90th anniversary and give them my heartfelt thanks for their commitment to helping vulnerable members of their community—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Oshawa.

* * *

● (1105)

[English]

VICTIMS' RIGHTS

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, repeatedly, we are witnessing the NDP-Liberal government's troubling tendency to prioritize the rights of criminals over those of victims. That is why I introduced the pro-victims' rights bill, Bill C-320, in March 2023. Thankfully, the bill passed unanimously through the House and is now at the Senate committee stage.

Lisa Freeman, a constituent of Oshawa and the inspiration behind Bill C-320, recently learned that the axe murderer who brutally murdered her father while on parole will be subject to a closed-door review by the Parole Board of Canada, with no hearing. Ms. Freeman's rights have been completely disregarded under the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, and she has continually been denied the rights afforded to registered victims, leading to repeated revictimization, not by the perpetrator, but by the very institutions that should be safeguarding her well-being.

Statements by Members

If the NDP-Liberal government refuses to recognize the need to prioritize victims' rights over those of criminals, it is time for an election so that a Conservative—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The hon. member for Milton.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Milton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today is the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and today, I am reaffirming my support for Canada's recognition for Palestinian statehood. Canada recently voted in favour of two UN resolutions to signal our deep concerns over the expansion of Israeli settlements into the occupied Palestinian territories and to express our unwavering support for Palestinian refugees, who are in urgent need of assistance. UNRWA is critical in that regard.

Canada remains committed to the pursuit of lasting peace in the Middle East. A two-state solution is critical to that endeavour, which includes the creation of a Palestinian state where Palestinians and Israelis live side-by-side in peace, security and dignity. The Netanyahu government has made it clear, with its words and actions, that it rejects a two-state solution, while illegal settlements and violence in the West Bank are on the rise.

Canada does not recognize permanent Israeli control over the West Bank, East Jerusalem or Gaza. We must see progress toward Palestinian self-determination. We need a ceasefire and sustained humanitarian aid. All hostages must be released. Peace in the Middle East is possible, and the recognition of a Palestinian state is an important step toward it.

* * *

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this week, I attended the launch of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence at Ottawa City Hall, hosted by GRAN advocates, Interval House of Ottawa and the Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women. We joined together to light buildings in purple, including City Hall and the Peace Tower, to symbolize our determination to end violence against women.

For the dedicated organizations and volunteers leading these efforts, activism is not limited to 16 days. It is 365 days a year. Our national action plan to end gender-based violence and our feminist international assistance policy provide funding to frontline organizations doing the hard work to support survivors and make real change. At a time when demeaning language and objectification of women is becoming normalized, we stand in solidarity to say that this is not normal. Together, we can end gender-based violence.

* * *

CANADIAN ENERGY SECTOR

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, the collective western history of wealth creation has largely followed the history of energy densification. What do I mean? First, we cooked our food and kept ourselves warm with wood and

then charcoal, followed by coal, fossil fuels. We now have today's options of nuclear and there are tomorrow's possibilities of hydrogen, etc. Each progressive fuel is denser and has less of an environmental impact.

The current government's focus on punishing our oil and gas production sector, coupled with a punitive carbon tax on consumers, is misplaced and bad environmental policy. Do members know what year the world consumed the most coal? It was last year, and this year we will break that record.

LNG has half the GHG emissions of coal, and the world wants cleaner-burning, affordable Canadian LNG. Instead of using the wealth generated by clean LNG to fund our own energy transition, the government has given Canadians a carbon tax, which makes us all poorer, and it has virtually no impact on the world's GHG emissions. We would axe the tax and sell the world cleaner fuels that would lower global—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The hon. member for Surrey Centre.

* * *

FEDERAL FUNDING IN SURREY CENTRE

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, last week, I was proud to announce funding to two excellent organizations in Surrey that are helping our veterans. BC/Yukon Legion Foundation and the Legion Veterans Village received \$9 million to help our veterans who are facing homelessness with access to housing and wraparound services. While the opposition talks about program cuts, our government is there for our veterans and the groups that support them.

Just last month, PacifiCan announced \$3.8 million to HealthTech Connex, a bioscience company based in Surrey that has developed NeuroCatch, a brain-imaging device that leads to more accurate diagnoses of concussions and head injuries. Thanks to federal funding, HealthTech Connex will increase its sales and operational capacities to create 40-plus highly skilled jobs. This is a tremendous illustration of our government's commitment to continuing to strengthen Canada's economy at home and around the world.

Statements by Members

• (1110)

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years of this Liberal government, we find that the mess it has made at our borders is alarming.

The Liberals are creating chaos, and Canadians are paying the price. The Liberal Prime Minister decided to fling Canada's doors wide open in 2016, with no controls whatsoever. This has resulted in a broken immigration system, growing tensions at the border, and now threats from the U.S. involving crippling tariffs for Canada if the government does not do more to secure its borders.

Criminals have taken over, with human smuggling rings charging \$5,000 per person for illegal crossings. This government has failed in its fundamental duty to protect our borders and keep Canadians safe.

Canadians deserve better. They deserve a strong prime minister who will take meaningful action to defend Canada's interests. Ensuring the safety of Canadians cannot wait any longer. It is time for the Liberal government to deliver the only thing Canadians want now, and that is an election.

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[English]

LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, last night, the leader of the NDP voted to put his pension over his country, propping up the Liberals once again. Do members remember when he ripped up the NDP's coalition deal with the Liberals, saying that they were, “too weak, too selfish, and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people”? It was nothing but a stunt.

The truth is that the NDP leader supports everything the Prime Minister does. He supports the carbon tax, having voted for it 24 times, which makes it harder for Canadians to eat, heat and house themselves. He supports the Liberals' inflationary deficits when he votes to fund waste, such the Prime Minister's arrive scam app. He even supports their hug-a-thug policies, which have led to crime and chaos in our streets.

It is time to stop the madness. Every day the Prime Minister remains in power it is because of the leader of the NDP. Canadians deserve better than this weak Prime Minister and the government's second-string NDP cheer squad. It is time for a carbon tax election.

* * *

AFFORDABILITY MEASURES

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party of Canada has absolutely no shame. It is unbelievable but true. Conservatives voted against a tax break for the holiday season. Now, this is the real burner on this issue. This is what the Conservatives said in their platform for the last election: “To help families and help our hard-hit retail stores recover, Canada's Conservatives will implement a month-long GST

holiday”. The the leader of the Conservative Party then tweeted, “We will remove GST for the month of December”.

It is incredible. How do each and every one of them say, on the one hand, that they are going to get rid of it, and then, when it comes time to vote, one by one, they stand in their place and vote against giving a tax break to Canadians? I say shame on each and every one of them. By the way, how do we define hypocrisy?

* * *

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, we hear the Liberal government time and again expressing concern about the escalating dangers of nuclear weapons, but where are the necessary actions?

Things are only getting worse. In the past week alone, Russia expanded its nuclear doctrine and tested a new missile against Ukraine. North Korea advanced its missile program with outside support, and Belarus became a nuclear host state. What was Canada's response? There were vague statements of concern while it clung to outdated deterrence policies.

However, there is a solution, which the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This treaty has 98 nations already on board. It addresses the humanitarian devastation of nuclear weapons.

It is time for Canada to engage. At minimum, we need to send an official observer delegation to the meeting of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in March 2025. Many NATO allies have already done so. Why has Canada not? New Democrats have always advocated for urgent nuclear disarmament and will continue to work towards a safe and peaceful future.

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[Translation]

JÉRÉMIE FORTIN CHALLENGE

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, if faith moves mountains, then solidarity and brotherly love makes us climb them.

On November 8 and 9, Jérémie “Jay” Fortin, an infantry sergeant in the Armed Forces, from the municipality of Saint-Valentin, walked 100 kilometres carrying 100 pounds on his shoulders in less than 24 hours. The goal was to raise money for the Cancer Research Society in honour of his brother Jason, who is currently battling the disease.

The challenge started in Rivière-à-Pierre and ended with a 400-step climb to the Plains of Abraham. This exceptional accomplishment represents the fight against cancer, while the 100 pounds represent the burden that cancer patients have to carry and the many challenges along the way. Jay ended the course surrounded by friends, family members, his brother Jason and a lot of love, raising \$40,000 along the way.

Oral Questions

I want to congratulate Jay and thank him for being so inspiring.

* * *

● (1115)

[English]

GST EXEMPTION

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Madam Speaker, at their busiest time of year, the Prime Minister has just buried small businesses under a mountain of complicated bureaucracy. Only Liberals could dream up a policy where Pokémon cards are GST-exempt but hockey cards are not, where train and Lego sets for kids are GST-exempt but train and Lego sets for adults are not and where physical video games are GST-exempt but downloadable games are not. Small businesses are being told to make these ridiculous assessments or risk paying hefty fines to the CRA.

Canadians are calling for real tax relief. The Liberals are defending an indefensible policy, but they are under strict orders not to step outside the party line. One Liberal MP, who was threatened into silence, said, “It says a lot about where our government is at right now and it says a lot about some of the shackles that have been put around MPs.” Canadians know this says a lot about how bad things are after nine years of the Liberal Prime Minister.

When will he finally call a carbon tax election—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

* * *

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): There we have it, Madam Speaker. The party that has been preaching for years about axing the tax did not have the ability to axe the tax yesterday.

Yesterday, we saw a GST holiday passed in the House for Canadians during the hardest time of the year when it comes to stretching their wallets. However, we should not be surprised that the Leader of the Opposition, who, by the way, ran on axing the GST for one month in 2021, was suddenly able to control all of his members. As a matter of fact, one Conservative recently said, “Everybody is being watched. What we say, what we do, who we talk to.” I feel sorry for Conservatives. The reality is that they are unable to vote on behalf of their constituents.

We made a significant advancement yesterday in helping Canadians with affordability. Unfortunately, when the time came to axe the tax, Conservatives were nowhere to be seen.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, Statistics Canada just released data showing a sharp decline in per capita GDP last quarter. This is the sixth consecutive quarterly decline. This is a made-in-Canada, per capita re-

cession caused by a government that stubbornly refuses to listen to everyone, from the Bank of Canada to private sector economists.

When will the government start listening to the experts, heed common sense and start cutting taxes on investment, energy and income to save Canadians from this collapsing economy?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, GDP per capita is one measure, and the Conservatives continue to raise it, so let us focus on it for a moment. Our country's GDP is in fact growing. On that measure, though, specifically, we exceed GDP per capita by leaps and bounds compared to the U.K., France and Japan. That is World Bank data and IMF data.

On the issue of tax cuts, which the Conservatives love to talk about, yesterday they had an opportunity to cut taxes for Canadians, all Canadians, and they said no. They showed who they are.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, last month, National Bank said, “GDP per capita has fallen by around 4.0% cumulatively since 2022, which is unprecedented outside a recession.” Now the economy is threatened with 25% tariffs, which the Canadian Chamber of Commerce says could shrink Canada's GDP by another 2.6%. The bigger decline in GDP would come from the government's policies, not from potential tariffs. That is because of the tax hikes on investment and income.

When will the government reverse course and start cutting taxes on investment and income to save Canadians from this collapsing economy?

● (1120)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it seems like the member was not in the House yesterday.

His question is interesting. The real question that Canadians have on their mind, all those watching, is why the Conservatives would vote against a tax cut. Imagine that, a tax cut. What Canadians are talking about is affordability. Yesterday, Conservatives had the opportunity to show Canadians that they are their voice in Ottawa, but what we saw is that they are the voice of their leader in Ottawa, voting against a tax cut at a time when families need—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills has the floor.

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SAFETY**

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, that was a tax cut on consumption, not investment and income.

The U.S. border patrol has released alarming data. CBS Boston reported on November 11 that a total of 155 suspects on the terror watch-list were encountered at the southern U.S. border in 2024, but double that number were encountered on the northern border and arrested, 361. Now Canada is threatened with 25% tariffs because of illegal border crossings.

What is the government's plan to protect our borders, our trade and Canadians from tariff—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. minister has the floor.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our plan is very simple: to tackle affordability. That is what we did yesterday. We offered a tax cut to Canadians at a time when they need it.

What is shameful and what is on the mind of every Canadian is this question: Why would the Conservatives vote against a tax cut? I am sure people watching at home are saying that they must have been missing something. What is happening to the Conservatives, who say, “axe the tax”? Yesterday, they had a chance not to do slogans but to do something for Canadians, and they failed miserably.

Canadians need a break. That is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable has the floor.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years, this Prime Minister's economic vandalism is the biggest threat to the economy for Canadian families.

Statistics Canada revealed today that Canada's GDP per capita has fallen for the sixth consecutive quarter. This is a made-in-Canada, GDP-per-capita recession, caused by inflationary spending and tax increases imposed by this Prime Minister, supported by the Bloc Québécois. This Prime Minister has caused the worst decline in Canadians' standard of living in 40 years. He has no plan.

When will he call an election so that Canadians can elect a prime minister who has a plan?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am sure people watching at home are wondering where the member was yesterday. Our plan is clear. Our plan is to cut taxes. It is like the Conservative slogan, only better. Yesterday, it became clear that the only thing the Conservatives care about is slogans.

On this side of the House, we understand that the issue Canadians care about most is affordability, affordability, affordability. Yesterday, the Conservatives missed an opportunity to show which side

they are on. People have realized that we understand what is going on in families—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, yesterday the Conservatives voted against a partial and temporary political gimmick to save 10¢ on chips. This is an election gimmick. That is what we voted against.

Today, we learned that, according to Statistics Canada, our country's GDP per capita fell for the sixth consecutive quarter. That is a sad and tough reality.

When will the Prime Minister put an end to his economic vandalism and call an election to really axe the tax and elect a new prime minister who has a plan for Canadians?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we see that, once again, my colleague is repeating the speaking points that his leader gave him.

Basically, the question we should be asking is how we can help Canadians who currently need financial assistance. That is exactly what we are doing. We are cutting taxes. Why, then, is my Conservative colleague from Quebec so opposed to us cutting taxes? Why did he vote against this measure? Why did all of his other Quebec colleagues vote against it?

Quebeckers know that the federal government is there to support them, and that is exactly what we are doing during this holiday season.

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JUSTICE

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Government of Quebec has just written to the federal government asking it to remove the religious exemption set out in the Criminal Code that allows hate speech masquerading as faith-based speech. Quebec is fed up with Ottawa's inaction, which is partly to blame for the current tensions in Montreal and which encourages speech that leads to violence.

As it happens, the Bloc Québécois has introduced a bill that would repeal the religious exemption. There should be no excuse, including any religious excuse, for inciting hatred.

Will the minister finally take action?

● (1125)

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are well aware of the figures and data concerning the truly alarming rise of hate in our societies, both in Quebec and in the rest of Canada.

We are being asked to take action against hate. I am perfectly willing to work with the member, with the Bloc Québécois and with the Government of Quebec to fight hate.

What we are asking is to break the gridlock in the House, with the help of the Bloc Québécois, and to study this bill and all others in good faith to fight hate.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, politicians are speaking out against hate speech, but this outcry is pointless unless somebody in Ottawa has the courage to demand that the religious exemption be repealed, as the Bloc Québécois is calling for.

