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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 4, 2024

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

● (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

MESSAGE OF KINDNESS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I will start today by thanking my friend, the member of Parliament for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, because it is rare that an S. O. 31 so hits home that I decide I had better put it on my social media page. The hon. member's S. O. 31 dealt with one theme, and that was kindness, how we can be kinder to each other. In the last week, we have seen some moments that we regret, some moments where things are sad. Postures are taken that suggest to Canadians we are not people worth emulating, those they elect to represent them in this place. What would affect us more, to think our mothers are watching or to know our children are watching?

Words not said often enough in this place are “I was wrong” and “I am sorry.” My hon. friend, the member of Parliament for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, brought me up short by telling me about some words I had carelessly said in the media. I completely agree with what the member of Parliament for London—Fanshawe said in her point of order, but I also told the same reporter I had agreed with what the member for Calgary Rocky Ridge had said. However, it never gets reported exactly the way we say it, and I should know better.

I want to share this with everyone here: Let us be kind, let us be loving and let us enjoy a Christmas of peace.

CANADIAN ATHLETES

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer, millions of Canadians cheered on team Canada at the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. Paralympic swimmer Sebastian Massabie smashed the world record and brought the gold home to Surrey.

Canadian athletes give it their all to represent our country, so budget 2024 boosts our support for them with more pay for our athletes as they train to represent team Canada. Unfortunately, for weeks, the Conservatives have blocked these funds and prevented these payments to our athletes.

I ask my Conservative colleagues to be honest with team Canada today. Will they support Canadian athletes by voting for our plan or will they continue to oppose them?

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● (1410)

CANADIAN WESTERN AGRIBITION

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is my favourite time of year for two reasons: First, the Christmas spirit can be seen everywhere we look, and, second, Regina hosts my favourite event.

Every year at the end of November, Regina becomes a destination for everything agriculture. The 53rd Canadian Western Agribition was a resounding success. Folks from around the globe gathered in Regina to take in the world-class livestock shows, the trade shows and the rodeo. This year featured 130 major events, including four nights of rodeo, the indigenous agriculture summit, the Canadian animal agtech awards and the 25th year of the RBC beef supreme champions.

Agribition holds a special place in my heart because my family showed Holsteins there for 25 straight years. It is my family's winter holiday. The barns are where I learned many life lessons, some the hard way, and made many lifelong friends.

I want to congratulate CEO Shaun Kindopp and his whole team on hosting a world-class event once again, bringing agriculture to the world and displaying proudly what we do in the agriculture sector.

*Statements by Members***TAX RELIEF**

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a Grinch impersonation contest. The time is right now; the location, the Conservative benches.

Our government is giving a tax break to all Canadians by exempting essentials such as groceries, restaurant meals, children's clothing and gifts from the GST. This includes snacks, sandwiches and other prepared foods, as well as beer and wine.

The Conservatives pretend they want lower taxes, but when push comes to shove, they vote against tax exemptions for Canadians. They want family essentials, such as car seats, diapers and children's toys, to be more expensive. We can talk about a heart that is two sizes too small.

We will not listen to these Grinches. Starting December 14, these items will be tax-free, and Canadians will be able to keep more of their money in their pockets.

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[Translation]

FALLEN SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, retired officers Lee-Anne Quinn and Hélène Le Scelleur found some inexcusable errors on two sculptures honouring fallen Canadian servicemen and women near CFB Trenton.

The bronze monument *Presence in Absence* is meant to honour 67 servicemen and women for making the ultimate sacrifice. What a shock it was for the two women veterans when they found their own names on it. However, this was not the only error. Of the 67 soldiers listed, only 20 made the ultimate sacrifice. Twelve are still alive, and four have never worn the uniform.

No one noticed the mistake before the monument was unveiled in 2022. Neither the soldiers who are still alive nor their families were invited to the unveiling. What an appalling lack of respect. The minister owes veterans an explanation and, above all, an apology. After this fiasco and the Afghanistan memorial debacle, it is clear that Ottawa is a monument to incompetence.

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[English]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, December 3, was the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. People with disabilities are the largest minority group within Canada and worldwide, as well as the only minority group that anyone can become a member of at any time. People in this group face stigma, discrimination and barriers to basic rights and services. They are more likely to experience poverty and face disproportionate impacts from climate disasters, conflicts and an increasing cost of living.

It is important for the voices of people with disabilities to be included in all conversations. More than one in four Canadians have one or more disabilities, with mental health-related disabilities being the most prominent among youth. Our government has been

working to support Canadians with disabilities through the development of a Canada disability benefit, the autism national framework and funding for mental health service delivery.

I am grateful to community groups in my riding, such as CMHA York Simcoe, Community Living Central York, the Lighthouse Learning and Development Centre, Kerry's Place and Child Disability Network Canada, which advocate for and work to support people living with disabilities.

I would also like to mention Voices of Joy, a choir for people of all abilities, which gave a wonderful holiday concert.

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● (1415)

CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, grief is an emotion I never truly understood until this year.

Grief does not change us; it reveals us. We become someone it would have been impossible to be before. In this way, our loved one lives on in us. Everyone loves and everyone has loss. Grief is universal, a sacred process, yet it is so unique. We all cope differently. We do not get over the loss of a loved one but learn to courageously adapt.

This is my first Christmas without my dad. I know he would want us to make turtles, sing *Silent Night*, put the lights up outside and decorate the tree with ornaments that represent our collective memories, losses, prayers, hopes and holiday wishes.

This Christmas season, we should reach out to those who need a hug and let them know we care. We should speak the names of those we have lost and know that their memories will never fade away as long as we refuse to let them. Grief is not a sign of weakness or a lack of faith. It is the price of love.

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CANADIAN PARALYMPIANS

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to honour three extraordinary Paralympians from my riding of Vancouver Granville: Nathan Clement, Peter Isherwood and Julia Hanes.

In particular, I would like to highlight Nathan Clement. This summer, Nathan took home the silver medal from the Paris Paralympic Games in the men's T1 individual road time trial. He was also a swimmer at the Rio Paralympics and holds the Canadian record in the 50-metre butterfly.

Meeting Nathan was an incredible reminder of his dedication and commitment to competition and community, which has inspired so many of us.

Through my own work, I have had the privilege of experiencing first-hand the power of sports in bringing us together, but these Paralympians are absolutely something else. It is such a privilege to be able to rise in the House and, on behalf of all of us, congratulate not just Nathan, Julia and Peter but also every single Paralympian. They have made us so very proud.

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CANADIAN ATHLETES

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, team Canada is in the House of Commons today. Our best athletes, Olympians and Paralympians, from across the country are here so that we can all congratulate them on their success and thank them for representing Canada so well. From Milton, we have Michael Foley, who is a track cyclist, and Kayla Alexander, who is an amazing basketball player.

I was one of these athletes eight years ago. I walked out on this carpet and imagined what my next steps would be, and here I am. I am really proud to be part of a government that supports our athletes. We have invested an incremental \$80 million in the community sport for all program, and we are the first and only government to increase the athlete assistance program two times. Therefore, all of these athletes here will be celebrating better affordability when it comes to their day-to-day.

The Olympians and Paralympians from Canada are the best of us. They are our best ambassadors and our greatest role models. I am proud to be part of a government that supports each and every one of them, from the playground all the way to the podium.

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CARBON TAX

Mr. Don Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the carbon tax is draining the pockets of Canadians and has failed to meet a single emissions target. Anyone can see that this is a failed policy, even the Ontario Liberal leader, Bonnie Crombie. In a speech last night, she said, "I'm not here to tell the prime minister how to do his job. But, I promise you, I will tell him when he is wrong. Like on the carbon tax".

I completely agree. It is wrong for the Prime Minister to punish Canadians with this heartless carbon tax, which devalues workers' paycheques. It is wrong to drive up the cost of living and vandalize our economy. Crombie's statement is not only a political critique but also a recognition that everyday Canadians struggle in so many ways. People should not have to choose between feeding their families and heating their homes this winter, yet the NDP-Liberal government will hike the carbon tax again in the new year.

When will the Prime Minister give Canadians real and lasting relief and realize the carbon tax is flat out wrong?

Statements by Members

[Translation]

OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC ATHLETES

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer, millions of Canadians enthusiastically cheered on team Canada. I would like to congratulate all the athletes who participated in the Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games, including Sofia Fassi-Fehri of Saint-Laurent, an incredible Paralympic basketball player who embodies the dedication and perseverance it takes to achieve excellence.

The journey from playground to podium is long and hard, and our athletes must train for years. The Liberal government is proud to support over 1,900 athletes through the athlete assistance program. The government is also proud to be enhancing this program to provide more money to more athletes. The additional \$7 million per year increases the living allowance by 23% and the Paralympic athletes' allowance by 30%.

Unfortunately, the Conservatives' filibuster is jeopardizing these support measures. I encourage Conservative members to let us get back to work so we can invest in our athletes.

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● (1420)

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, an Oakville man with a lengthy criminal record was arrested and charged with a violent home invasion, prompting the Halton police chief to tweet, "Yet another violent offender already out on similar and violent charges with court conditions.... Anyone surprised that some of these violent [offenders] re-offend? Over and over and over [again]? Our citizens deserve better! This offender needs to remain in custody to keep others safe!!"

Again and again, law enforcement officers across this nation are expressing the dire need to fix Canada's broken bail system. However, the Liberals are ignoring their concerns and are completely out of touch when it comes to community safety. The Liberals' soft-on-crime policies, like their catch-and-release bail failures, have led to a 50% increase in violent crimes across Canada. Canadians deserve to be safe in their communities, and police deserve to be heard.

Enough is enough. It is time for the NDP-Liberals to get out of the way so Conservatives can stop the crime and prioritize public safety.

*Statements by Members***LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY**

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is only one person keeping the Liberal government in power, and that is the NDP leader. He has repeatedly chosen to prop up the Liberals, aid their corruption and facilitate the economic misery of Canadians caused by nine years of the Liberal Prime Minister.

The NDP leader broke his promise to vote non-confidence in the Liberal government. In his own words, “the Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people”. The NDP leader continues to support the Liberals even though they have doubled housing costs, tripled the carbon tax and sent millions of Canadians to the food bank.

Why will the NDP leader not stand by his words and vote no confidence in the government, so that we can have a carbon tax election?

* * *

[Translation]

SUPPORT FOR CANADIANS

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a peculiar contradiction in Canadian politics.

For years, the Conservative leader and his party have been lecturing Canadians on the virtues of tax cuts. However, when this government proposes a significant GST cut to put more money in families' pockets, what do the Conservatives do? They vote against it. It is like a chef turning their nose up at their own food.

The Leader of the Opposition claims to champion affordability, but when given the chance to get behind real, tangible support for Canadians, he turns his back on it. This is not about politics; it is about priorities. The Conservatives have clearly lost sight of their priorities, not to mention their sense of irony.

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[English]

INDIGENOUS POLICING

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Juanita Migwans, also known as “Winnie”, a 30-year-old, first nation woman from M'Chigeeng First Nation has been missing since October 2. Her family, friends and the police fear she may have been taken by drug or human traffickers, or worse.

Last year, I stood in the House to decry the lack of resources provided to indigenous policing. UCCM Anishnaabe Police is doing all it can, but needs dedicated crime units to deal with increased human and drug trafficking.

Juanita's case is a tragic reminder of the ongoing crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. We must immediately recognize first nations police as essential services and fund them at a level that is equitable with all other non-indigenous police services. We must provide indigenous people with resources and develop a national missing indigenous women, girls, two-spirit and gender-diverse people database that can be shared throughout

Canada via a downloadable app. We must also ensure that the red dress alert is launched nationally.

Let there be no more missing sisters.

* * *

● (1425)

[Translation]

LUCILLE RIENDEAU-HOULE

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I wish to pay tribute to Lucille Riendeau-Houle, a writer and genealogist from my community.

After focusing on raising her children, Ms. Riendeau-Houle chose to tell her story, not through her own history, but through that of her ancestors. She used her immense talent to write seven books chronicling the histories of the Reguindeau, Riendeau, Hubert and Lesage families. They open up a portal to our past, reminding us what life was like for the brave and determined people who built our communities.

Thanks to her books, which have been sold in the United States and as far afield as Europe, she won the Quebec Lieutenant Governor's Medal in 2022 for her contribution to our genealogy and for her community involvement with *J'écris ma vie* and the Fondation Anna-Laberge. At age 82, despite fighting cancer, she continues to write every day to keep the memory of our ancestors alive.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to thank Ms. Riendeau-Houle and commend her for her outstanding contribution to sharing the history of Quebec, our history.

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[English]

LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the sellout NDP leader has once again betrayed Canadians by siding with the Liberals to prop up the failing government, all to secure his \$2.2-million pension. He is going to reject a motion of non-confidence in the government that was based entirely on his own words. He stated, “the Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people,” yet it is his party who keeps the Prime Minister in power through their carbon tax coalition.

Under this deal, housing costs have skyrocketed and rent, mortgage payments and down payments have doubled. The sellout leader has voted in favour of the carbon tax over 24 times and plans to quadruple it, driving up the cost of gas, groceries and heating. Food bank usage is at an all-time high, with one million Ontarians relying on food banks.

Oral Questions

Canadians deserve leaders who will fight for them, not a coalition of self-interest and betrayal. It is time to end the deal of failure and put Canadians first. It is time for a carbon tax election.

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FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's security is everyone's concern.

This week there have been more alarming reports of foreign interference in the Conservative leadership race, yet the leader of the Conservative Party is the only party leader who still refuses to obtain the necessary security clearance to access classified documents on foreign governments' political interference activities in Canada. Canadians are asking why.