Hate speech is supposed to be criminal, period. Tolerating hate speech in the name of religion actively undermines our ability to co-exist in harmony. The Liberals have a choice. They can continue to condone incitement to hatred, or they can bring the Bloc Québécois bill back to the House and support it.

Will they make the right choice?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what I can say about the fight against hate is that we currently have Bill C-63 on the table here in the House. It deals with aspects of the Criminal Code of Canada relating to hate. For example, if they want a change or amendment to the same sections in the Criminal Code of Canada, there is already a way to do that here in the House.

If they want to co-operate with us to promote this bill, I am quite comfortable co-operating with them.

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LABOUR

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, this government is allowing its own Crown corporation to attack workers. Canada Post is laying off striking workers. That is a brutal and illegal tactic for making them back down. It is disgusting. It is intimidation and a violation of the workers' fundamental right to strike.

The postal workers are fighting to protect good jobs and decent wages. The minister has to take responsibility and call Canada Post to order.

Will the Liberals stand up for the rights of workers, or will they allow Canada Post to behave ruthlessly?

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizens' Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the government is aware that this labour action will have a major and immediate impact on millions of people. No one wants this strike. Canada's small businesses and charitable organizations rely on Canada Post during the holidays. We understand in particular that the most significant impact will be felt in remote regions.

We want just one thing. We encourage both parties to continue working together to resolve the problems.

[English]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, the government has once again allowed its Crown corporation to walk all over workers. Not only did Canada Post illegally lay off striking workers; it also cut off medical benefits for people like Marc Caron, who has cancer and now has to pay thousands of dol-

lars for medication. This is despicable. It is intimidation and it is a violation of workers' fundamental right to strike.

What does the minister have to say to Marc Caron and the thousands of workers who have been abused by Canada Post and the Liberal government?

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on this side of the House, we know the best deals are always made at the bargaining table. The special mediator has suspended mediation services and the minister has asked both parties to go and create new proposals that will work and get back to the bargain table because Canadians are expecting them to come back and make a deal that works for all.

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THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years, we are seeing the NDP-Liberal government's economic vandalism in real time with new data from Statistics Canada today. Real GDP per capita fell 0.4% in the third quarter in 2024. Per capita GDP has fallen now for six consecutive quarters. This is a made-in-Canada per capita GDP recession caused by the NDP-Liberal carbon tax housing crisis and job-killing, investment-killing capital gains tax hike.

The Prime Minister does not have a plan. Will he get out of the way for a prime minister who does?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, inflation is back to normal levels. Unemployment levels in this country are around historically low levels. That member continues to talk about GDP per capita like all of them do. On that measure specifically, which has been roundly criticized by economists as not presenting a fair economic picture, let us look at it. We exceed the U.K., France and Japan. Yesterday, Conservatives had a chance to vote for a tax cut for Canadians, and what did they do? They did what they always did. They voted on the opposite side. They do not care about the middle class. They do not care about everyday Canadians.

● (1130)

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, what that member opposite does not want to talk about is that the new GDP data represents the worst standard of living decline in Canada in 40 years. The Canadian dollar is the lowest it has been in five years, and more costs to Canadians are on the way with the new U.S. administration wanting to put a 25% tariff on all Canadian exports. What is the Prime Minister's response? It is to hike taxes, like the carbon tax, which will be going up on April 1, which will make the cost of everything go up.

The Prime Minister does not have a plan. Will he get out of the way for a prime minister who does?

Oral Questions

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canadians respect principle, but they have challenges with duplicity. I know that member to be a strong advocate for small businesses in this country. I know that because she herself is a small business owner. In the past seven days, we have had the Canada carbon rebate apply to small businesses in the terms of thousands of dollars, which is tremendous. Last night, we had a vote in this chamber about axing a tax that reduces the GST on the small businesses that member defends constantly in this chamber. I just do not understand the duplicity when she cannot find her conscience and vote in favour of a tax that will help businesses in B.C. and right around the country.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, while the U.S. economy roars, real GDP per capita in Canada falls. It is a made-in-Canada recession, and these NDP-Liberals have presided over the worst standard of living decline in this country in 40 years. Food bank use is at records never seen before. The United States is going to hit us with a 25% tariff. What is their plan? It is to raise taxes. The NDP-Liberal government is going to raise its job-killing carbon tax.

The Prime Minister does not have a plan.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, he talks about our relations with the United States. I remember back when I was first elected in 2016. What did we see with the rise of Donald Trump in the United States? We saw a government that was there for Canadians, and we saw a Conservative Party at that time that was telling the government to capitulate. We will not do that. We will stand for everyday Canadians, as we always have. On the issue of what happened yesterday, they do not want to talk about it, but let us talk about it. It is very critical to note yet again that they turned their back on Canadians. They voted against a tax cut. They did it years ago; they have done it again. They were against middle-class tax cuts.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, let us talk about a record of the failed government that does not have a plan to address the 25% tariffs that are going to be imposed by the U.S. government, that is except for the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister to introduce his carbon tax being raised again on April 1, along with a host of other taxes. Poverty is up. Food bank use is up. Mortgage costs have doubled. Rent has doubled.

If the Prime Minister does not have a plan to fix what he has broken, will he get out of the way for a prime minister who can fix it?

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our trade relationship with the U.S. is of utmost importance and it is a key priority for our government. What Canadians want to know is where the Conservatives were last night with their axe. They did not vote in favour of axing the tax. On this side of the House, Liberal MPs stood strong with Canadian families and voted to axe the GST for two months so Canadians can save up to 13% in Ontario. This means prepared food, children's toys, diapers, car seats, board games, puzzles, video games and other essentials will be much less expensive over the

holidays. Why will the Conservatives not stand with Canadian families?

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Madam Speaker, new data has been released and it is bad. Canadians' economy is on life support. It is so bad that Stats Canada just reported our economy is collapsing. GDP per capita has declined for six consecutive quarters. The United States is eating our lunch. The U.S. economy in the last quarter increased by 2.8%; in Canada, 0.3%; not 3%, but 0.3%.

Canadians are going broke and the Prime Minister does not have a plan. When will he get out of the way for a prime minister who has a plan?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us stick to the facts. Over 10 years of Stephen Harper, we saw GDP per capita grow by \$1,810. After eight years of this Liberal government, we have seen it grow by over \$11,000. Not only are we better for economic growth in this country, we are also introducing mechanisms that are really leading to affordability for Canadians, like P.E.I.'s new school food program. We introduced one in Ontario last week and in P.E.I. this week.

Just yesterday, every Conservative had an opportunity to—

• (1135)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Saskatoon—University.

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Madam Speaker, new damning data has been released confirming the results of nine years of economic vandalism by the NDP-Liberal government. We saw the worst decline in living standards in 40 years. Consumer debt has hit an all-time record high and today we learned that GDP per capita fell again for the sixth straight month.

Americans are threatening a 25% tariff and the Prime Minister does not have a plan. When will he get out of the way for a prime minister who does?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that question has been answered on a number of occasions. However, I want the member to reflect on what happened yesterday and remember that members of the Conservative Party and their leader have been going across Canada, saying they are going to do people a favour; they are going to axe taxes. For the first time, they got a chance to vote on the issue and what did they do? They abandoned their principles, they demonstrated what hypocrites really look like and they voted against a tax break for the holiday season, even though during the last campaign, they campaigned in favour of it.

How would you define hypocrisy, Madam Speaker?

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***TAXATION**

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, the temporary GST pause helps everyone except the people who need help the most. Low-income households will not save a penny on food, because food is not taxable. They will not save a penny on their hydro bill, because hydro is not covered. They will not save a penny on their rent, phone bill or Internet. The measure does not cover any of their major core expenses. The Liberals and the NDP are subsidizing people who have money to spend while ignoring families who will be forced to settle for another bare-bones Christmas.

Can they not see the unfairness of that?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, people on this side of the House and across Quebec still cannot understand why the Bloc Québécois and the Conservatives voted against reducing the GST. This measure is so necessary to families and to Quebecers. It comes on top of all the other programs that we have put in place, like dental insurance, which the Bloc Québécois also opposed. We are here for families, and we are here for the most vulnerable Quebecers. We will always stand up for them.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, the GST holiday does not cover any of the major core expenses for low-income households who could have used some help this Christmas. At least there is a silver lining for lovers of fine wines. If anyone is buying a bottle of the legendary 1945 Romanée-Conti, which sells for over \$700,000, the Liberals and NDP will take off \$35,000. That is a lot of money. In fact, it is the median annual after-tax income in Quebec.

This strikes me as a pretty lousy measure. Would my colleague not agree?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for my colleague, but I must point out that the Bloc Québécois made a promise to Quebecers to represent their interests in Ottawa. Yesterday, the Bloc Québécois betrayed Quebecers. At a time when Quebecers are talking about affordability, at a time when families are getting ready for Christmas, and at a time when we need to help families, the Bloc Québécois said no to Quebecers. That is outrageous, but I would say that we on this side of the House will always be there to help families and to help Quebecers.

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*[English]***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canada's economy grew at a rate nearly 10 times slower than the economy of the United States in the last quarter. This week, U.S. President-elect Trump announced that he was considering a 25% tariff on all imports from Canada. This would be devastating to our economy because we export more goods and services to the United States than to the rest of the world combined.

What is the government's plan to prevent these economically devastating tariffs?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have had four months of consecutive job growth, one million new jobs since before the pandemic and 20 straight months of wages outpacing inflation. We have delivered \$50 billion in auto investment that is creating thousands of jobs in this country. Conservatives, in their track record, lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs. Last night, they delivered a kick in the teeth for working families, voting against the tax cut that we delivered. We will be there for workers. All they do is deliver words.

• (1140)

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Madam Speaker, it sounds like the government has no plan to deal with the United States, and Canadians continue to get poorer. Today, Statistics Canada reported that Canada's GDP per capita has declined for six quarters in a row. The situation will only get worse if the U.S. follows through on its threat to impose a 25% tariff on all imports from Canada.

Since the Prime Minister has no plan to deal with the United States, will he get out of the way for a prime minister who does?

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is this government that has a clear track record of working with the Trump administration. In 2016, we worked with it. In 2018, we renegotiated NAFTA when the Conservatives repeatedly asked us to capitulate. We will continue to stand up for Canadian jobs and Canadian workers. We will continue to be at the table with a team Canada approach, with premiers and with stakeholders across the table.

Every party leader in the House has security clearance except for the leader of the Conservative Party. When will he get his security clearance and join the team Canada effort?

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Madam Speaker, earlier this week, the finance minister said that all is well with the Canadian economy, that it is Canadians that just are not feeling that good, that it is a vobecession. New economic data has just been released from Statistics Canada, which has now confirmed a sixth consecutive quarter with a decline in GDP. Add to that an incoming U.S. administration threatening 25% tariffs across the board.

If the Prime Minister does not have a plan beyond bad vibes, will he get out of the way for—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Oral Questions

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the situation is back to normal levels because of the economic stewardship of the government. Unemployment is at historically low levels as well. They continue to talk about economic issues these days. Let us talk about it but let us look at their record. We cut taxes for the middle class. They were against it. We did that twice, in fact, and twice they were against it. We cut taxes for small businesses. They were against it. During the worst years of the pandemic, we put forward emergency measures to support small businesses. They were against them. Last night, we introduced a tax cut for every Canadian and they were against it. They talk out of both sides of their mouth. They are not serious.

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government is just not serious. Canadians are facing a made-in-Canada GDP per capita recession. The NDP-Liberals have overseen the worst standard of living decline in Canada in 40 years.

What is the Liberal plan? The Liberal plan is to quadruple the carbon tax, increase housing taxes and implement a capital gains tax increase. That is without a 25% tariff in place yet. A two-month tax trick will not make those bad vibes disappear.

Since the Prime Minister does not have a real plan, will he get out of the way for a prime minister who does?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think the Conservative photocopier must be out of toner because they have asked the same question 15 times today. I will say it again. GDP per capita, under Harper, rose by \$1,800 in a decade. In the last decade, under this Liberal government, it has risen by over \$11,000. I hope their batteries in their calculators are okay, as \$11,000 is more than \$1,800.

Yesterday, the Conservatives all had the opportunity to vote to axe the tax, and they did not. It is because they do not care about affordability for Canadians. They only want to axe the tax if it helps their wealthy oil and gas donating friends.

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NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, people in Nunavut are desperate for relief from sky-high food prices. Infant formula is upward of \$80. People even feel that every time there is Jordan's principle funding, the North West Company increases the price of food even more. People are pleading with the Liberals but all they offer is another study.

When will the government stop supporting corporate greed and finally help to alleviate poverty?

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, just recently, the Prime Minister was in Prince Edward Island, announcing our school food program, which is going to put, on average, about \$800 in the pockets of the people that are affected. In Ontario, we just had it done last week. It joins Manitoba and Newfoundland in helping hundreds of thousands of kids. We look forward to all provinces

and territories signing up for this program because it goes hand in glove with our GST—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, Liberals claim they are committed to reconciliation, but their actions do not match their words. They said they would fix the indigenous infrastructure gap, but it is only getting worse, with piecemeal funding that deliberately obstructs self-determination. Indigenous communities have been saying they need reliable roads, homes, airports and marinas, but the Liberals are always letting people down.

Why do the Liberals keep failing indigenous peoples and underfunding their infrastructure?

● (1145)

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for her question. It is an important one.

Our government is committed to closing the infrastructure gap by 2030. Since 2016, we have put more than \$25 billion into infrastructure, which has meant more than 9,000 infrastructure projects in Canada for indigenous people.

We are going to continue to work toward reconciliation. We are going to continue to work toward closing the infrastructure gap. On this side of the House, we continue to be committed to reconciliation.

* * *

TAXATION

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Madam Speaker, families in my riding of Sudbury are worried about the added costs of the holiday season. They are seeing inflation and interest rates come down, but they are not really feeling that in their household budgets or at the cash register.

What is the government doing to help families in Sudbury?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member is the daughter of a coal miner. She grew up in a working-class household. She later became the executive director of Community Living Greater Sudbury. She understands the everyday challenges of working people. She has always fought for them, and she will continue to do so.

The member understood yesterday why it was important to put forward the tax cut we did. This will help families. This will help workers across the country. It is something that Conservatives do not understand. If we think of a young family who wants to go out to eat or wants to buy a car seat for their growing family, all of that is GST-exempt now for two months.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government has no border plan and no immigration plan. While the minister is busy rage-tweeting and name-calling, he has no answer for how to manage over three million temporary residents before the deadline, no strategy for removals and no serious border enforcement measures in place. The minister's antics are not just embarrassing; they are reckless, risking chaos at our border and straining relations with our closest allies.

Will the immigration minister quit his histrionics and present a Canada first plan to fix the immigration system he broke?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us talk about the Conservatives' record when it comes to the border. They slashed over a thousand jobs from the CBSA even when they were warned it would increase human trafficking, drugs and guns in this country. What else did they do? They cut 600 officers from the counterterrorism unit. Eventually, some had to be pulled from other departments within the RCMP because their mismanagement was so bad. It left officers off the line of duty for things like organized crime—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government did not answer my earlier question on a very serious issue, so I will ask it again.

U.S. border patrol released alarming data. CBS Boston reports that 155 suspects on the terror watch-list were encountered on the southern U.S. border this year, but 361 suspects on the watch-list were arrested on the northern border, more than double the number. Now Canada is threatened with 25% tariffs because of illegal border crossings.

What is the government's plan to protect our borders, our trade and Canadians from terrorism?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will tell members our plan. Our plan is to invest in our border service agencies, unlike what the Conservatives did. They cut over 1,000 employees from the CBSA and have the nerve to try to lecture us about border management. They cut over 600 employees from the RCMP dealing with counterterrorism. What had to happen? Members had to be brought in from other departments within the RCMP

Oral Questions

just to make up for the mismanagement of border services and counterterrorism under the Conservatives. Our plan will be—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Niagara Falls.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, everything is broken. For over a century, there was a consensus on the importance and value of immigration, yet that is being placed at risk by the government's incompetence. By December of next year, three million visas will expire, and individuals will need to obey the law and voluntarily leave Canada. The problem is there is no way to ensure that they will leave.

My question is simple: What is the Prime Minister's plan to enforce and ensure the rule of law so that people who need to leave Canada actually leave?

Mr. Paul Chiang (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, immigration is key to growing our economy and strengthening our communities. Canadians want a robust and sustainable immigration system that sets Canada and all who come here up for success. The levels plan is doing just that. We are reducing the number of temporary and permanent resident visas to alleviate pressure on housing and infrastructure. These measures will achieve long-term growth and ensure a well-managed, sustainable immigration system.

● (1150)

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hope that someone leaves Canada is not a plan. My own community has four international border crossings. Cross-border visitation and tourism have been a strength of our region, yet that is being placed at risk because of the government's incompetence. We have three million expiring visas in Canada by the end of December next year. Without a plan, many of those individuals may attempt to cross the border illegally into the United States.

Again, what is the government's plan so that people who need to leave Canada actually leave?

Oral Questions

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Madam Speaker, talk about incompetence. How does the member, who represents a border town, talk to his constituents about the fact that the Conservatives slashed 600 RCMP employees from dealing with counterterrorism and had to pull those employees from other places, like dealing with organized crime? How does the member talk to his community about the fact that they cut over 1,000 CBSA agents during their time, which led to an increase of human trafficking, drugs and guns right in his community?

* * *

[Translation]

SENIORS

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, public money should never be used to buy votes. If the Liberals go ahead with their plan, sending \$250 cheques to couples earning \$300,000 a year while leaving out pensioners would be indefensible. Forty per cent of Quebec pensioners, more than 700,000 people, receive the guaranteed income supplement. The Liberals cannot expect us to believe that these people are ultrawealthy.

If the Liberals go ahead with this bad idea to hand out cheques, will they at least include low-income pensioners?

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizens' Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one thing the Bloc Québécois cannot be faulted for is inconsistency. Yesterday, the Bloc Québécois voted against a measure to cut the GST. I would remind my colleague opposite that Bloc Québécois members also voted against lowering the retirement age from 67 to 65. They voted against the guaranteed income supplement for seniors. They voted against the 10% increase for seniors aged 75 and over. They have voted against every measure for seniors. They certainly are consistent.

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, for months, the Liberals have been saying over and over that it would be too expensive to invest \$3 billion to enhance old age security for seniors aged 65 to 74. They said that they did not have the money to support seniors. They do not have \$3 billion for seniors, but they managed to find nearly \$5 billion to send vote-buying cheques to people who earn \$150,000 a year.

This is not a matter of money. It is a matter of priorities. Seniors are our priority.

Why is the Liberals' priority trying to buy their way back into office?

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizens' Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would invite my colleague to look her constituents in the eye and tell them where the Bloc Québécois was when our government lowered the age of retirement eligibility for seniors from 67 to 65. We set up a dental care program for Canadians for which over 972,000 Quebecers are eligible. People in her riding are benefiting from that.

When she is out and about in her riding at Christmas, she should have to tell every constituent she meets that she voted against the GST cut, against seniors and against the dental plan.

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[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadians were shocked to see footage of a violent carjacker shooting at commuters. Of course, this individual was out on bail. The rate of violent crime in Canada has gone up 50% since the Prime Minister took office, and gun crime has gone up every year. According to a report just released by the Fraser Institute, Canada's rate of crime is 14% higher than it is in the United States.

When will the Prime Minister reverse his hug-a-thug policies?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what we have seen in the last 24 hours in Toronto is completely unacceptable and terrifying to the people in the city that I call home. We need to take action strictly and strongly on exactly what is happening in Toronto.

The federal bail law is very clear. If someone is at serious risk of reoffending, they are not to be given bail. I am going to cite Premier Ford, because his reaction was correct. He said, "It's ridiculous. These JPs and these judges, they have to start keeping people in jail.... We need tough judges and tough JPs when it comes to crime. People are fed up with it." That includes people in the House. Canadians are fed up with what we are seeing—

● (1155)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Fundy Royal.

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is ridiculous. These guys have been in government for nine years. What happened yesterday is a direct result of their policies. Auto theft is up 45% since 2015. In Toronto, it is up 328%. This is a direct result of the government's failure on bail and failure on crime. Gun crime is up 116% and homicides are up 28%.

When will the government step aside so Conservatives can crack down on crime and bring home safe streets for all Canadians?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, with respect to being tough on crime, the critical piece is the administration of justice at the level of the province. I am going to point out what Premier Ford just said. He talked about JPs and provincial court judges, both of whom he appoints. What is illustrated by the member from Nova Scotia is that in his very province, JPs, who decide things like bail, have to have legal training before they are appointed. That is an example of best practice in our federation. That is not the practice in Ontario.

If we are going to improve the quality of the justice being rendered, we need to ensure people like JPs, who are deciding things about serious risks of reoffending, have legal training in Ontario the way they do—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Sturgeon River—Parkland.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years of crime, chaos and disorder, the legacy of the NDP-Liberal government's radical soft-on-crime policies is in tatters. The Prime Minister's hug-a-thug recklessness has caused violent crime to surge, and Canadians were shocked to see a violent armed carjacking on our streets.

It is time to put Canadians' safety first. When will the government admit its failure, crack down on violent repeat offenders who are spreading deadly drugs and violence in communities and, better yet, just get out of the way so Conservatives can get the job done?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the people who decide to arrest an individual are police. The people who prosecute the bad guys are provincial Crowns. The people who render the decisions are provincially appointed JPs and provincial judges. The jails people run for people to be placed in when they are denied bail are provincial detention centres. All of that relates to the province.

The province needs to do its part and invest in resources for cops, Crowns, JPs and detention centres so we can keep Canadian cities safe.

* * *

HOUSING

Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in my riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler, the housing accelerator fund is being praised by municipal partners, non-profit housing providers and my constituents who are seeking options for affordable and accessible housing. The fund will provide over \$40 million to Kitchener to fast-track the construction of over 1,200 new homes over the next three years and more than 37,500 homes over the next decade. A few weeks ago, the Conservative leader announced his plan to cut this funding for Kitchener and communities across the country.

Can the minister explain the cost of Conservative cuts—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. Minister of Housing.

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by thanking

Oral Questions

my hon. colleague for her advocacy, which helped secure \$42.4 million for Kitchener to help the city build more homes quickly. The city is already moving on ambitious zoning reforms and changes to permitting processes that make it easier to build homes near transit, services and opportunities. It is exciting because it is moving forward with new projects, adding hundreds of social housing units for low-income families and taking part in an extraordinary initiative, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, to build 10,000 homes at half price in the region in which the city is located.

The Conservative Party plans to cut this essential program, which will only result in—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canada's closest ally and largest trading partner is threatening crippling 25% tariffs, yet the Prime Minister is simply too weak to stand up for Canadians and defend our economy. Worse, his radical environment minister is in denial and declared at committee this week, "Of course, we're going to continue with the carbon tax". Not satisfied with just punishing Canadians here at home, now he is even plotting a global carbon tax on international shipping that will jack up the price of everything.

How much pain do the NDP-Liberals need to inflict upon Canadians before we can have a carbon tax election?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): He is making stuff up, Madam Speaker. This is coming from an MP who sent homophobic mail to households during an election to attack an opponent. This is coming from an MP who published a deepfake video and a misinformation campaign that caused the London Free Press to say the same tactics are being mirrored on a larger scale by Russian disinformation campaigns. This is coming from an MP who has said "axe the tax" in this House so many times I cannot count, and yesterday, he voted to keep the tax on. He voted against a tax cut for Canadian families. Nobody believes him.

Oral Questions

• (1200)

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, those are incredible skills at distracting and deflecting. The member may take Canadians for fools, but they see the difference between a temporary two-month tax trick and real, permanent tax relief. While our largest trading partner threatens devastating tariffs, the radical environment minister is hell-bent on quadrupling his carbon tax because he simply wants to destroy our energy sector.

Why will the Prime Minister not just stop this madness and call a carbon tax election so Canadians can choose between a two-month temporary tax trick and axing the tax for everyone on everything forever?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, these guys are all tax and no axe.

We can think about this: Last night, Conservatives literally voted to keep a tax on Christmas. We are moving forward with a tax cut to relieve families of the burden on the cost of such things as car seats, diapers, groceries, clothing for their kids and gifts over the holidays. What is worse, they are also talking about cutting the programs that families rely upon for housing, for dental care, for health care, which make life more affordable.

The Conservatives are going to cut programs. The government is going to cut taxes.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, for nine years, this Liberal government has been imposing inflationary taxes, creating bureaucracy that stifles business. Because of the unfair application of the harmonized sales tax, or HST, recreational vehicle dealers in Quebec are being forced to pay an Ontario tax on products sold in Quebec. The result is that thousands of jobs are in jeopardy and businesses are under financial pressure, all while the CRA will have to reimburse them.

When will this government put an end to its useless bureaucracy and stop penalizing Quebec businesses?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am well aware of the file my colleague is talking about. We have looked at it from all sides. In fact, the process that is posing a problem right now is one that applies to every sector of activity in Canada. Making changes is very complex. In fact, we are having this discussion with the Minister of Finance. This approach applies to every industry in the country.

[English]

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is good news for Canadians. Our government has declared a GST holiday on groceries, snacks, and clothing and gifts for kids. They are all exempt from the GST starting December 14, which is an immediate lift for all Canadians as they celebrate the gift of Christmas.

Could the government share why this deserves support from all members of the House, especially Conservatives, who all ran on the idea in 2021 but turned Grinch last night and whose hearts are still three sizes too small?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member was a broadcaster in his community. He was well in touch with that community, covering everyday stories. He is well placed to raise this matter.

It is very true. Last night, we cut taxes for everyday people, for all Canadians, on many items. We know that it is an important time because this is the most expensive time of year for workers, for families, for Canadians. What do we see in January? Anyone who has worked in retail, restaurants or sectors like that knows that January offers a bit of a lull, but this offers stimulus. People will go back out there and get involved in the economy. However, the Conservatives are not—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women has called out Canada's slow progress to end the ongoing genocide against indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse people. The Liberals are failing to implement the calls for justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, failing to end forced sterilization and failing to address the overrepresentation of indigenous women in penitentiaries.

When will the Liberals stop violating the human rights of indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse folks and uphold international law?

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think we all agree that we need to do more to address murdered and missing indigenous women in Canada. That is why one of the key budget items in the last budget was a red dress alert. We are listening to stakeholders. We are following the good practices in communities such as Nova Scotia, which is showing how to do this.

We know that we can do better on this, and our government continues to be committed to doing so.

• (1205)

[Translation]

SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That the House express its support for La Presse journalist Daniel Renaud, who had a bounty put on his head by members of organized crime. That it reaffirm that the work of journalists is one of the pillars of our democracy and that it must be carried out without fear of reprisal or threats to the physical or moral integrity of those who carry it out.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): 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)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

PETITIONS

SENIORS

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Madam Speaker, today, I am proud to present two petitions in support of my colleague from Shefford's Bill C-319. These petitions seek to put an end to the injustice, unfairness and discrimination towards people aged 65 to 74. One of these petitions was signed by 403 people and the other was signed by 91 people who support this bill, which I hope will pass because we owe it to seniors.

VERCHÈRES WHARF

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to present a petition on the Verchères wharf. I have presented an electronic petition on this same subject before, but now I am showing that we have real signatures on paper. I hope that the response to both of these petitions will be positive.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Privilege

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED INTIMIDATION DURING PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am rising on a matter of privilege as it relates to last night's proceedings. The appropriate letter was submitted to your office earlier this morning pursuant to Standing Order 48(2). I am rising at the earliest opportunity, having had a chance to review the statement the Speaker made earlier today, as well as to do the necessary procedural research.

We appreciate the ruling and the guidance provided earlier today, but I believe this matter rises to the threshold to be considered a breach of privilege and a contempt of the House. As was noted this morning, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* states in Chapter 13, page 643, "During the taking of a vote, no Member is permitted to...make any noise or disturbance from the time the Speaker begins to put the question until the results of the vote are announced."

The Standing Orders are also clear. Standing Order 16(1) states, under "Decorum", "When the Speaker is putting a question, no member shall enter, walk out of or across the House, or make any noise or disturbance."

This is more than a point of order. What happened last night clearly amounted to contempt. Even leading up to yesterday evening, there has been an escalation in the opposition lobby and in this chamber in terms of the levels of toxicity and unacceptable behaviour. On multiple occasions, this behaviour has been raised and has gone unaddressed. Even yesterday, earlier in the day, there were times during the votes when members had to scream in the lobby in order to be heard by their colleagues and staff as a result of generally disruptive behaviour from the Conservatives. As the final vote approached, we knew this behaviour would be intentionally escalated in order to disrupt the vote.

We identified this expectation directly to the Speaker and to the table. Nothing was done. When the vote did take place, even with an earpiece, I was unable to hear my name and the names of my colleagues as they were called for the vote. Being able to hear the proceedings is critical to my job as deputy House leader and to the functioning of this place.

Why were all of these actions taken? It was because there was a deliberate and concerted attempt to intimidate members on the basis of their vote.

As you know, Madam Speaker, the reference books clearly state that intimidation of members could rise to a contempt of the House. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* states in Chapter 3, page 107:

In order to fulfill their parliamentary duties, Members should be able to go about their parliamentary business undisturbed. Assaulting, threatening, or insulting a Member during a proceeding of Parliament, or while the Member is circulating within the Parliamentary Precinct, is a violation of the rights of Parliament.

Bosc and Gagnon's text, citing Maingot's *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, Chapter 12, page 230, is even more explicit: "Any form of intimidation of a Member with respect to the Member's actions during a proceeding in Parliament could amount to contempt."

Privilege

These actions are not just intimidation; they amount to a disrespect of this place. Canadians expect members of Parliament to debate and disagree vigorously, but we need to uphold a standard of conduct. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Chapter 3, states on page 135, “Parliamentary privilege holds Members responsible for acting in character with the function they fulfill as elected representatives. Disobedience to orders of the House, and actions such as...intimidating persons are offences for which Members can be reprimanded”.

The disrespect shown to this place disrupted members, staff and pages, leading to a toxic environment and an unsafe workplace.

As was noted in the statement this morning, I was on my feet immediately after the vote in order to raise this matter right away. I believed that I had your attention and would be recognized. My caucus mates were yelling for me to be heard, and members of the table were visibly bringing to your attention the fact that I was on my feet. As an officer of an official party, it is completely unacceptable that I was not accorded this fundamental right to intervene, and it did not end there.