What does the leader of the Conservative Party have to hide? If he feels he has nothing to hide, why does he not get the clearance, take the briefing and protect our country?

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is weak and has lost control. He has lost control of the borders, immigration and spending, and now he has lost control of his party. The Ontario Liberal leader is against his tax hikes. The Liberal Premier of Newfoundland is against his policies that attack natural resources. There are 20 Liberal MPs who want to fire him.

How can the Prime Minister continue to cling to power when he has lost control?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our caucus is united in delivering for Canadians. That is why we are offering all Canadians a tax break for the next few months. Many Conservatives would have liked to vote in favour of this tax break, but their leader blocked them. Their leader is muzzling them and will not let them be the voice of their community here in Ottawa. Instead, he demands that they be his voice in their community. That is not how things work here.

On this side of the House, we will always stand up for Canadians.

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● (1430)

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he cannot stand up because he has lost control. I already said that he has lost control of our borders and immigration. He lost control of his inflationary deficits, which are increasing the cost of living. That is how he doubled the national debt, the cost of housing and the number of people who need to use food banks.

He promised to cap the deficit at \$40 billion in his budget. In his economic statement next week, will he keep that promise?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will present the economic statement in due course. The Conservative Party will surely vote against it because it will include initiatives that are going to help Canadians during these difficult times. It will include initiatives that will help us invest in economic growth and in growth across the country.

The Conservative leader does not want to do anything that might help Canadians. He would rather devote all his energy to advancing his own political interests. That means not helping Canadians when they need it. That is why he votes against dental care, against the tax break, against Canadians.

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[*English*]

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this weak Prime Minister has lost control of everything. He has lost control of the borders, lost control of immigration and lost control of spending. Now he has lost control of his cabinet and party. In fact, his foreign minister is now announcing her leadership campaign in *The New York Times*. The Liberal leader of the Province of Ontario has announced she is against his quadrupling carbon tax. The Liberal Premier of Newfoundland is against his job-killing energy cap, and 20 of his MPs want to fire him.

How is it that he clings to power when he has lost control?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we can all see that the Leader of the Opposition has trouble with the idea that individuals might have different perspectives, and that might be a good thing for a robust political party like the Liberal Party of Canada and all its partners across the country. The Leader of the Opposition refuses to let his backbenchers or any of his team members have any opinions at all. Indeed, he sanctioned them and wrote a letter in their name decrying their advocacy for their own citizens in their communities when it came to delivering money to mayors for housing from coast to coast to coast.

He stands for muzzling his MPs. We stand for diversity.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I guess "diversity of opinions" means the opinion that he should not be Prime Minister. That is the predominant opinion among Liberals across the country.

Oral Questions

On the front page of The New York Times, we would think the foreign minister would be fighting Trump's tariffs. Instead, she is fighting for her boss's job, where she is described in the headline as a "possible successor" after she sat down for a photo shoot and made the case. This is on top of a Liberal leader in Ontario who is against the Prime Minister's quadrupling carbon tax and a Liberal Premier in Newfoundland who opposes his job-killing energy cap.

Why will the Prime Minister not get the point? His party does not want him anymore.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about standing up for Canada. One of the things we have seen throughout our history is that, when Canada is threatened, when it is challenged with a crisis and when people want ill of Canadians, Canadians pull together across partisan stripes, across backgrounds and across the country to stand up for our neighbours and to stand up for Canadians. That is certainly what we were able to do as a country eight years ago.

Unfortunately, this basic Canadian attribute seems unavailable to the Leader of the Opposition, who cannot help playing politics with Canadians' well-being.

* * *

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is from a Prime Minister who is helping Donald Trump take away our jobs. We can just imagine the President-elect in the Oval Office calling our businesses to say, "Hey, I saw that you have a quadrupling carbon tax north of the border. Why not come south of the border where there's no carbon tax and other taxes are falling?" How about the latest electricity tax the Prime Minister is bringing in that will drive factories south of the border, or his energy cap that will drive away our resource companies?

I understand why President Trump wants to take Canadian jobs, but why is the Prime Minister trying to help him do it?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the problem for the Leader of the Opposition is that Canadians increasingly see through his shallow partisan games. If he actually cared about helping Canadians and cutting taxes, he would not have voted against taking off the sales tax for Canadians for the next few months.

However, the Leader of the Opposition wants Canadians to continue to struggle, because it benefits him politically perhaps, instead of actually being there to solve the challenges that Canadians are facing. That is why he voted against dental care for seniors. That is why he voted against a school food program. That is why he is voting against a sales tax break for Canadians for the next few months. That is not on.

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec's National Assembly has unanimously adopted a

motion calling on the federal Parliament to end the religious exception for hate propaganda. At one time or another, everyone here has voted in favour of eliminating the religious exception. Obviously, everyone has already voted for this, which is both the right and necessary thing to do.

Is the Prime Minister now ready to go ahead and eliminate the religious exception for inciting hatred or violence?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Bloc Québécois really cared about tackling hate crimes, it would be open to stopping or preventing the Conservative filibuster here in the House so we could debate the bill he is talking about and so we could debate our bill about online safety for children.

There are measures we would like to debate with the Bloc Québécois members in order to better protect Canadians and reduce hate speech, but, unfortunately, they are not putting an end to the Conservative antics that are paralyzing the House's work.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what a clear answer.

In war, there are only victims, and they are often civilians. Here, however, anti-Semitic speech is seen as perfectly acceptable. Fixing this would be easy, and 75% of Quebecers and 66% of Canadians support the idea.

Is the government willing to remove two sections of the Criminal Code that recognize the religious exception? Will it put its money where its mouth is?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish we were debating these important issues in the House. Far too many Canadians face hate and discrimination these days. That is why Parliament should be able to debate the matter and move forward with bills to resolve this challenge that too many people are facing.

Unfortunately, the Conservatives continue to obstruct the work of this Parliament, and the Bloc Québécois is not stopping them.

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[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives showed us who they really are. They voted against tax relief for the working class, and the Liberals want to jack up taxes on February 15. New Democrats believe the working class needs permanent relief. Will the Prime Minister permanently exempt the GST on daily essentials, like a kid's winter jacket?

*Oral Questions***FINANCE**

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are actually moving forward to suspend the sales tax for Canadians so they can afford the basic necessities they will need. Whether it is fresh-made produce, sorry, products at the grocery store, or whether it is dinner at a restaurant or even at a fast-food place for the family, these are things that Canadians will find less expensive over the coming months.

Unfortunately the Conservatives continue to vote against measures that will help Canadians. They stand against the tax break for all Canadians, like they stand against dental care, school food programs and many other things to help Canadians.

• (1440)

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, why are the Conservatives chirping so much? They have proven that they are bootlickers for billionaires.

[*Translation*]

Families will still need to eat after February 15. On February 15, however, the Prime Minister is going to put the GST right back where it was. That is yet another disappointment courtesy of the Liberals.

Why does the Prime Minister think that people should keep paying GST on diapers and children's clothing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our tax holiday over the next few months will help families across the country buy groceries, because all groceries will be tax-free. All the things that people are going to spend money on in the coming months, like eating out at restaurants or enjoying wine and beer, are going to cost less.

It is a way to tell Canadians that we see how hard they are struggling, but we are here to invest and to lend them a hand, unlike the Conservatives who keep voting against help for Canadians, against tax holidays, and against dental care.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister claims he is taking taxes off fresh-made produce. He really does think that food comes from the grocery store, not from the farmers who actually grow the produce. That is why he, I guess, thinks he can carbon tax those farmers without taxing the food. Then there is his friend, the Maserati Marxist. He wants to tax their gas. They are both out of touch. Canadians are out of money.

How about a carbon tax election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition had the opportunity to axe the sales tax for Canadians. He voted against it and forced his MPs to do exactly the same. He is only interested in his own political self-interest; he is not interested in helping Canadians with a tax break for the next few months, with dental care for vulnerable seniors across the country, or with more school food programs that will help kids and will help parents afford their groceries.

These are the kinds of things we are doing. These are exactly the things the Leader of the Opposition is blocking.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says he is going to leave the economy to bankers. He says that he does not think much about monetary policy, that budgets balance themselves and that he is not very good with numbers, but he did get one thing right: He said that deficits cause inflation, as did his finance minister right before she introduced his budget, saying that there would be no deficit above \$40 billion.

This is a straight-up question: Will the Prime Minister keep his word and cap the inflationary deficit below \$40 billion?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that the Leader of the Opposition is eager for our fall economic statement. If he really wants to see it, he could perhaps stop the obstruction of Parliament to allow us to move forward on dealing with Canadians and the challenges they are facing.

However, it is interesting that he brought up inflation once again. He stopped talking about inflation after years of railing about it because we did the work to actually bring it down. We invested in programs that were there to support Canadians but that did not contribute to inflation. Inflation is now back down in the target range. Interest rates are coming down. That is why we can give a tax break to Canadians. That is why we are there for them.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1445)

The Speaker: I am going to ask colleagues to please not take the floor unless recognized by the Speaker, so we can hear and so people who use interpretation can hear the answers to the questions.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, inflation is on the rise as a result of this Prime Minister's inflationary spending. In fact, the four measures of inflation are higher than the Bank of Canada target, and this election-minded, inflationary spending is making it harder for the Bank of Canada to reduce interest rates for Canadians who are struggling to put food on the table and a roof over their heads.

I will repeat my question. The Prime Minister promised to cap the inflationary deficit at \$40 billion. Will he do that?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, we have invested in measures to help Canadians who are struggling, whether it be the dental care program, the program to create more child care spaces or the school food program. All of these investments are aimed at helping Canadians, but they still made it possible to lower inflation and bring it back in the Bank of Canada's target zone.

Now, we are moving forward with a tax holiday for all Canadian families, for all Canadians, and the Conservative Party is voting against direct help for Canadians because they are just here to play politics.

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[English]

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the results are in on the Prime Minister's radical liberalization of hard drugs. He teamed up with the BC NDP to decriminalize fentanyl, crack and heroin, he lowered jail sentences for mass producers of deadly fentanyl, and 80% of the fentanyl made in Canada is done so using ingredients that are not even regulated and come right into our country where they are cooked into poison, which is now threatening our trade relationship with the U.S.

Will the Prime Minister reverse his radical liberal drug agenda to save lives and jobs?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately we have seen that the Conservative leader's answer to the terrible tragedy fighting so many Canadians with the toxic drug epidemic is to stand for photo ops in front of encampments and try to use them for cheap votes. Exploiting Canadians is not the way to move forward.

We have anchored ourselves in science, working in partnership with municipalities, frontline workers and provinces; working with the United States on precursor chemicals; and working to invest in wraparound supports including housing for people suffering from homelessness and from the drug crisis. We will continue to be there for people.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the results are in: The Prime Minister's radical liberalization of hard drugs has led to a 200% increase in overdose deaths; 47,000 people have died, and the worst deaths have been in NDP-controlled B.C., where the liberalization has been the most extreme. Worse, he is allowing 80% of the precursor chemicals used to make fentanyl come in unregulated and legally over our border, to be used by criminals who get out because he softened the sentences. Now our trade relationship is threatened over it.

Will the Prime Minister reverse the disastrous experiment to save the jobs and the lives of Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what has become increasingly clear through the Leader of the Opposition's little performances is that he does not actually care about Canadians and about people suffering. He is there for a clip and he is there for a photo op, but he is not there to do the work of delivering based on science, based on compassion or based on a public health approach on dealing with the toxic drug epidemic. He

is instead continuing to try to score cheap political points on the backs of the most vulnerable. That is not serious. That is not responsible.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is not responsible is allowing 80% of the chemicals used in fentanyl manufacturing to come in unregulated and legally. What is not responsible is decriminalizing crack, heroin and fentanyl, and then, after seeing that it leads to a massive increase in deaths, two weeks ago, he, the Bloc and the NDP all voted in favour of a committee report to decriminalize fentanyl right across the country.

At a time when Canadians are dying and our border could be closed, will the Prime Minister confirm that he has reversed himself and now opposes decriminalization of fentanyl?

• (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we see that the priority of the Leader of the Opposition is to exploit and use Canadians who are suffering to score cheap political points. Meanwhile, we are doing the serious work among parliamentarians, across different orders of government and with partners around the world to address this in a way that is grounded in science, not ideology, which works with frontline workers, makes investments in wraparound services and puts everything forward to try to save lives as best we possibly can.

That is what Canadians deserve, not the kind of cheap partisanship that the Leader of the Opposition continues to demonstrate every time he stands up in the House, which is absolutely irresponsible.

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I get the impression that the Prime Minister does not appreciate how serious the situation is. The Quebec National Assembly voted unanimously to end the religious exception. The Jewish community in Canada and Quebec is afraid. Here and in Quebec, because of the federal government, people can incite violence against Jews with impunity.

If he takes this seriously, we will too. If he commits to passing the law to end the religious exception, we will unblock Parliament for 24 hours.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc has just demonstrated its openness. We would like to see a similar openness extend to initiatives to protect the health care system for the most vulnerable, but this work is being blocked by the Conservative filibuster. We would like to expand dental care, but that work is being blocked by the Conservative filibuster. We would also like the Bloc Québécois to unblock Parliament so we can work on our online harms bill, Bill C-63, which will protect people across the country, especially children.

We would love to have all these debates in Parliament, but unfortunately, the Bloc Québécois continues to allow the Conservatives to obstruct the work—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I do not think he liked that. It is a matter of consistency, leadership and courage. We in the Bloc, we have the courage.

I can replicate his own proposal. He did it for a GST holiday. He can do it to protect the lives of Canadians and Quebeckers. The government could unblock Parliament for 24 hours, get the bill passed and make everyone feel safer. After that we can see if there are any good ideas that do not interfere in Quebec jurisdiction.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it always comes back to interference in Quebec's jurisdiction. The Bloc Québécois believes that an initiative that allows seniors to go to the dentist is interfering in Quebec's jurisdictions. We are here to help seniors across the country, including in Quebec. We are here to increase old age security for seniors aged 75 and over. We are here to invest in those who need it.

Unfortunately, even when we wanted to create more child care spaces across the country, the Bloc Québécois said we were interfering in Quebec's jurisdictions.

We are here to help all Canadians, including Quebeckers.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the weak Prime Minister has lost control of the cost of housing, which has doubled since he became Prime Minister. Just this week, the OECD published a report showing that Toronto and Vancouver are now the two most expensive housing markets in all of North America. Vancouver's housing is significantly more expensive than that of Seattle, even though Vancouverites make half as much money. Toronto's housing is more expensive than that of New York, even though New Yorkers make 50% more.

Will the Prime Minister call a housing tax election so that we can bring it home?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader has been having a rough few weeks since he promised he would be shutting down housing projects across the country. Even his Conservative MPs have been going behind his back to complain to the CBC that they can no longer advocate for their communities and that they are no longer allowed to stand up for their mayors, who need investments in housing in their

communities. He prefers to muzzle his MPs than to allow them to be their constituents' voice for their communities.

The Conservative leader's commitment to cut billions of dollars of investments in housing will not help anyone. That is why we are delivering for Canadians.

• (1455)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we do not complain to the CBC; we complain about the CBC. However, I digress.

The Prime Minister says that, if he gives more money to local bureaucracies, they will speed up homebuilding, so he gave a half billion dollars to Toronto City Hall. What happened after that? Homebuilding slowed down by 40%. He gave Vancouver City Hall \$115 million, and housing construction slowed down by 15%. He gave \$176 million to Ottawa City Hall, and construction is down by 22%. When will we learn that what we need in this country is to build homes, not bureaucracy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, mayors across the country, including those in Conservative-held ridings, are speaking out about the reckless cuts that the Conservative leader is proposing to the money that municipalities need to increase densification, accelerate permitting and move forward on homebuilding faster and faster across this country. The Conservative leader is standing against what his own MPs are asking for when he is telling mayors across the country that he is going to pull billions of dollars away from investments in housing that would respond to Canadians' needs to grow the economy and live securely for the future.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister gives tax dollars to big-city politicians, and then he gives tax dollars to CBC to interview those big-city politicians to say that they liked getting the money. Well, if giving more money to big-city politicians were to solve the problem, we would have the most affordable housing in the world, after revenues for cities has grown twice as fast as inflation and population combined for two decades in a row.

We do not need more money for bureaucracy and politicians. We need money in the pockets of homebuyers and home builders. Why do we not go to my common-sense plan to axe the sales tax, the GST, to bring down housing costs by \$50,000?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are seeing the clear pattern of the Conservative leader. He picks fights with journalists. He picks fights with mayors and city councils. He even picks fights with the team Canada approach, which is standing up for Canada's interests when we are faced with the real challenges from the incoming administration to the south. He is choosing to pick fights and divide Canadians at a time when we should be pulling together to solve the challenges of housing and the challenges being brought in by the new American administration. These are moments for us to pull together. Unfortunately, that is something the Conservative leader seems incapable of.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, taxes, debt and inflation to pay off politicians in exchange for press releases and photo ops will not solve the problem. What it has done is double housing costs and made Toronto and Vancouver the most expensive housing markets in North America, worse than New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and many other places with more people and money and much less land.

Here is a choice. The Prime Minister is afraid of a carbon tax election. Why do we not have a different kind? Why do we not have a housing tax election? When he proposes to give money to politicians, I propose to put it in the pockets of homebuyers.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition really wanted to put money in the pockets of Canadians, he would not have voted against the Canada child benefit, our initiatives to cut taxes for Canadians over the next two months and initiatives such as the Canada carbon rebate, which puts more money in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadian families across the country as we fight climate change and reduce emissions.

The Leader of the Opposition continues to seek to divide and pick fights amongst Canadians while we are offering solutions to both support Canadians now and build a stronger and more prosperous economy into the future. That is what we are going to keep doing.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the holiday is fast approaching and people in Ontario are scrambling. The Liberal government has let grocery prices soar to pad the pockets of CEOs. Canadians are paying far more for far less. Ontario food banks are cutting back. The surge in demand has surpassed the capacity and resources. Liberals have let people down. Worse, Conservatives will not fix it. They will cut and make life harder for the working class.

Why are the Liberals leaning on food banks to fix the affordability crisis they created?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remember a time when NDP members stood up for workers across this country, but when we put forward a proposal to send a \$250 cheque to working Canadians right across the country, to anyone who worked last year and made less than \$150,000, they

stood against it. They said no. They will not support being there for working Canadians.

Of course, we will continue to look at doing more for seniors and more for young people and recognize hard-working Canadians who stepped up and got us through the pandemic, got us through this inflation crisis. Turning their backs on workers, like the Conservatives are, is really a shame to see from the NDP.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I am going to ask the hon. member for Hamilton Centre to please not take the floor when he has not been recognized by the House.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, the Chiefs of Ontario is calling for improved accountability of the non-insured health benefits program and access to mental health services. First nations and Inuit are not consulted or invited to participate when selecting cultural support providers for their communities. As a result, unqualified people with criminal records are being enrolled as service providers.

When will the Liberals meaningfully work with first nations and Inuit to improve accountability and access to appropriate mental health services?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that AFN chiefs are right now engaged in a review of the entire program. We will continue to work with indigenous leadership across the country to make sure we are fulfilling our responsibilities to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and everyone gets the services and supports that they need. We know this is part of the long journey of reconciliation that we have embarked upon as a country. We will continue to be there as a full partner in this and all other difficult discussions.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recent reporting about India's alleged interference in the Conservative Party leadership race is concerning to Canadians across the country, including my constituents in Davenport. All members of the House have a responsibility to take national security seriously. That is especially true of our party leaders, including the Leader of the Opposition, who refuses to get a security clearance.

Can the Prime Minister explain the efforts to protect our national security against foreign interference?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allegations of Indian foreign interference in Conservative leadership races are alarming, but they are not new. They were highlighted in the NSICOP report, and they were highlighted by the public inquiry into foreign interference in federal electoral processes and democratic institutions, yet the Conservative leader refuses to get the top secret clearance necessary so he can be fully briefed upon threats to his party, his colleagues and our democracy. It is inexplicable to the vast number of Canadians why he refuses to take the top secret briefings that would keep Canada safe.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: It is not the first time, and members know that I have asked this question of various members in the House. I will ask the hon. member for Edmonton West, as well as the member for St. Albert—Edmonton, to please not take the floor unless requested to do so by the Chair.

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GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has lost control, but he is clinging to power with the help of his NDP-Liberal leader coalition partner, who said, and I am quoting the NDP leader here, “the Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people.” He bemoaned the fact that the Teamsters and the ILWU were forced back to work, violating their right to strike.

How can the Prime Minister cling to power with the help of someone who says he is too weak and too greedy to govern?

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader has spent the last few months in the House trying to demonstrate that Parliament cannot work for Canadians. He has been obstructing debate. He has been obstructing our ability to move forward on delivering for Canadians. Indeed, every chance he gets, he votes against measures that would support Canadians. Whether it is the tax break that we are giving over the next few months or moving forward on dental care, on a school food program and on more spots in lower-priced child care, the Conservative leader is voting against them because he wants Canadians to believe that everything is broken. Well, it is not. We continue to believe in Canadians and build a stronger future together.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want to fire that costly Prime Minister. His MPs want to fire that costly Prime Minister. The only one keeping him in power is the NDP leader, who, again, says, “the Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people.”

Now the Liberals are complaining that Canadians might choose me if there were an election. That is not the Liberals' choice. It is not my choice. It is not any of their choices. That is the decision of the Canadian people. Therefore, why does he not turn the decision over to the people who run this country, Canadians, in a carbon tax election?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Again, I ask hon. members not to take the floor.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Conservative leader demonstrates that he is trying very hard to prevent anything from being delivered for Canadians, whether it is dental care, the tax break that Canadians are getting off the sales tax for the next few months, initiatives around child care or a school food program. He has stood up time and time again in the House to vote against measures that directly support Canadians, grow the economy and help people out, because his political argument relies on people being broken, Canadians being divided and people being angry. That is not the way we are going to—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will fix everything he broke, as my great finance critic said. Let us start with the carbon tax. The Indian Resource Council announced today, they will be presenting a resolution at the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly to take the Liberal-NDP Prime Minister's carbon tax to court. They say, “We will not stand by while our communities are pushed further into poverty by the tax we never agreed to.” They want to dispel any notion that lower-income first nations are better off with the carbon tax rebate.

Why not listen to our courageous first nations people and have a carbon tax election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indigenous people have been the first and have for the longest stood up to highlight the dangers of climate change and the impacts of neglecting our environment and of not protecting our lands and our oceans, particularly against the previous Conservative government, of which that member was a part. The reality is that the Canada carbon rebate puts more money back in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadians right across the country. We will continue to fight climate change by putting more money in their pockets, despite the attempts of the Leader of the Opposition.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he is talking down to first nations people again. They said they have done the research and they “want to dispel any notion that lower-income first nations are better off with the carbon tax rebate.” In rural and remote communities where first nations live, the tax drives up their food, their heat and their transportation bills so much that the Ontario Liberal leader, Bonnie Crombie, has said, “I promise you, I will tell him when he’s wrong. Like on the carbon tax”.

Why won't he listen to Bonnie Crombie and other Liberals and call a carbon tax election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indigenous peoples across this country know better than most the cost of inaction on climate change, the impacts of extreme weather events and the impacts, quite frankly, of Conservative underinvestment for years in the kinds of infrastructure and supports they needed. We turned that around. We started treating indigenous peoples and communities as partners. We are invested in fighting climate change and are putting more money back in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadians with the Canada carbon rebate. We are continuing to make sure that protecting the environment and growing the economy for everyone go hand in hand. That is the path forward.

* * *

● (1510)

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister talked about seniors, so let us talk about them. The Prime Minister admitted that there is discrimination in increasing old age security for seniors 75 and up, while his party is in favour of our bill to end the discrimination. He says he is in favour of supply management, and yet he is not doing what he needs to do to ensure the passage of our bill protecting supply management. He says he is against hate propaganda, but he does not have the courage to join forces with us to unblock Parliament and get the bill on hate propaganda passed.

Does he understand why Quebecers are ready for an election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is another fine example of the Bloc Québécois looking to pick a fight, while we are delivering results for Quebecers and all Canadians, with a dental care plan, with investments for older seniors who have higher expenses and more requirements and who often have less retirement savings. We are doing good things for Quebecers and for all Canadians.

We will continue to be there as a partner while the Bloc Québécois and the Conservatives try to prevent this Parliament from operating and prevent the delivery of goods and benefits for Quebecers, for Canadians and for our seniors.

JUSTICE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is possible to not squabble and show some so-called common sense at the same time.

We are freeing up Parliament, maybe even by unanimous consent, but one by one, I want to see every member here who will not stand up and vote in favour of a law that puts an end to hate propaganda and violence under the guise of religion. I want to see those members who are going to oppose this legislation.

Are we or are we not doing this?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have indicated, we are very open to discussing, debating and moving forward on this issue. We recognize that there is no simple or easy solution to this. This is a partial solution, but we must continue to work together.

That is why we introduced Bill C-63, which addresses online hate, protects our children and will be part of the solutions across the country to combat hate and discrimination, especially online.

We have work to do in the House. Why will the Bloc Québécois not stop the Conservatives from continuing their filibuster?

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[English]

LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Halifax longshoremen unionized workers have just put out a statement, “On Monday the NDP has the opportunity to reinforce that they will not bring in back to work legislation by supporting their own leader's words.” Below that are those words, in a copy of the common-sense Conservative motion quoting the NDP-Liberal leader as saying, “the Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people”.

Will the NDP-Liberals stand with unions and vote non-confidence in the costly government?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we can tell why the Conservative leader is so desperate to bring Parliament to a halt and to prevent debates on matters that are actually going to deliver for Canadians. As we support Canadians, as we make investments that are growing the economy and showing up for Canadians, like the tax break over the next few months, the Conservative leader sees that we are actually solving some of the challenges that the global economy has tossed our way. These are things that we are focused on.

While he is focused on his own, political, partisan advantage and personal attacks, we are going to stay focused on Canadians and on delivering for them tangibly and concretely.

*Oral Questions***NATURAL RESOURCES**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, his party does not agree. He is so weak that the NDP keeps him in power while the Liberal Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador is attacking his energy cap. The Liberal premier says that this reduction of 35% in Newfoundland's energy production is already sending investment away.

We understand that President-elect Trump wants to take our money and jobs, but why is the Prime Minister standing against his own Liberal premier in Newfoundland and Labrador to help Trump do it?

• (1515)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, across the country, except on the Conservative benches, Canadians know climate change is real. Canadians are also stepping up in lots of different ways to help reduce their emissions, to grow the economy and to create a better future for their kids and grandkids. The multi-billion dollar profitable industry that is the oil and gas industry right now has an unlimited ability to emit emissions into the atmosphere.

We do not think any industry, particularly not one as wildly profitable as the oil and gas industry, should be able to have unlimited pollution. That is why we are putting a cap on emissions, not on production.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is factually false. The industry's emissions have been regulated for decades. He just wants to shut down their production and give more of the money and jobs to Donald Trump and the United States of America. Then there is the electricity tax. He calls it a regulation, but now we know that it is a tax because the independent Ontario energy operator says that this new regulation tax will drive up costs for families by \$175 a year and will drive factories, mines and mills south of the border.