After we adjourned, I approached the Chair to ask how this could have been allowed. As I tried to address this with the Speaker, Conservative members of Parliament continued to call me names, harass me and attempt to bully me.

How can I do my job if Conservatives yell personal insults as I try to talk to the Speaker? To be harassed and intimidated while doing a fundamental part of my job as deputy House leader and, indeed, a member of Parliament, is beyond unacceptable.

● (1210)

Finally, I will bring to your attention a ruling by one of the Speaker's predecessors, the current House leader of the official opposition, on December 6, 2011:

Demonstrations are not part of the accepted standard of decorum in this chamber, not in the galleries by visitors to the House, and not on the floor by members of the House. Even brief applause, which has been tolerated at times when a particular member rising to vote is being acknowledged for his or her contribution to an initiative, is never encouraged. In fact, Standing Order 16(1) states:

When the Speaker is putting a question, no Member shall enter, walk out of or across the House, or make any noise or disturbance.

I repeat “or make any noise or disturbance”. This rule has traditionally applied until the results of the vote are announced. Clearly, sustained applause during a vote is out of order and should not happen again.

That is just applause, which does not even come close to what happened last night. The actions last night went well beyond the line drawn by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle and, in my view, amount to a breach of privilege. They had an impact on my ability to do my job, on the ability of my caucus mates to do theirs and on the political and non-political staff who ensure this place operates in a way that is befitting of what Canadians expect.

I understand the Conservatives have had a bad week. They have spent the whole week justifying their vote against a tax cut. They were clearly unhappy and that was visibly escalating throughout the day. However, we are seeing a dangerous pattern, where acts of harassment are escalating. Gentle pleas and reminders are not enough. Members need to be protected in this place. What happened last night amounts to contempt of the House. I believe normal debate

should be set aside as members debate what happened and how it was allowed to happen.

● (1215)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on this point of privilege, I have several points to make for your consideration in response to some of the items just raised by my colleague from the NDP.

First of all, she stated that she was not afforded the right to intervene. I was here. What I saw happen was that the Speaker saw the government House leader, who adjourned debate. The Speaker chose to adjourn debate and debate was adjourned. Let us start with that. From what I saw, the Speaker followed procedure in that point. Now, if my colleague had wanted to tell the Speaker there was an issue, she had plenty of time to send a page over or talk to somebody and say, “Hey, we would like to have a point of order.” From what I saw, that did not happen. I do believe procedure was followed last evening.

Second of all, as you are considering this point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, there is a bit of the story that was not told. My colleague was talking about harassment. What I watched unfold after the House was adjourned was that my colleague who has just raised the point of privilege walked very aggressively and assertively toward the Speaker's chair and took a very aggressive posture at the chair. Another one of her colleagues followed. Then she and two of her colleagues approached, in a very aggressive posture, two of my colleagues who were seated. There is video evidence of this, which was legally obtained because the House was adjourned. We are prepared to share that, post that or table it with the Speaker.

What I saw, since my colleague raised harassment, was three NDP members standing with a very aggressive posture, almost with hands in the faces of my colleagues, who then had to de-escalate the situation. Mr. Speaker, if you are going to consider harassment in this case, then you also must consider what happened after the House adjourned with the member who just raised this. It was completely inappropriate.

I also want to say that this colleague was feted in *The Hill Times* for raising a pledge on decorum and asking parliamentarians to take the heat down. In that situation, she had the ability to show leadership, but instead, what we saw was an aggressive march up to the Speaker's chair. We could see the body language of the Speaker kind of holding back and then NDP members stood over two of my colleagues in a highly aggressive, highly conflated way. Please take that into consideration, Mr. Speaker.

Third, I fundamentally disagree with the characterization of what happened in the House last night. The reality is that there were, I believe, close to 100 members of my caucus, the Conservative Party, who changed their travel plans to stay here to express the displeasure of their constituents, many of them small business owners, who understand that what we were voting on last night is going to have a detrimental impact on their small businesses. Many of our constituents vehemently oppose what the government did last night.

If my colleague wanted to bring the light and not the heat in this point of privilege, she would not have ascribed a motive to us at the end. I want you to note, Mr. Speaker, that she closed her point of privilege with a very partisan remark: that Conservatives were only here to harass and intimidate because we “had a bad week”, because we were voting against an atrociously bad policy that, as the government has heard, has been derided by virtually every group of every political stripe as an act of desperation. The fact that she, in her point of privilege, closed with a partisan argument in and of itself belies that this is a point of privilege at all.

What I saw last night, which you need to consider, Mr. Speaker, is that there were 100 members of the Conservative caucus here who were standing in force, in terms of standing up for our constituents. Our expressing the frustration that people across the country are feeling right now should not be allowed to be whitewashed by a member saying her feelings were hurt. That is a breach of my privilege and my ability to stand here in this place.

I have a lot of respect for all colleagues in this place. I try to—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I am being heckled by them right now as I am making this point. They just said, “That’s right you are.” Again, what the NDP members are doing is proving their hypocrisy on this point.

The last point I want to make is this. If you are going to consider this a breach of privilege, Mr. Speaker, then I need you to go through every instance that the NDP members have mercilessly heckled other members of the House. I understand, Mr. Speaker, it might be difficult for you to sometimes hear this. They are at the far end of the House. However, I sit over here and I hear it every day.

• (1220)

I usually let it go because I understand this Parliament is now at a point where it is extremely dysfunctional because we have the Liberal government refusing for weeks to reflect the will of Parliament and hand documents over. I understand everybody’s frustration in this place, but that does not mean we do not have the right to respect our constituents’ wishes and explain it as such. That is not a breach of privilege; that is exercising our privilege.

The NDP only had three or four members in the chamber last night on such a critical motion and they chose to support the government yet again, instead of fighting against disastrous policy after corruption scandal. Canadians want an election. If the New Democrats are feeling the heat because of their choices to keep propping up the corrupt government, then that is something they have to live with. That is not a breach of privilege; that is a choice for which they are facing consequences.

Privilege

I will not stand here and have my motive and my ability to speak be questioned by the NDP because of its questionable choices. No precedent has ever been made by the Chair that suggests this is something I have to experience. I would just ask all members in this place, out of respect for everyone, to bring the light and not the heat.

So many matters in front of this place right now have material impact on the lives of Canadians. To suggest it is a breach of privilege to have to listen to others in this place express displeasure on behalf of their constituents about what the government did is wrong. That is not in the spirit of the place. If there is a ruling that suggests otherwise, I suggest that is a breach of my privilege and the 120,000 Calgarians I represent.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the same question of privilege, since the matter has been brought forth, I would like to express what I saw and experienced last night.

As my hon. colleague said, we had just ended. I witnessed that the Speaker’s eye went to the government House leader, and then we adjourned. That is what I saw. I also did see and hear the NDP member for London—Fanshawe come literally storming up to the Speaker’s chair in a very physically and verbally aggressive way.

After that, when members were telling the member to calm down because her actions were obviously very inappropriate and unprofessional, she lashed out and attacked many members, in fact saying that they were intoxicated; this was to members who do not drink at all, for many reasons. It was very inappropriate.

The member then proceeded to come over to my desk. I felt physically intimidated. I hardly said anything because I was so in shock from what was going on. The member for London—Fanshawe, the member for Edmonton Griesbach and the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam came into my space, yelling at a colleague of mine, telling them to stand back, even though the colleague had not moved and even though the other members were actually in the space.

I feel that my privileges were infringed on. I have never in my professional career experienced anything like that with respect to the level of aggression and unprofessional behaviour that was occurring. I was quite shaken last night, actually.

Further to that, with respect to votes, I have been in this place listening, in particular to the NDP members, during many votes, being very aggressive, heckling and yelling “shame” very loudly and aggressively. We take it in this place. Now they are bringing a matter forth from what was a confidence vote last night. I have heard many of the members, for hours on end sometimes, saying comments that are completely meant to provoke and to make members feel like they are not representing their constituents. We hear it all the time from the NDP.

Privilege

I am not sure whether it is because the New Democrats are just frustrated by the fact that they were in an agreement that was then ripped up. They do not have the same level of control anymore, yet now they are still continuing to support the government in confidence votes. They are in a situation that maybe they are frustrated with. Maybe they cannot conceptualize how they are dealing with it.

I just want to make clear that what occurred last night after we rose, from the NDP, was very intimidating. I was packing up. I got up and I stepped back because I actually felt so physically threatened. Having people rushing at a colleague, right in my space, coming right over to my desk and touching the desk that I sit at, was something I had never experienced.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I hope that you take that into consideration as you are working on the issue, and I also hope that you will really think about it. I feel that my privilege last night was taken. I should be able to work in a safe place. I should be able to come and represent my constituents, vote the way that I believe my constituents want me to vote, without having the level of intimidation that occurred last night.

• (1225)

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a brief intervention on the question, to follow on the points from the member for Kelowna—Lake Country and the member for Calgary Nose Hill, who spoke well to the facts of what occurred last night.

Some of your consideration, Mr. Speaker, of the evidence can be found on the ParlVU feed, with the member for London—Fanshawe's storming the Speaker's chair. The Speaker, of course, will be able to attest to the volume of that exchange, which was after he had declared that the House had been adjourned.

For my part, the House was adjourned, there was a fair bit of volume in the House, and the member for London—Fanshawe made an utterance that was not true with respect to another hon. colleague. I requested that she apologize. The request was rebuffed, so I insisted on it. I sat in my chair, and the member for London—Fanshawe, the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, the member for Edmonton Griesbach and the member for Vancouver East all came to my seat and leaned over top of me.

During the exchange, of which there are multiple videos that the official opposition can make available to the Speaker, one can see there are hands being put in my face, there is obvious agitation on the part of the four members and there are very few words offered by me in the exchange.

When the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam made a statement about me that was false, I simply said that it was not true. The activity continued until the Sergeant-at-Arms instructed the four members to disperse. While the four members aggressively and loudly were over the top of my desk while I was seated, they continued. I remained seated, with very few words offered in response.

During yesterday's voting proceedings, the Speaker will know that at no time was his eye drawn to me for disorder, nor was I mentioned as having contributed to any of the matters that were raised by the member for London—Fanshawe.

This is a situation where a member has raised a question about their privilege having been violated and about harassment in this place, when the same member stormed the Speaker's chair, which cannot be accepted; made a falsehood about a colleague; and then was simply asked, with no accusations or personal attacks, to apologize for the falsehood. Then there was a refusal; there was not a discussion, but there was an inexplicable amount of vitriol unleashed on me and on the member for Kelowna—Lake Country while we were seated.

We said nothing in response. Perhaps we should have said something, but the situation needed to be de-escalated, and I am appreciative that the Sergeant-at-Arms did what he did in dispersing the members.

The Speaker then returned to the chamber to speak with me about what had occurred. I was still in my seat, and the member for London—Fanshawe could be heard using a raised and aggressive voice outside the chamber while we were still inside. That is really important in order to add some context to what everyone was experiencing in that moment.

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure how you will rule on the matter. I can tell you there is a fair bit of evidence that members of the official opposition can provide you—

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, there are limits to presenting alternative realities and ignoring the facts. The Conservative members are currently making speeches that have nothing to do with the question of privilege raised by my colleague from London—Fanshawe. What the member is talking about was already addressed by the Speaker this morning. The Speaker of the House made a statement about the interactions the Conservatives are currently attacking without cause.

I want to read the Speaker's statement. He said, "I also wish to take a few moments to address another situation that occurred after the vote. After the result was announced and Bill C-78 was adopted"—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I thank the hon. member.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel-Marie-Marie): I ask all members to show a little decorum. The Chair has the floor.

The point of order was a matter of debate. The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie may rise on the question of privilege when the other members have finished.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes has the floor so he can finish his speech.

[English]

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, there is a significant amount of evidence that can be offered by members of the official opposition in the form of video. It is not offered with any form of partisan context; it would simply provide an unbiased accounting for what occurred.

I will close with this: It is important that when there is an accusation of harassment in this place, it be taken seriously, but it is also important that the real context of what unfolded be understood and appreciated. Certainly, all of the details I have provided are true, but they are also incredibly important and paint a real picture about perhaps the sincerity that is being used in the offering of the question of privilege that has been raised by the member for London—Fanshawe.

• (1235)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I thank the hon. member.

I want to remind all members rising to intervene on this question of privilege to try to go straight to the point, in other words to the points that were raised in this question.

The deputy House leader of the official opposition.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what happened yesterday in the House is unacceptable on many levels. It is especially unacceptable for a member, from any party, to intimidate a staff member from another party in the lobby.

This is the part of the story that the deputy leader of the NDP left out, but yesterday, the member for Vancouver East literally used her position, her authority, to belittle and intimidate a Conservative Party and official opposition staffer. I think this story need also be mentioned—

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Conservative member's comments have absolutely nothing to do with the question of privilege that was raised by my NDP colleague from London—Fanshawe. I would ask him to come back to the question before us now and not cause distractions in order to change the subject.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The hon. deputy leader of the official opposition can continue his intervention and try to come back to the question of privilege being discussed here. Obviously a bit of latitude is always given by the Chair.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I can understand that the NDP member would be terribly embarrassed by the actions of his colleague from Vancouver East, but I would remind him that it was his colleague, the deputy House leader of his party, who mentioned what had happened in the lobby during her speech on the question of privilege. I therefore have every right to set the record straight and lay out the real version of what happened in the lobby following this incident.

The member for Vancouver East was so aggressive that the employee in the NDP lobby had to physically take hold of her and remove her from the Conservative section of the lobby to stop her

Privilege

from harassing the Conservative Party employee. Many of us witnessed the incident.

Again, once you are fully informed of the facts, I encourage you to accept the invitation extended to you several times by my colleagues who described this event, to ask to see the video footage taken after the mace was removed from the House to get a clear, fair, and honest idea of what happened, based on all the facts and all the evidence brought before you.

As mentioned by the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, I cannot accept my colleagues being intimidated here in the House by four members of an opposing party, who went to his desk to berate him, to spread falsehoods and to claim all sorts of things that did not happen and that never happened.

I invite you to be prudent. I invite you to look at all the facts. You will see that what we saw yesterday evening was an expression of uncontrollable frustration by the NDP who, my goodness, must have regretted its vote to keep the current government in power, once again.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I believe that the Chair has heard enough arguments. All of this will be taken into consideration.

The Chair will come back to the House if necessary in due time.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

• (1240)

[English]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed consideration of the motion, of the amendment as amended and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a simple comment for the member for Winnipeg North. I want to congratulate him. He has spoken over 300 times on this parliamentary question of privilege debate, which is 10 times more than, I believe, any other member in the House of Commons. He has contributed quite a lot to the debate.

My question for the member is a question of fairness. Does he think that every member in the House should have the same privilege and opportunity to speak to this bill as he has had? If he does not think we should all have the opportunity to speak to it over 300 times, then how many times does he think, 150 times, 100 times, 50 times? I just want a number that would be fair to every member to be able to speak to this parliamentary debate on this specific motion to represent our constituents.

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that is an interesting question. I would recommend that the member review the Hansard and look at my thoughts on parliamentary reform, dual chambers and the potential of using Fridays, and how we can ensure that every member is afforded an opportunity to address virtually any issue. I think that there is a great deal of merit to it.

I am a parliamentarian, first and foremost. Part of my role, as the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, is to hold opposition members to account for their behaviour. The member will find that, out of those 300 times the member has cited, as I do not count, what I am doing in part is trying to get the official opposition to be accountable for its irresponsible actions. That is why I highlighted the fact that what we are witnessing is borderline contempt of Parliament. I do not say that lightly. I have been a parliamentarian for close to 35 years; I am not sure as I do not know the actual number. Canadians should be concerned about this type of abuse of power, even when the leader of the Conservative Party is in opposition.

My time has run out. I respect that fact and will wait for the next question.

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the member for Winnipeg North his opinion as to why the Conservative Party is stopping this chamber from doing its work over the last several weeks, if not two months now.

I really find this very challenging and it is, frankly, appalling. It is halting our democracy from doing the work it needs to do. That is deeply concerning, as we talk about democracy, foreign interference and the protection of these touchstone values.

First, why is the Conservative Party stopping our democracy by halting this chamber?

Second, why is the Leader of the Opposition not getting a security clearance? Is he running away from something? Is there some question mark, some shadow in the closet, foreign interference, something like that?

Why is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question from the parliamentary secretary. He has posed it in two ways. The first one is in regard to the process that we are witnessing. People following the debate need to understand that we are debating a motion that the Conservatives introduced, which takes the issue and says it should be dealt with at PROC, yet they have now put up literally hundreds of speeches, not interventions. The member opposite made reference to me, in terms of interventions. They have actually put up hundreds of speeches on the issue.

By doing that, they are preventing the House from being able to deal with a wide spectrum of issues. One of those issues that the members make reference to is the issue of foreign interference. He

posed the other question in regard to why it is that the leader of the official opposition has not agreed to get the security clearance. I personally believe that it is because he has something that he is hiding from his past. He is scared that by getting that security clearance, Canadians will find that out. We need to find that out.

• (1245)

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am fascinated by that recent comment, that there might be something in the Leader of the Opposition's past that, if he gets a security clearance, gets to see it and is required to not speak about it, will somehow become public. I do not see how that works.

This is a terrible secret that is known to the Prime Minister, something that is a scandal, something that is terrible. The Prime Minister, who leaks regularly from this classified information, has not shared it with anybody.

What on earth is the member, in his parallel universe, talking about?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would ask the member to follow the ball here. What we are talking about is that every leader in the House of Commons has—

An hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Can I ask the hon. member to allow the parliamentary secretary to answer?

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker: Everyone has the right to answer what has been asked of them.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. I do not know what riding he is from; I will remember. He is having a really hard time controlling his toxic masculinity. I know, certainly, because they use sexist—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are not going to start a debate on this. I have already ruled. The hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston will have to allow the hon. parliamentary secretary to answer. There will be other opportunities to contest or diverge from the opinions of one another.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member does have to contain himself. Having said that, just so the member really has an understanding, the leaders of the NDP, the Bloc and the Greens all have the security clearance that enables them to deal with the issue of foreign interference. The only leader in the House of Commons who has chosen not to get it is his own leader. It begs the question. Why?

I believe that there is something in the past, with respect to the leader of the Conservative Party, that is preventing him from getting that security clearance. The member that he is sitting by will tell us that I have raised about a couple hundred interventions, I think he said. This is nothing new. I have been raising this issue for weeks now.

I would encourage the member to listen, in terms of what is taking place and—

Privilege

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his speech, the many speeches he has made in this place and the wisdom he bestows upon all of us, though I am sure we can all argue and debate the truth of them.

However, I do agree with the member on one critical fact, which is the leader of the official opposition will not get his security clearance. He will not get his security clearance, likely because, and maybe the member can clarify, he is implicated in that process. If he was implicated in that process, maybe it would be convenient for a leader to be shielded from that reality. If he is shielded from the truth, he can have willful ignorance.

Is that the case here?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, let us think about it. It was not that long ago when the Conservatives were jumping up and asking about the issue of foreign interference. They were questioning it all the time. All of a sudden, the leadership of the Conservative Party has been interfered with, potentially by foreign interference.

By the way, there are now Conservatives who have allegations of foreign interference against them and they have been quickly silenced. Now we wait for the Conservative Party leader to do the honourable thing and get the security clearance so that instead of protecting himself, we can be protecting the interests of Canadians. That does beg the question as to why he is scared to get that security clearance. I believe, and I have been saying this for weeks now, it is because he has something in his past that he wants to hide.

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member across the way. Earlier in his speech, he indicated that two past leaders of the Conservative Party left the party. Something is interesting, and maybe he can help me understand this.

We have been canvassing in the GTA, and I am hearing the opposite from constituents who are saying to me that the Liberal Party has left them, and they no longer feel comfortable that the Liberal Party can support them. They want a carbon tax election so that our common-sense leader can make things right and get rid of the Liberals once and for all.

• (1250)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, let us hear what Joe Clark, former Progressive Conservative prime minister, said. He said, “I think it’s a party that does not respect the progressive traditions of the Progressive Conservative Party and, consequently, does not reflect the country.... My party is over.” That is from Joe Clark. We have—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): There is no more time. The hon. member will probably have an opportunity later.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for King—Vaughan.

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, once again, I rise in the House to speak to the privilege motion. In

case anyone at home is confused about this, it is all about why we are debating this motion. Back in June, members of Parliament passed a motion demanding that all documents related to Sustainable Development Technology Canada be transferred to the RCMP for investigation within 30 days. The government did not do this.

On our first day back in the fall, the opposition House leader raised a question of privilege. The Speaker of the House agreed that the government ignored an order of the House, and it has since ignored the Speaker’s ruling. The government will argue that it did not ignore the ruling and did, in fact, table the requested documents. However, what it tabled was 29,000 pages of black ink. The documents were almost completely redacted.

What have they redacted? What are they hiding? My colleagues and I have asked every day in the House for the Liberals to adhere to the orders of the House and turn over all the reports unredacted for the RCMP to investigate. To date, they still refuse. Why? Of course, the government is going to say that the Prime Minister’s department, the Privy Council Office, has the right to redact documents. However, the act actually says that if a body such as Parliament were to order the production of documents, the Privy Act cannot be used as an excuse to redact information.

Let us go back a bit. Why did the House demand that the SDTC documents be handed over to the RCMP in the first place? The Auditor General did an audit for five years of SDTC. She sampled only about half of the transactions, 226 transactions, the board approved, and the Auditor General found that 186 of the 226 transactions were conflicted. In other words, 82% of those transactions. This means that only 18% were in good faith. If our kids came home from school with a score of 18%, they would need to do some explaining.

What do these conflicts of interest really mean? They mean the Liberal board members in charge of distributing funds that were meant to help Canadian companies develop and deploy sustainable technologies were funnelling money into their own pockets. Why do I say Liberal board members? It is because the chair of the board was hand-picked by the Prime Minister himself, ignoring any kind of fair hiring process.

Let us start with her. She approved \$390 million in funding for projects that had extremely disturbing conflicts. According to the Auditor General, the Liberals’ green slush fund handed out \$58 million to projects without a promise that the contribution agreement terms were met. Another \$58 million went to 10 projects deemed ineligible, as they could not prove an environmental benefit or were not developing green technologies. Finally, there was \$334 million in over 186 cases where SDTC board members held a conflict of interest.

Privilege

• (1255)

Here is an interesting piece of information that my colleague from South Shore—St. Margarets shared previously. The Prime Minister's far-left radical environment minister is profiting from Sustainable Development Technology Canada. One may ask how this is possible. Prior to his election, he was a paid lobbyist for a green technology investment firm called Cycle Capital. Cycle Capital is a venture capital firm that has received investments of over \$200 million from the Liberal green slush fund since it was created. Remember that these funds were approved by the Prime Minister's hand-picked board members, including the environment minister's long-time personal friend Andrée-Lise Méthot. Interestingly, Andrée-Lise Méthot was not only hand-picked by the Prime Minister to sit on the board of SDTC but is also the founder and owner of Cycle Capital.

However, it gets even better. During her time on the board, companies in which Cycle Capital was invested received more than \$100 million of taxpayer money. These taxpayer dollars inflated the value of Cycle Capital. Since the Prime Minister and his corrupt band of merry men took office, Cycle Capital has grown from \$200 million to over \$600 million. Let us connect the dots. Who benefits from a company whose value is inflated by taxpayer dollars? It is shareholders, of course. Guess who continues to hold shares in Cycle Capital. It is the far-left, radical, orange suit-wearing environment minister. This is the very definition of a conflict of interest.

As we all know, the tone of any organization starts at the top, and at the top of the Liberal-NDP government, the tone is corruption. As my colleague from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex stated the other day during her intervention, “The government has a pattern of giving its friends hundreds of millions of dollars, taxpayer dollars, while shirking responsibility for all it has done to destroy Canadians' livelihoods.” She took us all on a walk down scandal lane and revealed 68 of the Liberal scandals. In my previous intervention, I listed some of them and this morning I will mention a few more. I cannot possibly list all of them, as I only have 20 minutes, but here are a few.

There was the pressure put on the first indigenous justice minister and attorney general, Jody Wilson-Raybould, by the Prime Minister to get Liberal donor SNC-Lavalin off the hook. He fired her when she refused to the help with the cover-up. There was the “people experience things differently” response by the Prime Minister to groping allegations. There was the WE Charity scandal, for which the Prime Minister prorogued Parliament to escape scrutiny. There was the Prime Minister's assault on an NDP member of Parliament on the floor of the House of Commons. There was export of personal protective equipment to China during a pandemic and giving hundreds of thousands of dollars in ventilator contracts to Liberal Party insider Frank Baylis.

• (1300)

There were the fake charges against Mark Norman, the illegal invocation of the Emergencies Act and the fabrication of reasons to justify its illegal use. There was also the trampling of Canadians with horses and the seizing of Canadians' bank accounts.

There was the Winnipeg lab scandal and the Public Health Agency tracking scandal. There was the rampant abuse of staff in the office of the former governor general, who was appointed by the Prime Minister. There was the Governor General's \$100,000 private jet parties and the Liberals' connection to an illegal casino magnate.

There were the vaccine delays, the Prime Minister's racist costumes on an official trip to India, his racist blackface costumes and the mass airport delays and cancellations. There was the decriminalization of hard drugs. There were the over 72 secret orders in council. There was the Liberals' diplomats attending a party at the Russian embassy during the Ukrainian war and the minister who gave a \$17,000 contract to a Liberal-aligned media firm. There were also efforts to obtain unwarranted border searches of electronics and restrictions on online free speech.

There was the \$11 million in renovations to the Prime Minister's cottage, the \$8 million barn built at Harrington Lake and a Jamaican vacation that cost taxpayers at least \$162,000. There was the increase of the carbon tax during an energy crisis and the misinformation to Canadians about electoral reform. There was the skipping of the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation so that the Prime Minister could go surfing in Tofino. There was the elimination of mandatory minimums for gun offences while going after law-abiding firearms owners and the Prime Minister's party in Scotland while Canadians were under lockdown. There were the failed reforms of the ATIP system and the contracts awarded to government employees without proper bids, such as those for GC Strategies for the ArriveCAN app, or, should I say, the arrive scam app. There were also the Liberal cover-ups of foreign interference and the compromised Liberal MPs who continue to sit in the House of Commons.

There was the Bernardo and Magnotta prisoner transfer, which is a huge one since there has been a 75% increase in violence against women in this country due to the Liberals' misguided laws. There was the former Nazi scandal invitation and his recognition in the House of Commons, and the delay in recognizing the IRGC as a terrorist organization.

We have skyrocketing debt, skyrocketing inflation, skyrocketing addictions and skyrocketing overdose deaths. After nine years of the Prime Minister, everything is broken. He has skyrocketed the debt to the point where we are spending more on the interest of the debt than we do on health care. He has also skyrocketed the cost of groceries, sending more than two million people per month to food banks.

Privilege

● (1305)

He has skyrocketed crime with his catch-and-release bail and the elimination of mandatory minimum sentences for major crimes. Auto theft is up 200%, violence against women is up 75%, and the Prime Minister's legalization of hard drugs has seen the pop-up of drug dens near children's schools and playgrounds and has caused a massive number of overdose deaths.

Now we have the Liberals' attempt to bribe us with our own money in the form of a \$250 cheque to those who earn \$150,000 net income. I repeat, that is net income, meaning after-tax dollars, but there is nothing for those who truly need supports. Here is what the Liberals forgot to tell us: They will borrow more cash and print more money, which by their own admission will lead to higher inflation and devalue our dollar. More borrowing means interest rates are likely to stay higher for longer. We are already seeing evidence of this in the bond market. Borrowing more means our kids and grandkids will foot the bill. This is simply short-term gain for long-term pain.

If the Prime Minister is so confident in his economic policies, why does he not let the people decide and call an election? He can run on his failed economic ideology, while common-sense Conservatives would run on our common-sense plan to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

Axing the tax would permanently lower the price of gas, groceries and home heating. We would build the homes by axing the sales tax on new homes, sparking 30,000 extra homes built each year and effectively lowering prices. This week the member for Winnipeg North asked why we should listen to "the self-serving leader of the Conservative Party". I really hope the member would take some time to reflect on his own party and the actions of his leader. He may come to realize it is the Liberal leader, the Prime Minister, who is self-serving, as evidenced by the list of growing scandals designed to line his pockets and those of his friends.

It is the Conservative Party that cares about Canadians, all Canadians, not just powerful insiders. Perhaps he and all members on the other side of the House will eventually realize the words coming out of their mouths do not match the actions of their party. They have spent millions and millions of taxpayer dollars on their friends, while Canadians struggle to make ends meet.

I imagine the good that \$400 million could have done, the deserving lives it could have changed, and I ask this: Is it not the very definition of self-serving to ignore the ruling of the House to provide documents that could self-incriminate? Once again, the members on that side of the House like to project their character flaws onto us.

As the Liberals' popularity plummets in the polls, they continue to gaslight Canadians. What they do not seem to realize is that Canadians have had enough. Canadians need a common-sense plan that puts Canadians first. Common-sense Conservatives would put Canada first. We would build our military and secure our borders. Canadians want a prime minister with the brains and backbone to stand up for this country, a leader who knows how to play chess, not checkers. In the words of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, "Canada first...and Canada always." It is time to stop the corruption, axe the tax to help all Canadians and call a carbon tax election today.

● (1310)

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech. She mentioned economic policies, so I have a question.

The Canadian economy is improving. Inflation has come down to 2%. Interest rates have been cut four or five times. Though the economy is changing for good, the lingering effects of high inflation and high interest rates are still affecting Canadians, and the government is taking steps to help those Canadians in need.

I would like to ask two things. First, why did she vote against the government's measures cutting the sales tax to help Canadians? Second, I would like to ask her why she is not telling Canadians they will not receive the Canada carbon rebate they are getting now, if her proposals are approved.

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, I am a little concerned about those questions because let us look at the facts. Number one, the Liberals are bribing us with our own money. Number two, if they feel they have done such a great job for Canadians, can they explain to Canadians watching today why over two million Canadians have to use food banks? My grandfather came here in 1950 and food banks were not even in existence because people could work and pay for their own groceries without having to depend on food banks. We need to take this country back and the only way we are going to do it is with the common-sense leader of the common-sense Conservatives for the Canadian people.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to come back to two specific points in my colleague's speech.