Why is the Prime Minister killing jobs with high electricity prices?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our oil and gas emissions cap is a cap on emissions, not on production. No sector should be allowed unlimited pollution, and it is unfortunate the Conservatives continue to defend that incredibly profitable sector that is costing Canadians so much.

The reality is that we will continue to work with the industry, which is working on reducing its emissions, because we know that is how we protect oil and gas sector jobs into the future, by innovating, by bringing on better technologies and by recognizing that no sector should have a right to pollute unlimitedly.

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[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, affordability is an important issue in my riding, as it is across Canada. The people of Alfred-Pellan were happy to learn that they will be getting a bit of a break over the next few months thanks to the GST holiday.

Can the Prime Minister explain to Canadians how this holiday will help them?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Alfred-Pellan for his question. We know that the past few years have been hard for Canadians. That is why we are going to give all Canadians a GST holiday.

That means that, for two months, Canadians will not have to pay taxes on any of their groceries or on other everyday essentials. It does not make any sense that the Conservative leader and his caucus voted against the GST holiday for Canadians. While we are putting more money in Canadians' pockets, the Conservatives are opposing tax cuts.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Prime Minister has lost control. He has lost control of our border. He has lost control of immigration. He admits it, in fact. He did an about-face on immigration. We want to know if he is going to regain control by answering a very simple question.

How many people are staying here in Canada illegally?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after the pandemic, we answered the call of the provinces, businesses, small businesses across the country who needed to fill a labour shortage. That is why we allowed more people to come work in Canada.

The situation has changed and it is a good thing that we have a flexible immigration system because we were able to lower our immigration targets to ensure that our economy catches up to our level of growth.

It is perfectly normal for us to adjust our immigration targets based on the lived reality of people across the country.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he is the head of the government, which is responsible for monitoring who enters and leaves the country. I have a very simple question.

How many people are here in Canada illegally?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has always had a generous but responsible immigration system. The integrity of our immigration system has always been essential. This has created very strong growth for our economy over the past few decades, and we will continue to ensure the integrity of our system.

We have put measures in place to ensure that people return home when their visitor, work or study visas have ended, and we will continue to ensure the rigour and integrity of our system.

Oral Questions

• (1520)

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is the head of the government, responsible for monitoring who comes in our borders and who leaves our borders. Surely he will be able to answer a very simple question.

How many are in Canada illegally?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that have distinguished Canada from many countries around the world is that our immigration system has always been supported by Canadians, by our citizens from coast to coast to coast, because it is a strong and robust system that adjusts according to the needs of our population, of our economy, of our growth path and of our housing starts. That is exactly what we continue to do.

Where the Conservative leader is once again seeking to divide Canadians, seeking to import right-wing rhetoric from south of the border, we are going to continue to stay true to our Canadian values and deliver a strong and robust immigration system that meets Canadian values and expectations.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am going to ask the hon. member for Abbotsford to please not take the mic. He is an experienced and well-respected member.

The hon. member for Kings—Hants.

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SPORT

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer, Canadians across the country were filled with immense pride watching team Canada athletes represent us so well in the Olympic and Paralympic Games. In Kennetcook, we gathered at Findley Park to celebrate Wyatt Sanford's Olympic bronze. In Rimouski, they cheered for Maude Charron and, in Victoria, for the big man, Greg Stewart. That same story can be repeated for every single athlete who proudly wore the maple leaf in Paris.

Can the Prime Minister explain how we are supporting our world-class athletes and why it is important to support team Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my voice to those on this side of the House who are very excited that we have Olympians and Paralympians in Parliament today, here on Parliament Hill. Canadians celebrated them throughout this exciting summer, watching our Olympians and Paralympians succeed and inspire Canadians, and this is something we can continue to celebrate right now.

We will always support our athletes and work to make sure they can represent their country their very best. That is why we are giving more money for our athletes and supporting pregnant athletes, so they do not have to give up their careers to start a family.

These are all initiatives we are working to move forward. Unfortunately, the Conservatives continue to obstruct the House and make it more difficult.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we recognize the incredible hard work and dedication of our Olympic athletes. We have so much to be proud of. That is why it was so unfair that the soccer drone scandal distracted from the fact that Canada's athletes earned the podium. Many Canadians, including former athletes, have been calling on the government to do the right thing and bring about full accountability with respect to the drone scandal and the culture surrounding it so it never happens again.

Why are the Liberals blocking efforts at accountability at the heritage committee? Why is the minister refusing to be accountable?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer we celebrated our Canadian athletes with everything we had, from coast to coast to coast. It was very exciting.

Yes, the incident with drones and Canada Soccer was extremely unfortunate. That is why there have been consequences. That is why we continue to ensure there are follow-ups on that.

As the member well knows, committees in Parliament are independent and do their work independently. However, we will continue to make sure that the extraordinary support that all Canadians, not just governments but community members and volunteers, give to our athletes every single day to make sure they shine continues unabated.

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[Translation]

PASSPORTS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, with over 135,000 passports stuck in Canada Post warehouses or held back by Service Canada because of the strike, many Canadians and Quebeckers are feeling anxious as they struggle to get their documents before going on vacation or to visit loved ones in other countries.

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether he has a plan B and whether his government has contingency measures ready to ensure that these Canadian citizens will get their passports in time to travel?

• (1525)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working with both sides to try to end the strike at Canada Post.

The minister is holding regular meetings with Canada Post and the union. We want the parties to have every reason to settle this dispute quickly. We know that a lot of people are feeling the pain, including small businesses.

As far as passports go, we have opened more Service Canada outlets. We know that this situation poses a big challenge for many Canadians. We are going to keep working to make sure that people get their passports in time for their winter vacation.

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: Before we go to points of order, I wish to draw attention to a presence in the gallery.

[English]

I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee, Minister of Health and Social Services and Minister of Justice for Yukon.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

There have been discussions among the parties, and, if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: That the House affirm that no hate speech is tolerated—

The Speaker: Unfortunately, I have already heard “no”s from several members.

I have a list of people who wish to speak.

[English]

I will recognize the hon. member in a moment.

The person next on my list is the hon. member for Don Valley West.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is rare for me to rise on a point of order in the House. However, as I try to keep my head down and attempt to focus on the issues being raised, I feel the need to draw your attention to the increase in name-calling during question period.

Earlier today, the Leader of the Opposition referred to the member for Burnaby South by what I would consider to be an unparliamentary moniker: two words beginning with M that I will not repeat here.

We are about to welcome athletes who have represented our country with excellence and with appropriate maturity and who are truly honourable. Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you continue to be vigilant and ensure the decorum in the House is maintained, and that you ask members to apologize for using ridiculous monikers with hon. members.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please.

I appreciate the intervention from the hon. member for Don Valley West. I did notice as well a number of monikers being used by various folks in the House. This is something to consider and to review, and I will take a careful note of the hon. member's intervention and come back to the House.

I see the hon. member for Nunavut is rising on a point of order.

Points of Order

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, my point of order is according to *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, and is to address repeatedly putting on the record information that is not accurate.

I would like to ask the leader of the Conservative Party to withdraw and apologize for claiming that indigenous peoples, again, belong to the Conservatives. He needs to stop using terms that are possessive when it comes to indigenous peoples, especially when he has met regularly with residential school deniers. I do hope he stands up to apologize to indigenous peoples.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Nunavut for raising this issue. I will take a look at the record and come back to the House, if necessary.

Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 7, the House will now resolve itself into a committee of the whole to welcome Canada's 2024 Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games athletes.

* * *

● (1530)

[Translation]

CANADA'S OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC ATHLETES

(House in committee of the whole to recognize the 2024 Summer Olympic Games and Paralympic Games athletes, Mr. Greg Fergus in the chair)

[*And Canada's 2024 Olympic and Paralympic athletes being present in the chamber:*]

The Speaker: On November 7, the following motion was adopted by unanimous consent of the House:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order, or usual practice of the House, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions on Wednesday, December 4, 2024, the House resolve itself into a committee of the whole in order to welcome Canada's 2024 Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games athletes, provided that:

- (a) the Speaker make welcoming remarks on behalf of the House;
- (b) the names of the athletes present be deemed read and printed in the House of Commons Debates for that day;
- (c) when the proceedings of the committee have concluded, the committee shall rise; and
- (d) only authorized photographers be permitted to take photos during the proceedings of the committee.

[English]

I know my hon. colleagues are as excited as I am to welcome these extraordinary Canadians. We have many athletes to celebrate, too many actually to fit all together in the chamber, so we will be welcoming them in two waves.

[Translation]

This means we have to be patient and disciplined to ensure the event runs smoothly.

[English]

I draw the attention of colleagues to the last item of the motion and ask members not to take photos during the proceedings.

Points of Order

Now it is my pleasure to welcome onto the floor of the House of Commons our Canadian athletes who competed in the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games in Paris last July, August and September.

Some members: Hear, hear!

[Members and athletes sang the national anthem]

• (1535)

[Translation]

The Speaker: Dear athletes, I see that a few tears have been shed here in the House. You are simply extraordinary.

[English]

Extraordinary is a word that literally describes each one of you.

[Translation]

You have shown that you are extraordinary through years of training, sacrifice and the determination it takes to become the best. You are all champions, and an inspiration to all of us, but especially to the children and youth of Canada.

[English]

We also want to recognize coaches, families, mission staff and the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic committees for their hard work and dedication. Through all of your efforts, team Canada won 27 medals, including nine golds, during the Olympic Games and 29 medals, including 10 golds, at the Paralympic Games.

On behalf of all parliamentarians, thank you for representing our country and our people so well. You made us all proud.

[Translation]

I want to thank everyone for coming today.

On behalf of all Canadians, thank you very much.

• (1540)

We will now welcome the next group of Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[Members and athletes sang the national anthem]

The Speaker: Ladies and gentlemen, athletes, good afternoon.

Welcome to the House of Commons.

Canadians across the country are proud of you. Everyone realizes the years of training, sacrifice and determination that it takes to become world-class athletes like you.

[English]

You are all champions and a source of inspiration for your fellow citizens, especially younger Canadians. Today is an opportunity for us to recognize your coaches and your families, as well as the mission staff, the Canadian Olympic Committee and the Canadian Paralympic Committee for their constant support.

[Translation]

Through your efforts, team Canada won 27 medals, including 9 gold medals, at the Olympic Games. That is not all. You won 29 medals, including 10 gold medals, at the Paralympic Games.

On behalf of all parliamentarians, I thank you for representing our country with such distinction. We are extremely proud of you. Once again, congratulations.

[English]

We are going to need a bigger parliament after the next Olympics to accommodate you all. Thank you for coming.

• (1550)

Pursuant to order made Thursday, November 7, the names of the Olympic and Paralympic athletes are deemed read and will be printed in the Debates of the House.

Canada's 2024 Olympic and Paralympic athletes:

Abigail Dent, Ana Laura Portuondo Isasi, Audrey Lamothe, Briana Scott, Caeli McKay, Charity Williams, Claire Scheffel, Courtney Stott, Daniel Gu, Daniel Dearing, Emma Finlin, Emma O'Croinin, Emy Legault, Erin Attwell, Evan Dunfee, Fay Ebert, Florence Tremblay, François Cauchon, Javier Acevedo, Jazz Shukla, Jill Moffatt, Jonnie Newman, Kasia Gruchalla-Wesierski, Katie Vincent, Kelsey Mitchell, Kenzie Priddell, Madeline Price, Mariam Abdul-Rashid, Matt Berger, Maximilien Van Haaster, Maya Meschkuleit, Michael Foley, Michele Esercitato, Michelle Harrison, Molly Simpson, Nicholas Matveev, Olivia Lundman, Paige Crozon, Pamela Brind'Amour, Raphaëlle Plante, Rebecca Smith, Riley Melanson, Sade McCreath, Samuel Zakutney, Sarah Mitton, Scarlett Finn, Shannon Westlake, Tye Ikeda, Zachary Clay, Abi Tripp, Alexander Elliot, Alison Levine, Anthony Bouchard, Arianna Hunsicker, Aurélie Rivard, Charles Moreau, Charlotte Bolton, Clémence Paré, Cody Caldwell, Danik Allard, Erica Scarff, Felicia Voss-Shafiq, Greg Stewart, Hannah Ouellette, Julia Hanes, Kate O'Brien, Kyle Tremblay, Marissa Papaconstantinou, Meghan Mahon, Michael Sametz, Nathan Clement, Nicolas Guy Turbide, Noah Vuicsics, Peter Isherwood, Renee Foessel, Rio Kanda Kovac, Sabrina Duchesne, Sheriauna Haase, Stefan Daniel, Tamara Steeves, Tara Llanes, Tess Routliffe, Zachary Gingras, Jackie Boyle,

Aaron Brown, Aiyanna Stiverne, Alex Axon, Alex Baldoni, Alex Moore, Anicka Newell, Antonia Lewin-LaFrance, Avalon Wasteneys, Blake Broszus, Boady Santavy, Caileigh Filmer, Camille Carier Bergeron, Camryn Rogers, Connor Fitzpatrick, Cordano Russell, Craig Thorne, Duan Asemota, Ellie Black, Emily Bugeja, Fares Arfa, Georgia Lewin-LaFrance, Heather Bansley, Jacqueline Madogo, Jean-Simon Desgagnés, Jeremy Bagshaw, Jessica Sevick, Kate Current, Katherine Plouffe, Kelsey Wog, Kristina Walker, Lauren Gale, Lauriane Genest, Linda Morais, Lois Betteridge, Lucia Stafford, Margaret Mac Neil, Marie-Éloïse Leclair, Maude Charron, Michelle Russell, Naïma Moreira-Laliberté, Natalie Davison, Sarah Douglas, Shallon Olsen, Skylar Park, Sloan MacKenzie, Sophia Jensen, Sophiane Méthot, Sydney Payne, Thomas Fafard, Toshka Besharah, Tristan Jankovics, Tyler Mislawchuk, Virginie Chénier, Zoe Sherar, Allison Lang, Amanda Rummery, Amy Burk, Annie Fergusson, Ashlyn Renneberg, Austin Smeenk, Bianca Borgella, Blaise Mutware, Brianna Hennessy, Cindy Ouellet, Emma Van Dyk, Emma Reinke, Heidi Peters, Iulian Ciobanu, Jesse Zesseu, Jolan Wong, Katelyn Wright, Katie Cosgriffe, Keegan Gaunt, Mary Jibb, Michael Whitehead, Nicholas Bennett, Patrice Dagenais, Patrick Anderson, Priscilla Gagné, Reid Maxwell, Sarah Melenka, Shelby Newkirk, Whitney Bogart, Eliezer Adjibi, Kristen Siermachesky.

[*And Canada's 2024 Olympic and Paralympic athletes having left the Chamber:*]

The Speaker: The committee will now rise.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, 1999

The House resumed from November 28 consideration of the motion that Bill C-380, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 (plastic manufactured items), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being 3:53 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-380 under Private Members' Business.

Call in the members.

• (1620)

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

(*Division No. 909*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Berthold
Block
Brassard
Calkins
Carrie
Chong

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bezan
Bragdon
Brock
Caputo
Chambers
Cooper

Dalton
Davidson
Doherty
Dreeshen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Généreux
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Jeneroux
Kelly
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Lake
Lawrence
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
Maguire
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Morantz
Motz
Nater
Paul-Hus
Poilievre
Reid
Richards
Rood
Scheer
Seeback
Shiple
Soroka
Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's)
Strahl
Thomas
Tolmie
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

Private Members' Business

Dancho
Deltell
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferreri
Gallant
Genuis
Godin
Gourde
Hallan
Jivani
Khanna
Kmiec
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lantsman
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Majumdar
Mazier
McLean
Moore
Morrison
Muys
Patzner
Perkins
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Schmale
Shields
Small
Steinley
Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake)
Stubbs
Tochor
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer— 118

NAYS

Members

Ali
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bergeron
Bibeau
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Casey
Chagger
Champagne

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bérubé
Bittle
Blanchet
Blaney
Boissonnault
Bradford
Brunelle-Duceppe
Carr
Chabot
Chahal

Routine Proceedings

Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Dance	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gainey
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Michaud	Miller
Morrice	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Noormohamed	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Pauzé
Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Rayes
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rota	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Sauvé	Savard-Tremblay
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Sorbara
Sousa	Ste-Marie

St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thériault	Therrien
Thompson	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 210

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, the time provided for Government Orders will be extended by 12 minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to six petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the following reports of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, or APF: the reports respecting its participation in two parliamentary missions to the United Nations in New York, United States of America, on February 22 and 23, 2024, and from April 3 to 5, 2024; the report respecting the Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians in Doha, Qatar, on June 26 and 27, 2024; the report concerning the bureau meeting, the 49th annual session and the 10th edition of the APF's Francophone Parliament of Youth, in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, from July 4 to 9, 2024; and the report concerning the 39th regional assembly of the APF's America Region, in Toronto, Canada, from August 7 to 9, 2024.

[English]

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-China Legislative Association's 24th bilateral meeting in Beijing and Shanghai, China, from March 24-29.

• (1625)

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 25th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights entitled “Supplementary Estimates (B), 2024-25: Vote 1b under Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada, Vote 1b under Canadian Human Rights Commission, Vote 1b under Courts Administration Service, Votes 1b and 5b under Department of Justice and Vote 1b under Law Commission of Canada”.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 73rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House. If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the 73rd report later this day.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 21st report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food entitled “Supplementary Estimates (B), 2024-25: Votes 1b, 5b and 10b under Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food”.

[English]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move that the 73rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay. Hearing none, it is agreed.

The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay. Hearing no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

HEALTH

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move that the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Health, presented on Wednesday, June 19, be concurred in.

It is an honour to speak this afternoon. I will split my time with my great colleague and friend, the member for Peterborough—Kawartha.

It is with great sadness, though, that I have to rise in the House today to speak to the report from the health committee related to breast cancer screening guidelines in Canada. One of the things that we do know is that one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetimes, which is not an insignificant statistic. Even more poignant is that one in 36 are expected to die from the illness. When we look at these numbers, we know that this is

Routine Proceedings

something that, as we look around the chamber, could certainly affect many of us who are here.

From a very personal perspective, I want to say that my own wife, Deborah, had breast cancer and now, as of this spring, will be an eight-year survivor. Again, not to be overly personal, but when somebody realizes they have cancer, either by screening mammography or because they have found a lump in their breast, as a spouse who has experienced it and as a former physician who has seen this happen many times, the whole world comes to a screeching halt.

The most difficult thing, of course, is not knowing what is next, not knowing how severe the illness is and not knowing exactly what the treatment is going to look like, how they are going to feel, how long it is going to last or how terribly it is going to affect them, their family and those who are there to support them. Sadly, it also presents a significant financial burden often for Canadians who live in rural communities and have to go back and forth to appointments in larger centres at their own expense. That is not an insignificant thought either. Taking time off from work further exacerbates that difficulty. Certainly, I am thankful every day that my wife has made the incredible recovery that she has.

From a statistical perspective, breast cancer is also the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Canadians aged 30 to 49, which really brings us to look at why it is so important that the current guidelines, which suggest that Canadian women should begin screening for breast cancer via mammography at age 50, should be reduced and screening offered to women at the age of 40.

It really does pain me to think that this is a political issue. The difficulty is that those who bring forward the science around this, sadly, are not being listened to. It is the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care that puts forward these guidelines. It does not mean that the guidelines are binding to physicians, but certainly many jurisdictions would use those recommendations from the Canadian task force to inform decisions related to offering mammography to women earlier.

Part of the discussion is absolutely abhorrent when we begin to consider it. Some of the testimony that we heard was that screening women earlier would lead to finding things that would have to be investigated and, in the end, would turn out not to be cancerous, and of course that creates some anxiety. There were actually witnesses who suggested that the anxiety would be overwhelming. From the perspective of someone who has gone through it in a few different ways, it would be much more anxiety producing to miss something and know that someone had a much further-advanced cancer than they would have if it had been caught earlier.

Routine Proceedings

As we look at some of the statistics around this, there was a study published that looked at this particular issue and said Canadian women 40 to 49 years old were diagnosed with significantly fewer stage 1 and more stage 2 and stage 3 breast cancers than women aged 50 to 59. That means that, because younger women were not being offered screening mammography, their cancers were diagnosed at a much more advanced stage. As many people here in the House and watching on TV would know, when cancers are diagnosed at a later stage, the person is given a much worse prognosis or outcome and that is certainly something that we want to avoid in cancers.

• (1630)

Those cancers that are diagnosed at an earlier stage are more easily treatable, and the outcomes are significantly more favourable. We also know that the five-year survival rate is 74% for stage 3 breast cancer and only 23.2% for women who have stage 4 cancer. That is just to support the notion that the earlier the stage at which breast cancer and other cancers are found, the more favourable the outcomes are.

It is also interesting, when we begin to look at this, that this same study we are talking about found that earlier screening led to significantly improved survival rates among women in their forties with breast cancer who lived in provinces where they were allowed to receive screening in their forties. Once again, we see this new evidence that is out there.

Part of the difficulty with the task force is that it only wants to accept randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind trials. What does all of that scientific gobbledegook mean? That means that one group would have a treatment and the other group would have a sham treatment, and then we would compare the outcomes without either group knowing which one they were in. That would be unethical to do, because we know at the current time that screening for breast cancer is a proven treatment.

What we need to understand now is that the outdated information, often from the 1960s, does not necessarily apply to the significant advancements in imaging that we now have in the 2020s. Because that new information is not being included in the decision-making process, what we are finding is that the folks on the preventive task force do not want to change the guidelines in spite of the fact that there is overwhelming evidence to do the contrary.

I think it also important to outline to Canadians that this is about women in the 40- to 49-year age category, and there is also an interesting scientific notion of “potential years of life lost”. For instance, if a 45-year-old woman dies at age 45 and would have lived to 85, that is 40 years of potential years of life lost. We also know that many women are, as is anybody in society at age 40 to 49, in the heyday of their working careers. They are wives. They are mothers. They are sisters. They are daughters. They are aunts. As we look at that significant portion of the life that is lost, we know that in Canada things can be better than that.

Dr. Paula Gordon, a clinical professor at UBC, informed members of the health committee in June of this year that “women aged 40 to 49 are 44% less likely to die of breast cancer if they have mammograms.” We also heard that breast cancer in younger wom-

en is often “more aggressive” than that in older women and spreads faster if left untreated.

There are a couple of other notions that need to be brought forward here. It has also been reported that the peak incidence of breast cancer for Black and Asian women is 10 years earlier than among white women, and racialized minorities are particularly harmed by the current outdated guidelines. We also know that, in the United States, the United States Preventive Services Task Force recommended last year that women begin receiving mammograms of a screening nature at age 40. Why we continue to use these outdated guidelines is very nonsensical.

There are about 470 women aged 40 to 49 who die of breast cancer each year. I think of how many lives we could save by changing these guidelines. I think that, on behalf of all Canadians, when new science becomes available, it is important that it gets called out, and we say that things need to change and they need to change rapidly.

On behalf of all Canadians, I would certainly say very strongly to the preventive task force that its guidelines need to change and they need to change quickly, because truly, in this instance, lives are at stake.

• (1635)

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Cumberland—Colchester for that speech and his leadership on this issue before the health committee.

The public may not know, but the matter that is presently under debate in the House is one that was moved at the health committee in the middle of a study on breast cancer screening guidelines. It was moved pre-emptively, before the study was completed. As luck would have it, the draft report is presently before the committee and is being reviewed.

This is an example of a piece of work that has been undertaken very much on a non-partisan basis and probably represents the good work that can happen here when Canadians are put first and party differences are put aside.

I would like to invite my hon. colleague to talk a bit about the evidence that was heard at the committee before and after this report was tabled, and his expectations and hopes for the recommendations that will come out of the final report on this issue.

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Charlottetown as well. Certainly, as he is the chair of the health committee, we often have our differences, but I would say he is most often fair and sometimes even kind. I know that is a big admission.

That being said, as we look at the evidence, one of the studies we talked about specifically was a 2022 study published in *Current Oncology*, which states that the current Canadian breast cancer screening guidelines, initially published in 2011 by the Canadian task force, pose a dangerous threat to Canadian women's health. It goes on to say the screening guidelines are based on ancient data, from as early as the 1960s, that provided the recommendation that screening for an average-risk woman begin at age 50.

It is incredibly important that when new evidence becomes available, it is adopted as quickly as possible. Even these task force recommendations are from 2011.

I think it is sad we have to have political intervention in a scientific area of expertise because those scientists refuse to be different and do the job they are asked to do on behalf of Canadians. When we know lives are at stake, it is incredibly important that things change today, not tomorrow.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his nuanced and compassionate speech. I also want to thank the entire Standing Committee on Health for this study, which is so very important.

Research into breast cancer must continue. Discoveries are being made quite regularly, including with respect to genetics and DNA. There are some genes that predispose a person to preventable breast cancers.

In certain hereditary cases, would it also be appropriate to include this genetic research to see if a woman is more at risk than others of developing breast cancer?

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Mr. Speaker, it is a bit hard for me to say everything I want to say with the right words in French, so I will switch to English.

[*English*]

The specific terminology is a bit difficult, at least for me, in French.

What we know is that genetic information is going to be more important. Partly, we have to consider that in the context of screening large portions of the population. It could interfere with things such as getting insurance if one knew one was at greater risk than the general population, so we have to look at that very carefully.

It will be very important as time goes on to know that certain cancers are linked together, such as colon cancer, ovarian cancer and breast cancer. The more knowledge Canadians have, the better the informed choice they will be able to make, rather than having to rely on their own decision-making.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as luck would have it, I am a breast cancer survivor who was diagnosed before 50. I was at the committee that day and spoke about the impact it had on my small children, who were still in elementary school.

The member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake shared her story about being a child when her mother got breast cancer and passed

away. The member and I immediately clicked and said we would do this for people, we would put together a motion to have the task force reconsidered, basically.

I am going to quote from Dense Breasts Canada, which said that “the Task Force [should] be disbanded and rebuilt.”

I faced push-back from the Liberals on this motion. They said it was not important enough.

I wonder if the Conservative member would share why it is so important to listen to women who have experienced this in their life and to get this done.

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Mr. Speaker, I would like to give my congratulations to my hon. colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam.

One of the important things, especially in this particular study, is that there is an incredible collision between women like the hon. member, who have lived experience, and the science. When we see those two things colliding and giving us the same messages over and over again, it behooves us, those of us who have the privilege of having a voice, to stand up and shout as loud as we can and to say the current state of affairs is unacceptable and things need to change today.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. With respect to questions on the Order Paper, I believe that if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for me to answer a number of questions today.

• (1645)

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 3075, 3078 to 3080, 3082, 3084, 3085 and 3088.

[*Text*]

Question No. 3075—**Mr. Bob Zimmer:**

With regard to Northern Affairs Canada: (a) what is the organizational chart of departments within Northern Affairs Canada; (b) what are the details of each department for the last three fiscal years, broken down by (i) department, (ii) year, (iii) number of full-time equivalent employees, (iv) budget; (c) what is the purpose of each department; (d) how many employees work remotely or from home one or more days a week; and (e) how many employees currently have a salary (i) of less than \$100,000, (ii) between \$100,000 and \$200,000, (iii) of more than \$200,000?