She talked about the \$250 cheque that would go out to those making up to \$150,000 in net income, as she said. In Quebec, that is roughly equivalent to \$270,000 a year. The government is going to go further into debt to send cheques to these people, and yet it is excluding people with no employment income, who are often the most vulnerable. Seniors and people with disabilities come to mind.

I would also like her to comment on the two-month GST break that excludes nearly all basic expenses for the most vulnerable households, such as taxes on heating, electricity, telephone and Internet. As everyone knows, groceries and rent are already tax-free.

Would it not have been wiser to simply double the GST rebate to target those who really need it?

*Privilege**[English]*

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, that is an excellent point. I want to say a few things. First of all, we have a food bank in my riding called the Sai Dham Food Bank that I happen to assist in many different ways. It serves 4,000 seniors every single month by delivering food baskets. In one month alone, it delivered 5.42 million meals. That is unheard of in this country. We need to ensure we help the most vulnerable.

Let me ask another question. Do the members of Parliament need that \$250? No. The government is bribing us with our own tax dollars. It is going to shoot up inflation and we are all going to have to pay for it, including the most vulnerable. We need to get back to the basics. For instance, we need to stick to a budget. The Prime Minister said that “the budget will balance itself”. He needs a lesson. The budget does not balance itself; it is our responsibility to ensure that we budget.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened to my colleague's speech. I think the Conservatives have forgotten that, although it is not perfect, the measure that was passed yesterday will still eliminate the tax on babies' diapers, car seats, children's clothing and shoes, and food that is processed and prepared in grocery stores, like sandwiches or chickens that have been roasted in store. This will really help the average person. It seems that the only tax cuts the Conservatives want are those for CEOs and big companies that make millions of dollars in profit.

Another meaningful NDP action is the dental care program. Already, one million Canadians and Quebecers have had their dentist's fees paid thanks to this program.

If, by some misfortune, her party were to take power, can my colleague commit to maintaining the dental care program, which is helping her constituents and seniors across the country?

- (1315)

[English]

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, the \$250 is our tax dollars. We are going to have to pay it back.

As far as the member's claim that he wants to help people who need the money, all of us MPs who will be receiving the \$250 do not need it. It should go to people who need it: people with disabilities and seniors who cannot afford to feed themselves and are going to food banks. I have volunteered at a seniors home for over a decade and when I speak to seniors in my community I hear it day in and day out: They do not understand why their taxes and utility bills continue to go up. It is because of the carbon tax. The only way to bring these issues to light is to reduce and get rid of the carbon tax and to call a carbon tax election now and let the common-sense Conservatives with our common-sense leader lead this country back.

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Madam Speaker, in my riding I hear mostly from seniors who actually watch what is going on here in the House of Commons. The one thing I get asked continually is, “What about us? What have we done? Why are we

forgotten?” It is continuous and now we have seen another package, seniors are not going to get the \$250, so they are upset.

My question to my colleague as the critic for seniors is this: What could we do, with all these scandals and all the money out there, to help seniors in our ridings and across Canada when we look at the amount of wasted money the government has spent the last little while?

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, I visit seniors in my community on a regular basis and I am hearing exactly the same thing as this member. Recently we were canvassing in the GTA and the seniors I met were very upset. They are now looking at leaving their homes and either trying to live with their children or find an encampment because they cannot afford to stay in their homes. Anyone who has volunteered with seniors knows that when a senior is moved out of the environment they are accustomed to, they do not survive. That is the sad reality of the Liberal mismanagement of money that has caused this inflationary situation we all face in Canada.

My seniors and the seniors I have spoken to in this country have all said the same thing: that we need a common-sense Conservative to lead us back to the way things were. That is going to happen with our leader.

Call an election and we will make it happen.

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the member opposite, and I would like her not to evade the question, why her leader will not get security cleared.

Canadians want to know this. I want to know this. Maybe she has the answer to why her leader is not getting security cleared. It baffles me. Anybody who serves in this Parliament should be ready and willing to personally be security cleared, especially party leaders. I would like to know, without any evasion, why her leader has not been security cleared.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, could you please call quorum?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We will check.

And the count having been taken:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Yes, there is quorum.

The hon. member for King—Vaughan.

Privilege

[English]

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister has to release the names to Canadians so we can tackle the situation and discover who is involved with foreign interference. He is the only one who can do it. Let us get it done.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member raised an absolutely true point. Seniors having to be dislocated and evicted from their homes is a death sentence for many. That is happening because of financialized landlords.

People in my riding have come to my office to say they received an above-guideline rent increase, forcing them out of their homes. As well, I have been in buildings that were getting rezoned, where people in their seventies have asked me to find them a place to live, a nursing home, because they cannot afford to live in these financialized, purpose-built rental buildings they had lived in for 10, 20 or 30 years. It is disgusting. The Conservatives continue to protect those corporate landlords who are killing seniors by displacing them out of their homes.

What does the member have to say about the Conservatives' terrible record on protecting financialized landlords?

• (1320)

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, seniors need our help. I agree with that, but what the member fails to remember is that the Liberals, along with the NDP, have been in power for nine years. They have done absolutely nothing to ensure homes are built for our seniors, for our children and for people who cannot afford it. Maybe instead of voting with the Liberals, the New Democrats should look into their own souls and decide what is right for this country.

I will tell members what is right for this country: a common-sense Conservative to bring back common sense for the Canadian people.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, never has so much effort been put into renewing Parliament as has been over the past decade. Over \$5 billion is being spent on renovating Parliament Hill.

Centre Block, with its iconic Peace Tower, has been shuttered since December 2018 so that magnificent building can be restored. Tonnes of rock have been blasted out of the Canadian Shield. Some 40,000 truckloads of rock have been removed to create a pit 75 feet deep for a new underground structure. The leaded windows in the building have been taken out and are being restored. The copper roof has been replaced. The stonework is being repointed. The woodwork is being restored, and the mechanicals in the building are being completely overhauled.

Confederation Building has had its windows completely removed and restored, and the outside of the building has been cleaned and repointed. The outside of East Block has been restored. Its stonework has been cleaned and repointed and the copper roof redone. Here in West Block, the quadrangle has been turned into an atrium that houses the glass chamber we now sit in. The stonework looks as bright as the day it was laid, over a century and a half ago. While Centre Block is still undergoing work, the buildings on Parliament Hill are sparkling with new renovations.

However, Parliament is more than its buildings. The essence of Parliament is its procedure and practices, its privileges, its powers and immunities and its authorities. The buildings are secondary. While the buildings gleam and shine, particularly at night, the authorities of Parliament do not. The \$5 billion in renovations on Parliament Hill belies a Parliament that is unable to do its job, a Parliament that is unable to fulfill its constitutional role as a legislative and deliberative body that holds the government to account, a Parliament that is unable to deliberate about the Sustainable Development Technology Canada fund because it is unable to get the documents related to that fund, and a Parliament that is unable to hold the government to account because it is unable to get the documents about the Sustainable Development Technology fund.

Let us start from first principles. Our Constitution is the supreme law of this land. The preamble and section 18 of the Constitution Act, 1867 lay out the privileges, immunities and powers of the House. The beginning of the preamble reads:

WHEREAS the Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick have expressed their Desire to be federally united into One Dominion under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, with a Constitution similar in Principle to that of the United Kingdom:

Section 18, which was reiterated by Parliament itself in section 4 of the Parliament of Canada Act, reads:

The privileges, immunities, and powers to be held, enjoyed, and exercised by the Senate and by the House of Commons, and by the members thereof respectively, shall be such as are from time to time defined by Act of the Parliament of Canada, but so that any Act of the Parliament of Canada defining such privileges, immunities, and powers shall not confer any privileges, immunities, or powers exceeding those at the passing of such Act held, enjoyed, and exercised by the Commons House of Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and by the members thereof.

The preamble and section 18 grant to the House of Commons the unfettered right to send for persons, papers and records. The House of Commons has the unfettered right to order any and all documents. Its right to order the government, or anyone, to provide documents is absolute.

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, third edition, 2017, edited by Marc Bosc and André Gagnon, reads:

No statute or practice diminishes the fullness of that power rooted in House privileges unless there is an explicit legal provision to that effect, or unless the House adopts a specific resolution limiting the power. The House has never set a limit on its power to order the production of papers and records.

• (1325)

Speaker Milliken also affirmed that absolute right of this House to order documents in his rulings of April 27, 2010, and March 9, 2011. Again, I quote from the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, which states:

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By virtue of the preamble and section 18 of the Constitution Act, 1867, Parliament has the ability to institute its own inquiries, to require the attendance of witnesses and to order the production of documents, rights which are fundamental to its proper functioning. These rights are as old as Parliament itself.

The right to order the production of documents is as old as this place itself. The right to order the production of documents is fundamental to the proper functioning of Parliament. The right to order the production of documents is a constitutional power. It is an essential power for Parliament, as a legislative and deliberative body, so that we in this House can legislate, deliberate and hold the government to account.

There is no limit on the kinds of documents that can be requested. The only prerequisite is that the documents exist, that they are either in hard copy or in electronic form and that they are located in Canada. These documents can be in the possession of government, civil society or the private sector.

Again, I will quote from Bosc and Gagnon. Although this passage refers to committees, it equally applies to the House as a whole.

It states:

The Standing Orders do not delimit the power to order the production of papers and records. The result is a broad, absolute power that on the surface appears to be without restriction. There is no limit on the types of papers likely to be requested; the only prerequisite is that the papers exist in hard copy or electronic format, and that they are located in Canada. They can be papers originating from or in the possession of governments, or papers the authors or owners of which are from the private sector or civil society (individuals, associations, organizations, et cetera).

The power to order documents is absolute. Nothing can impinge on the right of this House to order documents, not unwritten conventions, not common law, not even statute law.

I will quote from the 42nd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs of the 41st Parliament's first session, which states:

Since parliamentary privileges form part of the Constitution, laws must be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with them, and where there is a conflict between privileges and statutory provisions, the statutory provisions are "of no force and effect" to the extent of the inconsistency. This constitutional principle is a fundamental postulate and organizing principle of the Canadian constitutional structure, and is clearly set out in subsection 52(1) of the Constitution Act, 1982 that provides: "[t]he Constitution of Canada is the supreme law of Canada, and any law that is inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution is, to the extent of the inconsistency, of no force or effect."

Courts have recognized the special constitutional status attached to parliamentary privilege and the limitations it imposes over their own jurisdiction, and that of the executive.

The government has failed to comply with an order of this House for the documents related to the Sustainable Development Technology Canada fund. This is not the first time. In the previous Parliament, the government also refused to comply with four orders of the House and its committee for the production of the Winnipeg lab documents, even though the House ordered the documents be handed over in secret, under lock and key, so as to prevent the release of information injurious to national security. Incredibly, in the dying days of the last Parliament, the government had the audacity to take the Speaker of the House to court to try and use statute law to defy our constitutional law. It was only after three years that the government recanted and handed over the documents to the House.

Let us compare the government's treatment of Parliament when it asks for documents with how other governments treat their national legislatures.

• (1330)

In the United Kingdom, in the fall of 2018, the House of Commons ordered the government of then prime minister Theresa May to hand over a solicitor-client privileged document in its unredacted form. This was a legal opinion prepared by United Kingdom's then attorney general Geoffrey Cox. He prepared a legal opinion for cabinet about the validity of the Irish backstop in the Brexit deal. The former prime minister resisted handing over the document to the House, and the House subsequently adopted a motion holding the government in contempt, indicating that it had to hand over the solicitor-client privileged document. The former prime minister then complied with that order and handed over the document forthwith.

Let us do a comparison to what happened south of the border when an individual refused to hand over a document to Congress. Steve Bannon refused to appear in front of a congressional committee and refused to hand over documents to it. He was indicted on one count of refusing to appear in front of a committee and a second count of refusing to hand over documents to a committee, and he served four months in prison for that refusal. That is how important the constitutional order in other democracies treats the right of a national legislature to get documents from the government, individuals or civil society. That is why the founders of Confederation wrote the preamble to the Constitution Act, 1867, and wrote section 18 into that act.

Let us compare the government's treatment of Parliament with that of previous governments.

In 1990 and 1991, during the government of former prime minister Brian Mulroney, the solicitor general refused to provide the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General with documents, citing privacy issues. The Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections concluded that the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General had the right to insist on the production of these documents and recommended that the House order the solicitor general to comply with the production order.

The House subsequently issued a production order that the documents be presented at an in camera meeting of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General. The government complied with the order at the next meeting of the committee, and members of the committee examined the unredacted version of the documents.

In 2009, during the government of former prime minister Stephen Harper, the hon. Ujjal Dosanjh moved the following motion, which was adopted by the House:

That, given the undisputed privileges of Parliament under Canada's constitution, including the absolute power to require the government to produce uncensored documents when requested, and given the reality that the government has violated the rights of Parliament by invoking the Canada Evidence Act to censor documents before producing them, the House urgently requires access to the following documents in their original and uncensored form:

all documents referred to in the affidavit of Richard Colvin, dated October 5, 2009;

all documents within the Department of Foreign Affairs written in response to the documents referred to in the affidavit of Richard Colvin, dated October 5, 2009;

all memoranda for information or memoranda for decision sent to the Minister of Foreign Affairs concerning detainees from December 18, 2005 to the present;

all documents produced pursuant to all orders of the Federal Court in *Amnesty International Canada and British Columbia Civil Liberties Association v. Chief of the Defence Staff for the Canadian Forces, Minister of National Defence and Attorney General of Canada*;

all documents produced to the Military Police Complaints Commission in the *Afghanistan Public Interest Hearings*;

all annual human rights reports by the Department of Foreign Affairs on Afghanistan; and

accordingly the House hereby orders that these documents be produced in their original and uncensored form forthwith.

I want to emphasize what the order said: “the House hereby orders that these documents be produced in their original and uncensored form forthwith.” In other words, the documents about the Afghan detainees were to be released to the House and to the public immediately, without redactions, for the entire world to see, including the armed combatants fighting Canadian Forces in Afghanistan. The order required the government to immediately and publicly, without any redactions and without any consideration to the injury that could result in the ongoing Canadian Armed Forces military operations in Afghanistan, release the documents.

• (1335)

Understandably, the Harper government was reluctant to release the information publicly. Speaker Milliken ruled that the House had an unfettered right to these documents, but he also sympathized with the government's concerns about publicly releasing information that could be injurious to ongoing Canadian military operations. Therefore, he encouraged the parties to work together to resolve it. The government did exactly that, and six months later, an ad hoc committee was struck. The government handed over all the documents to that committee in the summer of 2010, without redactions, and the committee began its work.

There are two things to note about the Afghan detainee document order that made it different and distinct from the Winnipeg lab document order. First, there were no measures in the Afghan detainee order to prevent the release of information injurious to national security or to the conduct of Canadian military operations. The order mandated that all the documents be released forthwith, publicly, without redactions. Second, the government understood its obligations to Parliament and worked with the opposition parties to produce the documents to the ad hoc committee in six months.