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Northern Affairs organization is part of the department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

With regard to part (a), all information regarding the department's organization can be found at <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1706208647247/1706208665767>

Routine Proceedings

With regard to parts (b) to (d), there are no departments under Northern Affairs Canada.

Question No. 3078—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to Canadians detained or incarcerated abroad: (a) how many Canadians are currently detained or incarcerated in Hong Kong; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by length of incarceration and type of charge or accusation that resulted in the detainment or incarceration?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

With regard to part (a), as of October 7, 2024, Global Affairs Canada is aware of 13 Canadians in custody in Hong Kong. This data was extracted from Global Affairs Canada's consular case management system and may be updated on a daily basis. As such, caution should be exercised when analyzing data in relation to previously disclosed data. These are cases of Canadians detained abroad with a specific detention status: "in detention" or "in a medical facility".

It should be noted that Canadians may choose not to advise Global Affairs Canada of a situation of detention; moreover, in countries where dual citizenship is not recognized, dual Canadians who entered on non-Canadian documentation would not necessarily result in a detention notification from the host government. It is important, therefore, to underline that these numbers may not represent a complete picture when it comes to detention figures.

With regard to part (b), the Government of Canada's first priority is always the safety and security of its citizens. For this reason, in addition to privacy considerations, we will not comment on or release any information on specific cases. Doing so may compromise ongoing efforts or endanger the safety of Canadians.

Question No. 3079—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to ministers' and government entities' compliance with paragraphs 74(d) and 88(c) of the Access to Information Act: (a) has each minister or government entity subject to those provisions of the Act prepared or had access to "back pocket" briefing materials for parliamentary committee appearances; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what is the distinction between regular and "back pocket" briefing materials; and (c) are the "back pocket" briefing materials also disclosed proactively and, if not, why not?

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Access to Information Act requires that the package of briefing materials prepared for a minister or deputy head for the purpose of an appearance before a committee of Parliament be proactively published within 120 days after the appearance. The act does not make any distinction regarding the type or format of the information that comprises the package of briefing materials.

Ministers and deputy heads receive information from departments on a regular basis that may be used for a variety of purposes. This material would not be subject to proactive disclosure requirements 74(d) and 88(c) of the act unless it was part of the package of briefing materials prepared specifically for a parliamentary appearance.

Information published through proactive publication should mirror what would be released if information were released in response to an access to information request. In other words, if an institution

received a request for the briefing materials prepared for a minister or deputy head for a parliamentary committee appearance, that institution would apply exemptions and exclusions in accordance with the act. The same exemptions and exclusions should apply when briefing materials are proactively published.

Each minister and government entity is responsible for compliance with these requirements.

Question No. 3080—Mr. Chris Warkentin:

With regard to subsection 63(2) of the Access to Information Act: (a) how many reports has the Attorney General of Canada received from the Information Commissioner since January 1, 2024, concerning potential offences under federal or provincial laws; (b) of the reports in (a), how many has the Attorney General passed along to the appropriate police of jurisdiction; and (c) of the reports in (a) that the Attorney General has not passed along to the appropriate police of jurisdiction, what are the details, including (i) the date on which the report was received from the Information Commissioner, (ii) which government institutions the report concerned, (iii) the nature of the potential offence or offences, (iv) the reason for which they were not passed along, (v) the date on which the Attorney General reached that decision?

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice, including the Attorney General of Canada, did not receive any reports concerning potential offences under federal or provincial laws under subsection 63(2) of the Access to Information Act from the Information Commissioner between January 1, 2024, and October 17, 2024.

Question No. 3082—Ms. Lianne Rood:

With regard to Health Canada's advertising of the COVID-19 vaccine: (a) how much was spent on advertisements encouraging the use of vaccines; (b) how much was spent on advertisements related to the safety of the vaccine; (c) how much was spent on publicists; and (d) how much was spent on social media influencers?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), \$45,477,174.55 was spent. All advertising costs reported include agency of record, AOR, and ad tech fees. Costs do not include HST, to align with the advertising costs reported in the Annual Report on Government of Canada Advertising Activities. Total costs reported include media placement costs that were submitted for the Government of Canada annual advertising reports, and taken from the advertising management information system, AdMIS. Costs do not include planning or production costs.

With regard to part (b), the safety of the vaccine was a key message in the broader campaign to encourage vaccine use. Costs for safety-specific ads cannot be separated, as these were integrated with other campaign messaging. The total advertisements cost is provided in response to question (a).

With regard to part (c), there was no spending on publicists.

With regard to part (d), \$132,168 was spent in 2021-22 to plan and deliver a social media influencer campaign to help people in Canada make an informed decision about COVID-19 vaccines. Expenditures are related to planning, material development, influencer outreach and liaison, updates, content monitoring, evaluation and payments to influencers.

Question No. 3084—**Ms. Lianne Rood:**

With regard to Canada Carbon Rebate payments made in the last fiscal year: (a) how many rebates were sent to temporary foreign workers, and what was the total dollar amount; (b) how many rebates were sent to international students, and what was the total dollar amount; (c) how many rebates were sent to permanent residents, and what was the total dollar amount; and (d) how many rebates were sent to citizens, and what was the total dollar amount?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the CRA does not collect the information in the manner requested regarding Canada carbon rebate payments made in the last fiscal year to temporary foreign workers, international students, permanent residents, and citizens. The CRA does not require taxpayers to provide this type of residency information when they file a tax return.

Question No. 3085—**Ms. Lianne Rood:**

With regard to geoengineering projects in Canada since 2016: what are the details of the projects that Environment and Climate Change Canada has been involved with, including the (i) name of the project, (ii) names of the project partners, (iii) total financial commitment, (iv) goals of each project, (v) project completion status, (vi) evidence supporting the project goals?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ECCC does not have any projects related to Q-3085.

Question No. 3088—**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:**

With regard to the 2 Billion Trees program and the municipalities of Port Moody, Coquitlam, Anmore and Belcarra: (a) how much funding has been delivered through each funding stream; and (b) what is the total number of trees planted through each funding stream?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the two billion trees, 2BT, program committed to partnering with provinces and territories to support the Government of Canada's target of planting two billion trees. The government is actively negotiating multi-year agreements with provinces and territories, indigenous governments and organizations, municipalities, and other organizations.

As of October 2024, there are no announced projects or tree-planting sites funded by the 2BT program found in the municipalities of Port Moody, Coquitlam, Anmore and Belcarra. All 2BT funded projects can be found on Open Government at: <https://search.open.canada.ca/grants/>.

More information on the program can be found at the following links.

General information about the two billion trees program can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/campaign/2-billion-trees.html>

Information on the two billion trees program progress can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/campaign/2-billion-trees/our-action.html>

Information on the two billion trees program's collaboration with provinces and territories can be found here: <https://>

Routine Proceedings

www.canada.ca/en/campaign/2-billion-trees/2-billion-trees-partnerships-with-provinces-and-territories.html

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[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 3073, 3074, 3076, 3077, 3081, 3083, 3086, 3087 and 3089 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 3073—**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:**

With regard to the government's refocused spending initiative, broken down by department or agency, program and year: how much funding has been refocused away from policing-based initiatives, broken down by (i) crime prevention, (ii) crime response, (iii) community outreach?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3074—**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:**

With regard to the government's refocused spending initiative, broken down by department or agency, program and year: how much funding has been refocused away from initiatives that support Canada's domestic fishing industry, broken down by (i) commercial fishing and aquaculture, (ii) fish processing and distribution, (iii) Indigenous fisheries?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3076—**Mr. John Brassard:**

With regard to Microsoft licenses paid for by the government, in total and broken down by department or agency: (a) how much was spent on Microsoft licenses in the last fiscal year; (b) how many licenses does the government pay for and how many users are able to access Microsoft products through those licenses; (c) how many licenses are currently unused; and (d) how many licenses are not currently assigned to an employee or full-time equivalent?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3077—**Mr. John Brassard:**

With regard to Adobe licenses paid for by the government, in total and broken down by department or agency: (a) how much was spent on Adobe licenses in the last fiscal year; (b) how many licenses does the government pay for and how many users are able to access Adobe products through those licenses; (c) how many licenses are currently unused; and (d) how many licenses are not currently assigned to an employee or full-time equivalent?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 3081—Ms. Raquel Dancho:**

With regard to applications for warrants made under the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act between November 20, 2019, and October 26, 2021: (a) how many warrant applications were provided to the office of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness between November 20, 2019, and December 31, 2020; (b) how many warrant applications were provided to the office of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness between January 1, 2021, and October 26, 2021; and (c) for each warrant application in (b), what is the date on which the (i) warrant application was provided to the office of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, (ii) minister provided his approval?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3083—Ms. Lianne Rood:

With regard to the pollution prevention planning notices, before issuing the notices: (a) did Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) take into consideration the plastics life cycle assessments conducted by the Government of Quebec, the United Kingdom, or Denmark; (b) did ECCC gather evidence and consider studies related to the greenhouse gases and waste contributions of plastic alternatives, and, if so, which studies and what evidence; (c) did ECCC take into account the increased manufacturing and energy requirements for plastic alternatives; (d) did ECCC take into account the economic impact on Canadian manufacturers and producers; and (e) did ECCC conduct any analysis of social impacts on consumers, including (i) cost increases, (ii) the contribution to inflation, (iii) the contribution to food safety, (iv) the contribution to food security?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3086—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to Canada-Sudan relations: (a) what are the complete details of development assistance dollars spent with the intention of having an impact in Sudan over the last two years, including, for each spending item, the (i) amount spent, (ii) recipient and any additional delivery partners, (iii) allocation timeline, (iv) amount spent on each item; (b) what are the complete details of development assistance dollars spent with the intention of having an impact on Sudanese refugees outside of Sudan in the last two years, including, for each item, the (i) amount spent, (ii) recipient and any additional delivery partners, (iii) allocation timeline, (iv) amount spent on each item; (c) how many people have arrived in Canada so far through the "Family-based permanent residence pathway for people affected by the conflict in Sudan"; (d) does the government have an estimate of how many people have died as a result of the current civil war in Sudan, and, if so, what is that estimate; (e) does the government have an estimate of how many people will die as a result of the civil war in Sudan over the next year, and, if so, what is that estimate; (f) has the government engaged with the Sudanese Coordination of Civil Democratic Forces (Tagadam), and what is the position of the government with respect to engagement with Tagadam; (g) has the government engaged with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) or the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), and what is the position of the government with respect to engagement with the SAF and with the RSF; (h) what is the position of the government regarding the Sudanese peace process; and (i) what are the complete details of statements and diplomatic representations made by the government regarding the Sudanese conflict since April 15, 2023?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3087—Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:

With regard to tanker traffic and Burrard Inlet, British Columbia: (a) what work has been done to date on the creation, implementation and enforcement of safety measures in the event of a diluted-bitumen spill; (b) what are the details of all reports or plans in (a), including the (i) title, (ii) date of publication, (iii) author; and (c) in what ways was the work in (a) informed by recommendations made by the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3089—Mr. Randall Garrison:

With regard to federal departments and agencies and the public services which they provide to Canadians, broken down by department or agency and fiscal year since January 1, 2006: which government-owned or rented buildings have been closed due to federal budget reductions or reallocations, and what services or programs were impacted by these closures?

(Return tabled)

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**HEALTH**

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a true honour to stand and speak in the House of Commons on behalf of my riding, Peterborough—Kawartha, but many of the issues, obviously, impact Canadians across our country.

What we are discussing, as my colleague and friend from Cumberland—Colchester talked about, is the 20th report from the health committee, or HESA. To give a bit of background for folks watching at home, the report, "Breast Cancer Screening Guidelines", reads:

That the committee report to the House that the decision by the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care should be immediately reversed and breast cancer screening should be extended to women in their 40s, as this will help save lives; that the Minister of Health urge the task force to go back to the drawing board and revisit the guidelines based on the latest science; and that the Public Health Agency of Canada table to this committee the parameters given to the task force to update breast cancer screening guidelines.

A lot of women watching, a lot of families watching, have been impacted by breast cancer, and this was a very important study brought forward in the health committee. I had the privilege to sit on the status of women committee, where we also brought this forward. For context, so folks will know, under the Liberal government there is the Minister of Health and then there is the Public Health Agency, which designated a task force, and a chair of that task force, to study breast cancer. However, what the chair and the task force came back with was a recommendation that there should not be screening for women under the age of 50.

Now, as members just heard, this had unanimous consent, and it certainly did in the status of women committee, across all party lines, but this is a terrible recommendation from the task force and the chair. It was interesting to listen to witness after witness in the status of women committee testify against the recommendation of the task force.

Here is the thing. I would post these stories and get feedback, I love to hear what people say, and most provinces have already said screening should happen at 40, or self-screening. Those are the provincial rules. However, we have a federal task force, sort of a bureaucratic body, saying no, it should be from 50 and over, which is really bizarre.

I asked this question to a lot of the witnesses: "Why does it matter? If the task force and the chair are saying it should be over 50, but the provinces already have it at 40 for self-referral, which is the recommendation of the provinces, what does it matter what the task force and its chair says?" Every single witness said, "Because it sends a message that you should not get screened under 50, and that is wrong."

Routine Proceedings

I want to bring members up to speed a little, because the chair of the task force actually wrote an editorial during our study in the status of women committee, doubling down after hearing witness after witness in the committee saying no. I heard the member from the NDP even agree with this. I think everybody at home knows there are not many things we agree on in this House when we go across the floor, but this is women's health. Women are dying because they are not getting screened in time or it is not being detected that they have breast cancer.