In comparison, the Sustainable Development Technology Canada fund documents contain no information injurious to national security. The government's explanation for defying an order of the House for those documents is that it could be a violation of charter rights. This argument is weak and thin. One suspects that this is because it was the only argument the government could come up with in response to the order. One suspects that, if the reference to the RCMP was not in the order for the documents, the government would find another flimsy excuse not to hand them over. One suspects that the real reason the government will not hand over the documents is not

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that it would be injurious to the rule of law or to charter rights but that it would be injurious to the government's political fortunes.

There are several ways to end this debate, but there are only two ways to end it in the right way. One is for the government to hand over the documents, and the other is for Parliament to be dissolved and for the matter to be taken to the Canadian people for their decision at the ballot box.

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have immense respect for the member opposite. He has the capacity to disagree without being disagreeable, unlike many of his Conservative colleagues, who continuously go to the bottom of the gutter and to ad hominem.

I am really here to ask the question I just asked his colleague, who could not answer it and evaded the question. I want no evasion in the answer the member opposite will be providing. Why will his leader not become security cleared?

The member opposite has stood in Parliament on the issue of foreign interference. Each and every Canadian, each and every representative in the House, should be ready to be security cleared. Why is the member of the party opposite not willing to do so, especially if he is looking to protect the privileges of the House? I do not get it.

• (1340)

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, quite simply, it is because the Treasury Board Secretariat's policy on government security would require the leader to sign a certificate or an undertaking to not reveal any information to anyone else under threat of criminal prosecution. This is a security clearance process that the Prime Minister himself has not gone through.

That is why the leader of the official opposition has said that the Prime Minister needs to release the information of parliamentarians compromised by foreign interference. It is so the House can make a decision about those members and whether they can continue to sit in the House. It is so Canadians can go to the ballot box in the next election and be informed about the choices they are going to make, particularly when it comes to members of the House who colluded with foreign powers, to the detriment of the interests of this country and in violation of their oath.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to comment on what my Conservative colleague said, because he quoted the British North America Act in the speech he just gave.

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To strengthen his argument, he read excerpts from that act as though it were truth or fact. There is one point in particular that I would like to raise. He mentioned that the British North America Act was created by mutual agreement and that it was born of the will of the four founding provinces, namely Lower Canada, or Quebec, Upper Canada, or Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

I do not know whether my colleague is aware of this, but that act was actually born of an alliance between Cartier's Conservatives and the Liberals and Conservatives of Upper Canada. Les Rouges of Lower Canada, or Quebec, were strongly opposed to it. Nova Scotia was also strongly opposed. It even voted unanimously against this infamous British North America Act, but that was never taken into consideration by London. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia sent a delegation to London to negotiate a different treaty than the one that was imposed.

The reality is that this is a colonial law that was never put to a vote by the people. Can my colleague concede that?

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, the Constitution of Canada is the only constitution we have in Canada. It may not be perfect, but it is all we have. That is the reality.

We are therefore going to respect the Canadian Constitution. In my opinion, the Constitution has a lot of issues. Maybe we will be able to improve it in the future, but we have to respect the Canadian Constitution, because the rule of law is a fundamental principle for all Canadian citizens. That holds true for people who support the Constitution and for those who take issue with the Constitution. Everyone has to respect the Constitution and obey the law across Canada.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I will leave the year 1867 behind and come back to 2024. There are serious allegations of political interference. Some concern the Liberal Party, but there are also some that concern the Conservative Party. The leader of the Conservative Party refuses to get security clearance that would allow him to know all there is to know about former candidates and the situation in his own caucus.

The leader of the Bloc Québécois, the leader of the NDP and the leader of the Green Party all got their security clearance. Why are the Conservatives choosing ignorance over knowledge?

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, the answer is simple. We do not believe that this information should be kept secret. It has to be made public so that, when the next election comes around, Canadians have the information they need to make an informed choice based on the contents of this report.

• (1345)

[English]

We do not believe that this information should be secret. We believe that it should be made public. We believe that Canadians should know which of the candidates in the next election were compromised by foreign interference activities. Quite simply, that is the reason we are calling on the information to be released.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to take the questions back to the de-

bate that we are having today on the failure of the Liberals to provide the documents as ordered by the House and their cover-up.

The member gave perhaps one of the best speeches in this long, sordid tale of the constitutional requirements for the government, the Crown, to not defy the will of the people. What I found interesting is that the Privy Council office, the Prime Minister's department, is the one that ordered the redactions from departments. Could the member explain why he thinks the Prime Minister's personal department thought that it could redact, under the Access to Information Act and Privacy Act, the order of the House, when this was not part of the order of the House.

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, I go back to the 1991 case during the government of then prime minister Brian Mulroney, where the government of the day said that it was not going to hand over the documents related to the Solicitor General because of privacy concerns. The House ordered the documents be handed over, and the government complied at the following meeting of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General.

As such, clearly Parliament has the right to these documents, and no statute law, common law nor anything can interfere with Parliament's absolute right to call for the production of documents. Again, I quote from section 15 of the Constitution Act, which makes that very clear. It says, "The Constitution of Canada is the supreme law of Canada, and any law that is inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution is, to the extent of the inconsistency, of no force or effect", and that would include the Privacy Act.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member quoted quite a bit from the preamble of the Constitution and other laws. He had a lot of authorities quoting on the subject he was speaking on. I do agree with him that the House of Commons has the power to legislate, deliberate and hold the government to account, which we do. In one of the authorities he mentioned, he said, "on the surface appears to be without restriction". I think this was a reference to the power to ask for documents.

The key word in that phrase is the word "appears". It is not absolute. That is number one. Number two is that I think he also mentioned the parliamentarian or the minister in the U.K. Parliament sent to prison. I do not think it was for his refusal to produce documents. I think it may have been for his refusal to appear before the committee. Maybe the member can clarify.

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, in answer to the first question, the word "appears" is used, because the only restrictions on Parliament's absolute right to order the production of documents are that those documents be present in Canada, not extraterritorially, and that they exist. That is why they use the word "appears" in the previous sentence.

With respect to the question about the U.K. case, it was a legal opinion issued by Attorney General Geoffrey Cox to the cabinet of then prime minister Theresa May. This was a solicitor-client privilege document. The document was released in full, unredacted, publicly to the House of Commons after the Prime Minister was held in contempt and ordered to hand over the document.

• (1350)

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity this afternoon to address a matter of critical importance to the health and future of our democracy: the dangers posed by corruption. A democratic government is founded on the principles of accountability, transparency and trust. When these principles are eroded by corruption, the very fabric of democracy is eroded as well, and public confidence in institutions is undermined.

History offers numerous examples of how corruption has tested long-standing democracies and the strength of democratic institutions. History has a lot to teach us about this very real problem. As the saying goes, those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it.

One of the most iconic symbols of corruption in modern-day governance has to be the administration of former U.S. president Richard Nixon and his infamous Watergate scandal. The Watergate scandal consisted of Richard Nixon's staff hiring burglars to break into the Democratic Party's headquarters to plant listening devices in their phones. When the burglars got caught, Nixon's re-election campaign paid them to stay quiet. Eventually, a Senate committee was established to investigate the matter.

When the Senate committee requested that Nixon hand over audio tapes of his White House meetings, Nixon initially refused. He then ordered his attorney general to fire the special prosecutor who was requesting the tapes. Only after a Supreme Court ruling did Nixon eventually relent and hand over all of the tapes unedited and unredacted. Shortly after, former president Nixon resigned in disgrace.

While it is good that, in this instance, the corruption was stopped and the bad actor resigned, the effects were long-lasting in democracies all around the globe, including Canada. Ever since, people have become very cynical and distrustful of politicians and assume those in power prioritize personal or partisan gain over the public interest. People assume politicians routinely engage in bribery, embezzlement and influence peddling.

These actions, whether they are real or merely perceived, erode public trust, distort policy-making and diminish the legitimacy of government. In democratic systems, citizens must entrust their elected representatives with the authority to make decisions on their behalf. When this trust is violated, the repercussions are severe: voter apathy increases, polarization deepens and public cynicism grows.

Canada, like any democracy, has experienced its share of corruption scandals. While no political party and no government is immune to such scandals, the current Liberal government has taken these scandals to another level. The SNC-Lavalin affair brought renewed scrutiny to the Liberal Party under the Prime Minister.

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This controversy involved allegations that senior officials in the Prime Minister's office attempted to interfere with the judicial process to secure a deferred prosecution agreement for SNC-Lavalin, a major engineering firm facing criminal charges. When former attorney general Jody Wilson-Raybould refused to go along with the deferred prosecution agreement, the Prime Minister removed her from the position of attorney general in a move reminiscent of when Richard Nixon ordered his attorney general to fire the special prosecutor who was requesting the White House tapes.

Fortunately, Jody Wilson-Raybould blew the whistle and went public with allegations that she had faced undue pressure to intervene in the SNC-Lavalin case. While the Prime Minister denied any wrongdoing, the Ethics Commissioner ultimately found his actions violated ethics rules. The affair raised serious questions about the independence of Canada's judiciary, the accountability of elected officials and the influence of corporate interests on public policy. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister chose to violate the fundamental democratic principles of accountability, transparency and trust, instead of simply coming clean with Canadians.

• (1355)

Another recent example is the WE Charity scandal, in which the Liberal government awarded a sole-source contract worth \$900 million to the WE Charity to administer a completely unnecessary grant program for students who did volunteer work. It later emerged that the Prime Minister and the then finance minister, Bill Morneau, had personal ties to the charity, raising concerns about conflicts of interest.

Both the Prime Minister and Bill Morneau faced investigations by the Ethics Commissioner, further damaging public trust. The scandal highlighted the dangers of conflicts of interest in government decision-making, the importance of rigorous ethical standards and the need for transparency in awarding public contracts. Without these safeguards in place, the trust Canadians place in their democratic institutions is further damaged.

The ArriveCAN app is another one of the Liberal government's recent scandals, complete with money disappearing in amounts that far exceed what Richard Nixon paid to the Watergate burglars. The incident showed how covering up criminal activity and a lack of transparency in government operations can erode public trust. While the ArriveCAN app was initially developed as a tool to facilitate efficient border crossings, its rollout and associated costs raised serious concerns about government accountability and oversight, and about the effective use of taxpayers' money.

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According to the Auditor General, the ArriveCAN app cost over \$54 million, while other vendors estimated they could have done the work for about \$200,000. When a relatively straightforward \$200,000 app balloons in cost to over \$54 million, it cannot be due to simple incompetence or mismanagement. The only explanation is criminal activity. The government should have called in the auditors immediately and should have called the police, but only after months of audits, committee meetings and investigations was the truth finally brought to light.

The principles of accountability, transparency and trust have also been eroded by the most recent scandal, what I will call the “other Randy” scandal. The member of Parliament for Edmonton Centre owned and operated a medical supply company that bid on government contracts while he was a cabinet minister. The member’s business partner in the two-person business informed a client he was providing updates to someone known as Randy. Then he said that he meant another Randy.

To date, despite having been asked repeatedly in question period, the member for Edmonton Centre has never identified who the other Randy may be. Everyone knows that the member was violating ethics rules and was in a conflict of interest, but even this was not enough to warrant his dismissal from cabinet. It was only after it was discovered that the member’s company was self-identifying as wholly indigenous-owned while bidding on government contracts that the member for Edmonton Centre was removed from cabinet.

Just like Richard Nixon, the member for Edmonton Centre was desperate to cling to power regardless of the harm he was causing to the public trust and to the reputation of our democratic institutions. Once again, the principles of accountability, transparency and trust were all broken under the Liberal government.

The actions of the Liberal government over the last nine years have led to an erosion of public trust in our democratic institutions. More and more citizens perceive that their government prioritizes partisan or personal gain over the public good. The government’s actions have led to a weakening of democratic institutions. Corruption undermines the independence and integrity of democratic institutions, such as the judiciary and the public service. The SNC-Lavalin affair in particular raised concerns about political interference in the judicial process, the absence of which is a cornerstone of democratic governance.

● (1400)

The government’s actions have led to an increase in voter apathy. Scandals contribute to voter disengagement by fostering a sense of futility and disillusionment. People see a few crooked politicians on the news and assume that they are just the tip of the iceberg and that all politicians must be corrupt. This is particularly dangerous in a democracy, in which active participation is essential to hold leaders accountable.

Robust mechanisms need to be in place to ensure transparency and accountability in government. Independent bodies, such as the offices of the Auditor General and the Ethics Commissioner, play a critical role in identifying and addressing corruption. However, when these institutions discover problems and ring alarm bells, the government cannot simply sweep the matter under the carpet or let reports sit on a shelf to collect dust. The rules must be followed,

and wrongdoers must be held to account. This brings us to the Liberals’ most recent scandal and the subject of this afternoon’s debate: the documents pertaining to the Sustainable Development Technology Canada Fund that the Liberals refuse to hand over.

Earlier this year, the Auditor General released a scathing report on Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC, and its mismanagement of public funds. Here are some of her findings: There was \$334 million handed out to projects in which board members held a conflict of interest, with over 186 cases. A staggering \$58 million was handed out to ineligible projects. What were these projects? Some of them did not develop a single new technology; others made outlandish claims about their environmental benefits that could not stand up to the slightest scrutiny. However, they were funded.

Let us not forget that the Auditor General looked at only a sample of SDTC transactions. She looked at roughly half of the transactions and found that 82% of them were conflicted. We can easily surmise that the remaining cases were just as conflicted and that the sums of money involved were hundreds of millions of dollars more.

In December 2023, a whistle-blower testified before the House of Commons Committee. In one particularly stark statement, the whistle-blower said, “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.”

Enough is enough. In the same way as Richard Nixon finally relented and handed over the tapes related to the Watergate scandal, it is time for the Liberals to relent. It is time for the unredacted documents related to the SDTC scandal to be handed over to the RCMP so that it can do its job and get to the bottom of this.

Democracy is fragile and vulnerable, and it is a system of government that requires constant vigilance to preserve. Corruption, whether it occurs in Canada or elsewhere, poses a grave threat to the principles of accountability, transparency and trust that underpin our democratic institutions. As members of Parliament and as citizens of a democratic country, we must demand accountability from our leaders, which is exactly what we are doing here today. Let us learn from history and ensure that Canada’s democracy remains resilient and true to its founding principles. It is time for the Liberals to hand over the documents.

● (1405)

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for his speech just now.

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It is ironic, and interesting, that the member highlighted Nixon and Watergate, as well as how democracy must be protected. Certainly, Nixon is a shame on democracy. He also highlighted how we must protect our public institutions and have faith in our democracy. However, how can Canadians trust this when the leader of the official opposition refuses to get his security clearance?

It is ironic that the member mentioned Nixon, and at the same time, the Leader of the Opposition is refusing to be security cleared. It boggles the mind. I do not get it. Thus far, I have not heard a satisfactory answer today in this chamber from the Conservative Party on why its leader refuses to be security cleared. Could the hon. member answer that question?

Mr. Michael Kram: Madam Speaker, I have never had that conversation with my leader, but if the hon. member or members of the government feel strongly about this issue, they can make it part of their legislative agenda. If they have ideas about enhanced security clearances that should be in place for any member of Parliament, they can table a bill to that effect.

In the meantime, we must deal with the situation that the Liberals refuse to address, and that is why they will not hand over the SDTC documents to the RCMP so the hon. member and the government can move forward with their legislative agenda, however they wish it to look.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, when we were first elected to this place, I remember the member being quite hopeful in being able to represent the good people of Regina—Wascana. However, since that time, we have seen him consistently repeat the message box from the Leader of the Opposition. He has not one time brought up the very real concerns of the people of Regina—Wascana. I know many of his constituents are disappointed by that. They are disappointed that he always reads from the script. They are disappointed that he has no voice in this chamber. They are disappointed that the Conservatives keep whipping members and printing out sheets that tell them exactly what to say.

On behalf of the good people of Regina—Wascana, I ask the member to please focus on any one issue that relates to the good people of Regina—Wascana, perhaps even, as his parents were teachers, the teachers' strike in Saskatchewan. He has not once stood up for the good people of Saskatchewan. Can he now today stand up for the people of Saskatchewan and call for fair wages for teachers?

Mr. Michael Kram: Madam Speaker, where do I begin? I would say that the voters of Regina—Wascana do not like it when \$400 million of taxpayer money disappears. I do not know why the hon. member from Edmonton would think that would possibly be okay.

As for the biography he obviously read about my parents on my website, yes, my parents are retired teachers. If the hon. member is interested in schools and education policy, I would invite him to run in the next provincial election in his home province, because I strongly suspect that after the next federal election, he will be handing out résumés and looking for something to do.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked quite a bit about the situation that happened at SDTC, and I am wondering if he can expand on it.

What we are discussing and what the House is seized with is the over 180 instances of conflicts of interest that were determined by the Auditor General. The Auditor General did not even audit all of the contracts that went through SDTC, so there could potentially be even more.

When we look at the scope of this, how big it is, it is potentially one of the biggest scandals in Canadian history, so members can understand why the Liberals do not want to bring forth the documents. They are obviously trying to hide something. The documents they have brought forward have been heavily redacted.

I am wondering if the member can speak to how big this is and how important it is right now in Canadian history.

Mr. Michael Kram: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for all the good advocacy she does on behalf of her constituents.

It really is reminiscent of the Watergate scandal of the 1970s in the sense that there always seems to be more to this story and this scandal. As I mentioned in my speech, it is not just \$400 million. That was just the sample the Auditor General audited, so it is highly probable that it is much bigger than that. The Watergate scandal of Richard Nixon looks like small potatoes compared to the scandal currently paralyzing Parliament and the Liberal government.

This is an issue of corruption that has not received the attention it deserves in the general public, probably because Canadians have become so cynical of the government given the scandal after scandal we have seen from it over the last several years.

● (1410)

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member highlighted the concerns around transparency and representing our constituents. When I spoke to this parliamentary privilege motion, I could not believe the amount of feedback when I asked my constituents about just how frustrated they are with the government's unwillingness to comply with the will of this democratic chamber, of Parliament, in turning over the documents. In fact, over 91% of the 500-plus replies I got back indicated that they think the government should follow the will of Parliament.

I am wondering if the member could elaborate a little more on what he has been hearing from his constituents in his great riding?

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Mr. Michael Kram: Madam Speaker, what I am hearing from my constituents is that they have had enough of all of the Liberal scandals. I enumerated quite a few of them during my speech, whether it was SNC-Lavalin, the “other Randy” scandal or the ArriveCAN app. They all just blur together, and people say they have lost confidence in the government and in the Liberals. It is time to call an election, send the Liberals out to pasture and bring in a new Conservative government.

Mr. Sameer Zuberi: Madam Speaker, I want to note first off that, in the member from Regina—Wascana's response to the Conservative member for Kelowna—Lake Country, he said that Parliament is paralyzed, but it is paralyzed because of the actions of the Conservative Party.

With respect to the member's answer to me, though, he said he has not yet had a conversation with his leader about why he is not getting a security clearance. Will he commit to speaking with his leader to make sure he gets a security clearance and tell us why he is not doing so? Will you have that conversation with your leader?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): No, I will not.

The hon. member for Regina—Wascana has the floor.

Mr. Michael Kram: Madam Speaker, let me be perfectly clear. The reason Parliament has not moved forward with its legislative agenda is because the Liberals continue to block the handing over of documents to the RCMP. That is like saying Richard Nixon filibustered Congress for not handing over his tapes. We have to comply with the law. The Liberal government has to comply with the law. If we see something, we need to say something. If we see 400 million dollars' worth of corruption, we need to call in the RCMP so it can investigate the matter.

As for talking with my leader, I think the hon. member is more than capable of doing so himself the next time he sees him.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I obviously struck a nerve in my last question with the member, who never speaks about Regina—Wascana issues and only speaks from the talking points he is given by his leader.

To that point, on the matter of the last question regarding a security clearance, I think I need to lay this out very clearly for the member. The issues of national security are so critically important that national leaders in our country get briefed on those particularly important details, and we do not release them publicly because our political adversaries, including Russia, would use that information against us. That is why we have a security clearance program in this country that allows MPs and leaders to be cleared by that process to get confidential information on how foreign interference could be impacting our parties.

The leader of my party got the security clearance and found no evidence of such things. Why are the Conservatives hiding from getting a security clearance that they should be getting to protect Canadians?

Mr. Michael Kram: Madam Speaker, I take considerable exception to the hon. member's statement that I never stand up for or speak about Regina—Wascana.

During the pandemic, Nav Canada was planning to shut down the air traffic control tower at Regina International Airport. I advocated to keep it open. During the RCMP mass casualty—

• (1415)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have run out of time.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar has the floor.

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a privilege and a pleasure to rise in this place. On this particular issue, I rose last in early October to speak to the House about the Liberals' failure to turn over documents on the green slush fund as requested by the House of Commons' duly elected members and agreed to by the Speaker.

Two months later, it is pretty obvious the government is more concerned about what damage might emerge from handing over these documents and the consequences that may follow. Instead of moving ahead with its own agenda, as flawed as it may be, it is choosing to let this place live in gridlock. Then, from its ivory tower, it stands and lectures us on how our quest for transparency is impeding the business of this place.

There is a pretty easy solution to this. The Liberals could just hand over the documents, as requested by the elected members of this place. If they had done that by now, we would not be here today. I would not be speaking on this privilege debate today. They could do it today. Recognizing that my time will run short at adjournment, I will come back Monday morning to conclude my speech and take hopefully decent questions from members of the NDP-Liberal government. However, I am willing to sacrifice and cede that time if the government were to just do the right thing and hand over the documents. It is a Friday afternoon. It is a dump. The government can get rid of it. Maybe nobody will notice. The reason that it is obviously hiding the documents and refusing to do so is because it is very worried about those consequences.

I mentioned the legislative agenda of the government, if we want to call it that. Let us review where we are at to perhaps understand why it might not want to move forward with its own agenda.

Of course, the Minister of Justice has the Orwellian bill, Bill C-63, a widely panned piece of legislation that would see Canadians arrested for speech the Liberals deem impermissible, speech that they do not like. George Orwell's dystopian future is proving eerily correct under the Liberal government, with thought crime set to be added to our legal books should that bill ever pass.

Then we have Bill C-65, the electoral participation act, that is also under way in theory. Maybe we should call it by what it more appropriately would be, the “ensuring the leader of the NDP’s pension act”. Since the NDP and the Liberals got together and cut some backroom deals to get another payout on the backs of hard-working Canadian taxpayers—

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order relating to relevance. The member is bringing up pensions. His leader’s pension is worth over \$1 million, 50 times bigger than—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): This is debate and the hon. member knows it.

The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar.

Mr. Branden Leslie: Madam Speaker, I think I struck a nerve. They seem a little upset by my talking about when their leader’s pension comes to fruition and the legislation that is literally trying to move back the election date to enable a whole bunch of them who were elected in 2019 and are probably not coming back to this place after the carbon tax election. They are trying to get their pensions. Once again, last night, the NDP leader put his pension above Canadians and our country. It is another failure, but it is not surprising.

I will continue on to what we could be debating on Monday, if the government, the Liberals, just handed over the documents. We could go to Bill C-73, the nature accountability act, which our environment committee is attempting to do a prestudy on to circumvent the fact they will not hand over the documents, to try to help pass legislation in the future.

Obviously I, as a proud member of the environment committee, have looked at the legislation and I will summarize it like this. It is a plan to make a plan, which is consistent with the current government. It is all about trying to build bureaucracy, help out friends of the Liberals and not actually accomplish anything. It is lazy environmentalism that is best summarized as all of the Liberal government’s environmental policy. I asked the minister who was before us on this bill this week, the radical environment minister, about additional spending and/or potential new hiring of bureaucracy that would be needed to enact this legislation should we pass it. He refused to say. He just would not admit there might be.

I asked if he could look for internal savings, given that there has been a 53% increase in the number of senior executives within that department, or maybe we could look internally and try to find some efficiencies, we will call it, within that department. Do we just need to go back to the piggy bank of Canadians and borrow more, increase our debt and increase inflation, just to pay for their reckless, bureaucratically bloated ideas?

I have been here a little over a year now, and I think I have come to understand the Liberals’ guiding principles in this place. I would say principle number one is this: When something does not work, just throw money at it. That must be the solution. It looks like we are doing something if we just throw more money at it.

Principle number two is this: When people do not work, hire more of them. Clearly that has been the track record.

Privilege

Principle number three is this: When something actually is working well, bring in some Liberal insiders and break it. That is how we have ended up doubling the number of bureaucrats over the last nine years. Even the Parliamentary Budget Officer is questioning whether Canadians are seeing an increase in service delivery after all of that new spending.

I have talked to constituents. Anybody who deals with this behemoth of a federal government rightfully has complaints about service standards. Passports are not being returned to people faster. Our PAL, our firearm licensing application, for which many people are currently undertaking the courses to become trained and tested responsible firearms owners, is slowing down. It is not getting any faster. Nobody has said to me, “Oh, I called the CRA the other day and it answered like that. It was a great conversation. I really enjoyed that.” It is the exact opposite.

Nothing is working better under the federal government right now, despite more debt-fuelled spending to once again expand that bloated bureaucracy without outcomes. That is what we should measure, not how much money we throw at the problem. Are we improving the outcomes and delivery of what the federal government should be focused on for Canadians?

Of course, we have the recent NDP-Liberal tax trick. It is another example of the failed philosophy. The reality is that we in this country, industry in this country, unfortunately, has faced regulatory strangulation, for lack of a better term. Perhaps it is the right term.

We will use one example of many terrible pieces of legislation that have continuously focused on driving out investment, driving away opportunities and just trying to add problematic elements for those entrepreneurs and investors, whether they be individuals or Canadian public pension plans, who want to invest in Canada, who want to build in Canada. Bill C-69, the no-more-pipelines bill, or, maybe more appropriately named, the never-build-anything-ever-again-in-this-country bill, is a prime example of how we have made it so unattractive to invest in and do business in this country.

Privilege

• (1420)

This is evident by the fact of the massive outflow of foreign direct investment that has previously been in Canada but is now going to the United States. I would be surprised if any member of the House has not talked to a business owner in their community who has said that if the Conservatives do not win, they are leaving. It is a real problem, and the data shows it is happening already, because of the strangulation through regulation and legislation under the Liberal government. The Liberals treat the economy as if it were some sort of machine where we just pull some levers and press some buttons and everything will work out just fine.

The Liberals are not even trying to hide their plans. They regularly say that we need to build the future economy and to transition our economy. What they mean when they say that is that they want a government-controlled, centrally planned and manipulated economy, entrepreneurs be damned. The Liberals claim to know what Canadians need and want, and they are going to try their best to make sure the economy matches their ideology. That is not the way the economy works.

Instead of trying to drive economic growth through private sector investment, the Liberals choose to spend, which is why there has been a doubling of our national debt and drastic increases in the price of life. Whether it be through direct taxation on individuals or on companies, or, of course, through the hated carbon tax, it is not surprising that when a party focuses on changing the economy to something it believes it should be, taxing everybody to death, there is a doubling of the price of all homes in this country, a doubling of rent and record-breaking numbers of people lining up at food banks in what should be a prosperous, leading nation.

The Liberals have doubled down as of late. They are trying to bribe Canadians with their own money with the government's \$250-check proposal and a temporary tax cut, a pause. It has been called a "cut" a lot in the chamber over the last number of days, but to me a tax "cut" means actually cutting it, not hitting the pause button to give a break for two months on a couple of items deemed essential. The Liberals decided what is going to be listed for the temporary pause.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Branden Leslie: That is right; it is a tax trick. Madam Speaker, even my opposition colleagues know that it is simply a temporary tax trick.

I suppose maybe the Liberals think that their hand is in people's pockets already, so they might as well just grab a little extra cash. What they have failed to realize, and it has been brought up by members of the opposition, is the havoc that it is going to wreak on small business owners. Again, I have received calls, and I assume all members from wherever they may be have as well, asking, "Do you know how a point-of-sale system works? Do you know how hard it is to get an overnight December 13 group of staff to come in and make all these changes? What if we collectively screw something up a little bit? Is CRA going to come and audit me right away?"

Small-business owners like the idea of actual tax reductions, permanent ones; those would help drive prosperity, but the tax trick is

simply not appealing and is driving a whole bunch of extra work. We have all heard the same thing: People are going to return things now and then rebuy them at the busiest time of the year. These are legitimate grievances from our small-business community, which is the backbone of our economy.

I do not want say that business owners were ignored, because of course under the Liberal government they were probably just never listened to. Consulting is not something the Liberal government takes a lot of pride in. It announces something and everybody is upset at it, and then it decides to forge ahead. It does not matter if it is a terrible idea.

I think some of these examples illustrate what we have seen with the matter at hand, the Liberal green slush fund scandal. In my previous interventions in this place, I have detailed the history of the scandal, but I will provide a little bit of context for Canadians who are perhaps listening in for the first time and wondering why we are still debating the privilege motion and why the government will not just hand over the documents. Those are reasonable questions for Canadians to ask—

• (1425)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Do not make that kind of noise. The tapping on the desk can be bothersome for the interpreters.

Mr. Branden Leslie: Madam Speaker, the Sustainable Development Technology Canada organization was a body that started back in 2001 to fund companies creating technologies that promoted sustainable development. It is not a bad idea to invest in technology, not taxes. Where have I heard that before? I think it has been coming from this side of the House because it is a good idea.

However, the Liberals applied one of the principles that I outlined earlier: When something works well, bring in some Liberal insiders and break it. That is exactly what the Liberals did. They hired Annette Verschuren in 2019 to chair the board of directors that oversaw payments from the fund.

She is an individual from an organization that had received SDTC funding in the past, so a couple of red flags went up across the bureaucracy, and I applaud it for that. However, despite being warned, the Liberal government went ahead and appointed her anyway. Under her watch, an environment rotten with conflicts of interest thrived. The Liberal-friendly board awarded funding to organizations that they individually had a financial interest in. The gravy train, unfortunately, could not go on forever for those board members—

• (1430)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member will have six minutes to conclude his remarks when we next return to the subject.

Privilege

Having reached the expiry of the time provided for today's debate, the House will resume consideration of the privilege motion at 11 a.m. on Monday, December 2.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 94, I wish to inform hon. members that Private Members' Business will be suspended on that day.

It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

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

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