However, the chair, Dr. Guylène Thériault, wrote this article while we were hearing testimony from every single witness to change the age of screening. She said, “the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care...conducted a comprehensive review of evidence on breast cancer screening.... The key message is that breast cancer screening is a personal choice, and that women need the full picture so that they can decide what is right for them.”

That makes sense. We should not have to fight and beg our doctor. We should be able to advocate for what we want.

She went on to say, “The evidence did not show a clear benefit of screening for breast cancer in women, especially those aged 40 to 49”.

I will now read some testimony from the status of women committee by experts in the field.

• (1650)

Anna Wilkinson is a medical doctor. I asked her some questions. She said, “First, regarding the expert involvement, the actual task force and working group for this had no breast cancer experts on it.” Nothing about this makes any sense. My colleague, who is a doctor and whose wife survived breast cancer, said it very well. Why do we as politicians have to stand up and tell this arm of the Public Health Agency that it got it wrong? It is just bizarre.

I am going to move on because there are tons of survivors and tons of families. I think it is really important to note that breast cancer impacts not just the person who has been diagnosed; it also impacts a whole community.

Kim MacDonald is a patient advocate for Breast Cancer Canada. She said, “Right now, at stage 0 or stage 1, if it's found that early, as it often is in screening, you have about a 99% survival rate. By the time it gets to stage 4, we're talking about a 31% survival rate.” These are significant numbers. Kim MacDonald also said, “I first want to say how shocked and disappointed I was in the task force recommendation of keeping the breast cancer screening age at 50 and how heartened I am by provinces like Ontario for lowering the age of self-referral to 40.”

Dr. Anna Wilkinson testified again. She said:

My research with Statistics Canada has focused on breast cancer in women in their forties. We found the incidence of breast cancer in these women has increased almost 10% in recent years and that women with access to organized breast screening programs have an earlier stage at diagnosis and significantly increased survival....

Even if we use the task force...and minimize mortality benefits of only one death averted per 1,000 women screened over 10 years, this amounts to over 2,500 deaths of 40-year-old women.

I brought something up to a couple of witnesses. I said that we literally have not heard from one witness who agreed with the task force chair. The task force chair was the only one. Then she doubled down on an article during committee as sort of a passive-aggressive way of saying that she was right and everybody else was wrong.

I spoke to Ms. Alethea Kewayosh. She is a director of the indigenous cancer care unit. I asked her whether she thought the chair should resign. That was one of the things I wanted to ask because we have to write recommendations. The point of a study in any committee is recommendations. We were hearing things and wondering what was going on and whether we should disband the task force. In any other world, the person would resign if this is what was happening. Nobody else agreed with them.

I asked Ms. Kewayosh if she wanted the resignation of the task force chair. She said, “I don't know who he or she is, but he or she is obviously very out of touch with the topic. I'm sure there was a task force struck at one time that created residential schools, and look how well that went over. They need to be more in touch with the topic, then. They need to have understanding of what's happening with community and with people. They need to have their pulse on the hands of what community are saying and what people are saying. They're very out of touch.”

I want to say that we need a lot of help in health care in this country. It is one of the biggest things I get asked about. People cannot even get in to see a doctor. Conservatives have a plan. We have talked about the issue in terms of a policy and a solution. It would be called the blue seal program. I know that my colleague has spearheaded it tremendously, to get all of the doctors who are driving for Uber and who are qualified to practice medicine, in order to have access.

This sends a bigger message. We need to increase our access to the newest technology like thermogenics. Patients need to have choice and informed consent. We need to give back the power to the women who want to be screened for breast cancer so families do not have to bury their mothers, sisters and daughters.

• (1655)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I recently sat on another committee, the status of women committee. It was studying a similar study on breast cancer screening. The topic was specifically on first nations' and indigenous peoples' screening.

One of the discussions in the committee was to make sure that there is better access for and representation of indigenous peoples. I wonder whether the member agrees that, with the motion, there also need to be assurances that the task force also focuses its work on ensuring that first nations, Inuit and Métis also get the breast screening they deserve, because for them it is a lot more difficult, especially in Nunavut; my constituents are flown to places like Ootawa, thousands of kilometres away, to have basic access to breast screening, for example.

Routine Proceedings

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Mr. Speaker, yes, the study the member is referring to is the one I was referring to in my speech, from the status of women committee, where we were studying the task force recommendations. Multiple witnesses testified about Black women and indigenous women. The research was from the 1980s; it was so outdated. A disproportionate number of women who are Black or indigenous are impacted by breast cancer, but this is not reflected in the task force's recommendations.

Therefore 1000%, again, that is what we say. We need updated evidence. As I answered earlier, the task force chair said that the evidence did not even show a clear benefit of screening, yet nobody on the task force represented any of the groups in question, so it makes no sense.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during my intervention, I did have an opportunity to speak about the consequences of diagnosing late-stage breast cancer in a woman aged 40 to 49. I wonder whether my hon. colleague might like to make some comments around the intrusiveness, the loss of dignity, the loss of employment, the loss of income and, of course, the consequences of treatment inside a family of a woman diagnosed at age 40 to 49 with later-stage breast cancer.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Mr. Speaker, with regard to that age, 40 to 49, I am 45, and I think about the fact that I have aging parents. A woman that age has children. She is trying to make her career. She is trying to pay her bills. She is trying to do all these things, and then, boom, she is not well. She is now not able to go to work or make money. The consequences are devastating.

With respect to prevention, I asked a question to one of the witnesses. I said that I do not understand the recommendation. I asked whether it is a money thing, because that is the only thing I can ever find. I hear things like "Follow the money" and "It costs too much money to do the screening." The witness talked about how much money we save; Cheryl White, a breast cancer survivor, said, "People talk about the harms of mammograms, but the only harm I can think of is the \$75 cost of getting one."

With regard to the money we would save, in terms of the prevention for women who otherwise would have to access medicine and not be able to go to work, and the families impacted, it does not make any sense. We are going to save economically. The impact would be far worse if we did not get early diagnosis.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Charlotte-town. He is the chair of the committee that produced the report, and I will leave it to him to discuss the very important issues specifically as they relate to the report.

What I would like to do with my time is point out some issues that I see with, once again, the manner in which the Conservatives are bringing forward motions just to delay and to prevent anything from happening in the House. For starters, the report was endorsed unanimously by the committee. The entire committee voted in favour of it, that is, the Liberals, the Conservatives and the NDP. There was no dissenting report, to my knowledge. There certainly was not anybody who voted against the report.

One has to ask themselves why the Conservatives would bring the report forward when they know it has been unanimously supported.

The only rationale, in answering that question, comes from the same place of so many of the reports from committees having been tabled in the House: Conservatives are just putting up concurrence reports, one after another, every day, because they know it burns away three hours of the day. It is so completely disingenuous. I would argue it actually does a disservice to the very important issue being discussed in the motion and the report as it relates to breast cancer.

The speaker before me read out the motion or report. I will read it myself. It is literally one sentence:

That the committee report to the House that the decision by the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care should be immediately reversed and breast cancer screening should be extended to women in their 40s, as this will help save lives; that the Minister of Health urge the task force to go back to the drawing board and revisit the guidelines based on the latest science; and that the Public Health Agency of Canada table to this committee the parameters given to the task force to update breast cancer screening guidelines.

That is the entire report, so I am perplexed. I have been here for nine years, and I have seen so many concurrence reports being tabled and concurrence motions being moved in the last two and a half to three months. In my opinion, it is just another delay tactic of the Conservatives because they are running out of people to speak to the motion on the question of privilege.

Well over 220 people now have spoken to the motion. To give folks at home who might be watching the proceedings a comparison, there have been, in total, about 22 Liberal, NDP and Bloc speakers, so 22 speakers from four political parties that represent well over the majority of the House, and over 220 Conservatives, who have spoken to that particular motion.

Why is that important and why is it germane to the discussion we are having today? It is because the Conservatives have run out of talking points. I think AI has just said, "I'm sorry, I cannot produce another speech for you. There have been way too many requests for a 20-minute speech." The Conservatives are just at a point now where even moving an amendment that resets their speaking order is not effective anymore because literally everybody has said absolutely everything there is to be said.

Even sitting in here and listening to Conservatives speak on and on ad nauseam, it is very clear that we drift away into other topics routinely. We are even well beyond the point of anybody's calling relevance anymore, because it is absolutely pointless.

I will say that the issue of breast cancer screening is very important to me, and in particular to my wife. There is a history of breast cancer in my wife's family, so she regularly gets screened and tested. When it comes to issues that are so critically important, I do not think we should be using a motion like the one before us, on a report that has been unanimously passed in committee, as a political tool in the House to delay what we talk about and what we do.

Routine Proceedings

• (1700)

The reality is that when it comes to an issue that relates to health, it is so critically important that we do everything we can to support women and the proper screening to protect them from possibly being diagnosed with breast cancer. We do a huge disservice to the seriousness that requires when a motion comes from a committee that was unanimously supported, had no dissenting reports and is used as a political tool in this House to slow this place down and create disorder. That is, unfortunately, what we have seen once again.

No objective person looking at what has happened and the countless number of concurrence motions that Conservatives have put forward over the last three months could possibly ever come to the conclusion that they are being genuine in their actions. They are not. They are doing this strictly for political reasons.

At the very least, I would ask my Conservative colleagues, if they are going to do that, to please pick some issues that perhaps are not as sensitive to so many people and affect so many people in our country. They should not play politics with an issue like this. In my opinion, it is extremely despicable.

In any event, I am going to end there. Like I said, I am sharing my time with a member for Charlottetown, the chair of this committee. I am sure he can provide much more insight into the discussion that took place when this was at committee. I look forward to hearing what he has to say because I am sure that he will be able to fill the House in on some of the very meaningful discussion that was had around producing this report.

• (1705)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is commentary on what I just heard from the member for Kingston and the Islands.

Members in the House come from different parts of the country. Many members have constituencies that are very large with lots of varying issues that people really care about. This Parliament would not be paralyzed if the government would just hand over the documents in their unredacted form. Because there is no Private Members' Business or private members' motions, the only other way to raise issues, apart from Standing Order 31, is to use concurrence reports in order to be able to talk about them.

In my family, I do not know of any cases of breast cancer, but my paternal grandfather passed away due to brain cancer here in Canada. That is the reason my family came here from Communist Poland, thanks to a medical exit visa my father was able to get. Cancer touches a lot of Canadians. I think it is disingenuous to accuse us of not having the right motivations. The member heard from two others in the Conservative caucus who gave impassioned pleas for what should be done. This is an opportunity to speak about cancer. I think one in two Canadians, at some point in their lives, will face that diagnosis.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, my father-in-law passed away at the age of 67, only about five years ago, from brain cancer. It could very well be the exact same form of cancer that the member just spoke about. With all due respect to him, I am not going to be lectured on taking an issue such as cancer seriously when I lost my father-in-law at the age of 67.

Nonetheless, his argument about what we are discussing today would be great if it was not premised on the notion that this House is seized with the position that it is in because of what the Liberal Party has done. On the contrary, the member knows procedure very well. I know that for a fact. He knows what was put forward, at the direction of the Speaker, was a motion to send something to PROC. He can explain to Canadians why he is participating in a filibuster of his own motion to send something to PROC. He put forward a motion that said we should send this to PROC and then refuses to let us vote on it. I would ask him to please not lecture me on being disingenuous.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is a sensitive subject. I think I have said it before, and I will say it again. There is no one in the House who has not been affected by cancer one way or another.

When will the government fully implement the recommendations in the committee report and give women a better chance when they are diagnosed, especially with breast cancer? There are also other female cancers that need to be studied thoroughly.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my speech, breast cancer has affected my wife's family, so I am very aware of the need for screening and making sure that breast cancer is caught as soon as possible. However, I would remind the member of the actual report. The member asked me a question about what the government is going to do. However, this report that unanimously passed and that we are debating now is about asking the Minister of Health to urge the task force to go back to the drawing board and revisit the guidelines based on the latest science. Unfortunately, this member is asking me a question about what the government is going to do.

I will say that this report was only tabled back in June. I know it sounds like a long time ago when we talk about the calendar, but it certainly is not when we talk about days in this House. I agree with my colleagues on the unanimous consent for the report and with the committee that this is a very important matter. If the committee members feel that the report is so important, with which I agree, and if they feel that the report should go back and that the committee ask the minister to go and ask the agency to look at it one more time, then I am totally in agreement with that.

• (1710)

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am the chair of the health committee, so I can probably give the House a bit of the background on how this report came to be and the present status of the issue before the health committee. I am inclined to agree with the member for Kingston and the Islands with respect to the motivation behind bringing this motion before the House for concurrence today. I agree that it is unfortunate and unseemly for an issue as deadly, as personal and as sensitive as breast cancer screening to be used as a tool for delay, as was pointed out by my colleague.

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This came before the health committee at the behest of a motion from the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake to have the committee engage in hearing from witnesses on the subject of breast cancer screening guidelines. To go a little further back, the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care issued breast cancer screening guidelines in 2018. There have been dramatic developments in medicine and science since 2018, and in May 2024, the task force issued draft guidelines, but those draft guidelines maintained the position taken in 2018, recommending against breast cancer screening for those under the age of 50.

By that point in time, many of the provinces had already caught up with the developments in medicine and science, and were routinely screening patients under the age of 50. The committee heard from nine witnesses and received 15 briefs, and before embarking on its study, the motion that is the subject of the debate today was pre-emptively moved, amended and unanimously adopted by the committee.

The work of the committee, throughout the hearings of the witnesses, was non-partisan, was undoubtedly in the best interests of Canadians and showed a positive bias toward evidence, not politics. It was, in my time in the health committee, one of those studies that I would be proud of because of the way parliamentarians worked together, which I think compounds the discomfort that I feel that it is being used in this way.

The briefs have been reviewed, the transcripts of evidence have been reviewed and the committee now has in front of it a detailed draft report, which we are going to be looking at the second version of tomorrow. At some point, that report is going to be adopted by the committee. It will undoubtedly include significant recommendations that will be reported back to the House. I would respectfully suggest that the time to be talking about concurrence in a committee report on breast screening guidelines would be on a report that is significantly more comprehensive than a motion that was pre-emptively moved before the deliberations on the report even began.

More and more women under the age of 50 are being diagnosed with breast cancer. This is what we heard at the committee. The Canadian Cancer Society reports that one in eight Canadian women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime and one in 36 will die from it. Last year, there were 30,500 Canadian women who were diagnosed, and given those statistics, 5,500 of them will die from this disease. This is not something to be politicized. This is something that parliamentarians need to take very seriously.

● (1715)

One of the challenges we have with any health care issue is that the health care system in Canada is partially federally funded and completely provincially administered. However, the federal Minister of Health has indicated that he is in favour of the measures mentioned in the motion. The overwhelming weight of evidence, along with the overwhelming weight of what we hear from patients, experts and physicians, is that the task force on preventive health care, in its draft guidelines, got it wrong.

The direction from the minister, the evidence we heard and the committee is to send the task force back to the drawing board to give some detail to the committee on a robust procedure for determining who gets to sit there, what its mandate is, the depth and

breadth of the consultations and the depth and breadth of the things it ought to consider when reviewing and revising these draft guidelines. The task force, as we heard from the member for Peterborough—Kawartha, has been widely criticized, and it is a bit of a head-scratcher how it ended up in the same place, given how science and medicine has developed.

Part and parcel of the evidence we heard before the health committee on the full report was the need for investment in research and the need for public awareness. This is public awareness for both the general populace and physicians. All of these types of issues are those I fully expect will make their way into the report that will eventually be tabled in the House. As I indicated, that would be something that would provide much more substance for a concurrence motion.

I am going to end it there. I thought that colour would be helpful to the House on this debate.

While I am on my feet, I move:

That the question be now put.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion is in order.

For questions and comments, we will go to the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a very significant issue. I think many, if not most, members of Parliament have lost family members to cancer, of one kind or another. It is a little disappointing to see the amount of time Liberals have devoted in their speeches to partisan talking points about concurrence and aspects of the business of the House. There is a lot of time to discuss those issues and the appropriateness of concurrence at this hour, that hour, on this day or another day.

However, this is an issue on which we should all agree. It does show the orientation of the government that, rather than focusing on constructive solutions for a sensitive issue on which there is general agreement, there is more of a focus on trying to attack the Conservatives. I wonder if the member can just share, and I am trying to get him off some of that partisan tone we especially heard from his colleague from Kingston and the Islands, some constructive suggestions for additional steps the House could pursue that would help effectively combat this problem and promote wellness.

● (1720)

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the study before the health committee included nine witnesses, 15 briefs and some heart-wrenching stories, both from witnesses and from members of Parliament, about the impact of this disease on them and their families. There is absolutely no question that this is something that merits the attention of the Parliament of Canada, and in a way that puts forward our best work.

As I indicated in my speech, that was on display at the health committee. A comprehensive report is in process and will be coming before the House. It is a safe bet that the report will include recommendations for measures around funding, transparency and a process to ensure that the task force has the right people in the right seats, with the right information and the right mandate to get to the right result. That is what we hope for, and that is the goal. It is a worthy goal.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is a very sensitive subject.

We are talking about resources and the federal withdrawal from health. There are concerns that we will not have the necessary resources. Is that because, over the years, successive federal governments have been decreasing their investments in health since the 1990s?

The federal government did not agree to the 35% contribution that Quebec and the provinces were calling for. Now, the health care system does not want to screen women starting at age 40 for fear that there may not be enough resources and that some people will be penalized.

I think it is important to get back to basics, which means making more investments in health care.

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, the question may be slightly off topic for the speech and the conversation, but health care is indeed one of the major challenges facing the federal and provincial governments. When I go door to door in my riding, this is the number one issue on people's minds.

As I mentioned in my speech, one complex aspect of this issue is the fact that funding for Canada's health care system is shared among the provinces and the federal government, but the jurisdiction is primarily provincial. This factor is relevant to any discussion of health care.

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the member for expressing how this impacts families. I appreciate that because it was really hard to hear the task force come back to say that it is not going to make these changes, especially when, as I said earlier, Dense Breasts Canada said that the task force needed to be disbanded and rebuilt, and other breast cancer organizations said that the guidelines do not reflect modern science and do not prioritize the lives of Canadians. Even the minister of health at the time said that this needs to be reviewed and looked at. We have not had an update, so I wonder if the member could update us on the most recent comments from the Minister of Health on this.

• (1725)

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to do that. The minister was as set back and put off by the draft guidelines as just about everyone else. The minister has encouraged the committee to bring forward a recommendation that is along the lines of the pre-emptive motion we are looking at here, but something a little more robust. He is of the view that the draft guidelines should not stand and

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should be revisited in a manner that is consistent with the evidence and with developments in medicine.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is with great humility, sensitivity and heartfelt thoughts for all those who have lost a loved one to breast cancer that I rise today to speak to this report of the Standing Committee on Health. What is unusual is that the report is not even finished, even though the committee began drafting it last spring. I am deeply humbled to speak this evening because I have some big shoes to fill. That is because I am filling in for my colleague from Montcalm, who is an excellent health critic and one of the co-chairs of the Standing Committee on Health, which examined this issue. I will try my best to do him justice.

This report addresses the crucial and important issue of national breast cancer screening standards. Although the report has yet to be completed, there seems to be some consensus that the screening age should be lowered to 40. Study after study and report after report have confirmed it. My colleague, the health critic and member for Montcalm, has given me his seat on the Standing Committee on Health for the women's health study. In addition, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women also began a supplementary study focusing more specifically on breast cancer screening standards at age 40. We are starting to hear a lot of testimony about lowering the screening age from 50 to 40. After my speech, I have to go back to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women for instructions for the report on that topic.

I will begin by summing up the issue of standards for screening at age 40. I will then talk about other recommendations on women's health. I will close by highlighting the importance of health care transfers for giving the health care system more resources. Towards the end of my speech, I am going to broaden the debate a little.

I will begin with a little background information. The Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care recommended screening at age 50 as a national standard. People started speaking out to explain that the global trend was more in favour of starting screening at age 40. The Standing Committee on Health heard this perspective during a study on women's health. It then undertook a study specifically focusing on standards for breast cancer screening starting at age 40. As I said earlier, a short time later, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women decided to draft its own report on the age 40 standards. At first, we planned to meet twice, but more meeting hours and more witnesses were subsequently added. That is why we still do not have the report in hand.

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Expert testimonies are more or less unanimous. In contrast, the members of the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care are having a hard time explaining their position. A few lines have been put forward. There are more and more studies demonstrating the importance of prevention when it comes to breast cancer. There are also more and more international examples and figures showing that it costs less to treat cancers that are caught at a less aggressive stage. Then there is also the fact that early detection increases the chances of survival and reduces the impact on quality of life. If we lower the screening age to 40, however, the federal government will have to make a contribution, give the means and provide the health transfers. I will come back to that later. I should point out that this could result in savings. More than \$460 million could be saved with early protection and screening. Investing in screening is a good thing. It is in no way an expense.

We also learned that many experts had tried to contact the task force with their comments. However, they were reportedly ignored. Non-disclosure agreements were even signed to silence witnesses. Questions are being asked about the composition of this group. Survivors came forward to explain that their perspective was non-existent in this task force.

• (1730)

It was also found that some communities were disproportionately and differently affected by breast cancer. This includes Black communities and indigenous communities. There was even a lot of talk about the issue of women from the Philippines. There are different points of view that were not taken into account by the task force.

Women must certainly not be prevented from asking to be tested before age 50, the age currently recommended by the task force. That is more or less what we were told. We have some international examples. That was an important starting point for our reflection process and the start of this study. There are international studies, for example in the United States, that show the importance of making this shift. In April, the United States Preventive Services Task Force published an update on its 2016 recommendation.

That update reads as follows: “Previously, we recommended that women in their 40s make an individual decision with their clinician on when they should start screening, taking into account their health history, preferences, and how they value the different potential benefits and harms. The Task Force now recommends that all women start getting screened for breast cancer every other year starting at age 40. Basically, it’s a shift from recommending women start screening between the ages of 40 and 50 to recommending that all women start getting screened when they turn 40.” That is what it says on the website of the U.S. task force.

Even here in Canada, women in British Columbia and Yukon can start asking for mammograms at age 40. Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island offer annual mammogram screening for women who are asymptomatic. In Ontario, the age of eligibility for publicly funded mammograms changed from 50 to 40 in October. This shows that the trend toward starting screening at age 40 is becoming increasingly widespread.

Even in Quebec, the minister of health, Christian Dubé, recently commissioned a task force to study the possibility of lowering the age of preventive screening to age 40. The findings could not be

clearer. After instructing the Institut national d'excellence en santé et en services sociaux, or INESSS, to assess the possibility of expanding breast cancer screening to start at age 40, Quebec's health minister, Christian Dubé, says that the cost is worth it. It is therefore hard to understand why the Canadian task force is digging in its heels.

In addition, the Canadian Cancer Society issued a press release in May urging the provinces and territories to lower the eligibility age for breast screening programs to 40 for individuals at an average risk of developing breast cancer. This recommendation has been made by Quebec, the provinces, other countries and even organizations.

Second, I would like to come back to a study that the Standing Committee on Health is currently conducting on women's health. If everything goes smoothly, the committee will begin studying the report tomorrow. Several different topics have been discussed. The gender health gap exists and has been proven. One of the issues is medical bias.

Yesterday, I met with representatives of a brand new clinic that opened this year. This clinic seeks to be more inclusive and to offer services to women in the LGBTQ community who have difficulty finding their place in the health care system and who experience medical bias. I met representatives of this clinic at the recent Emergence Gala. Yesterday, we talked for over an hour and they did a great job of explaining this reality to me, including the fact that women do not always feel that they have a place in the health care system. They do not always feel as though they are being listened to in the current health care system. They are discriminated against. The clinic I am talking about is Vivago, an inclusive health care clinic. We really had a great discussion. We promised to do it again and to stay in touch so that we can continue to share information.

During this study, we also examined the issue of endometriosis and other gynecological problems. As we have heard, for a long time, endometriosis was just seen as a problem experienced by women who were not strong enough to endure the pain. For a long time, there was persistent bias regarding this condition. Proper investments were not made in research because endometriosis was considered a woman's problem that was not important.

• (1735)

Obviously, in the recommendations, we hope that there will be more research on this front.

It is the same for cancer. There is breast cancer screening for women. As I was saying, we examined this issue because the study on women's health came before the study on the rules around screening at age 40. The question of gynecological cancers is an interesting one. Cervical cancer is rare, but we now have a vaccine that can prevent it. The World Health Organization believes in it strongly, and Canada has set targets. When we heard from the experts during the study, they made it clear that we are missing the target. However, vaccine procurement is the federal government's responsibility. Quebec and the provinces are responsible for health administration, but health transfers and procurement are the federal government's responsibility. There are some things that the government could be doing.

Another issue is women's mental health. How long were women treated as hysterical? Postpartum depression was observed in women, but it was trivialized for a long time, despite increasing evidence that it was real. During the study on women's health, the committee also heard that it has an impact not only on the mother, but also on the children and the entire family. People used to think it was because she had just given birth and that she would recover. Now we are starting to take postpartum depression more seriously and treating it as a real condition, not just as the whim of a woman who is too weak psychologically to cope with the presence of a new child after giving birth. Could more research be done to find better ways to help and support women when they are going through what should be one of the best experiences of their lives, and to support them through it all?

In the end, the study was quite broad. I look forward to seeing what happens next. There were instructions for the report, but now we are beginning to study the report, and we will see what recommendations are made in the coming weeks and months.

Third, this is, of course, going to take resources. That is why I am going to end my speech by talking about health transfers. For example, in Quebec, the government's challenge is to expand access to mammography to women aged 40 to 74. That involves guaranteeing reasonable wait times in all regions of Quebec. As the study on women's health showed, there are still too many women who do not have access to the same services because of where they live. The services offered in rural areas are not the same. How can we ensure that wait times are the same in every region of Quebec?

Quebec's health minister calculated that, if women in their forties were included in routine screening, it would require 100,000 to 150,000 more mammograms a year. That will cost money, but it should not be a reason not to move forward and work on the issue of screening. So many survivors told the committee how important prevention is. I spoke about savings earlier, but the treatment is not the same for stage 1, stage 2 or stage 4 cancer. The effects on the body and the long-term impacts are not the same.

It is important to take all of that into consideration and not just decide that we cannot afford to implement this recommendation. We have to find a way. As I said earlier, the government has been reducing its investments for a long time. Remember that initially, the federal government's share of the transfers was 50%. This is one budget item that must not be cut in the name of austerity. On the contrary, it should be increased. Quebec and the provinces have unanimously called for a 35% contribution. It is currently barely

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reaching 20%. That is not enough. I think we can and must do better at making sure we can offer mammograms starting at age 40. That is why the federal government must respond to this request and plan for better transfers for the future than what it is offering right now.

• (1740)

In closing, I also want to say that I asked the witnesses questions in committee because more and more young women in their thirties and forties are dealing with aggressive forms of cancer. The issue has come up a lot lately. For example, there was the high-profile case of entrepreneur Geneviève Everell, who shared her story. During her second pregnancy, she was diagnosed with cancer that needed to be treated soon. For the time being, she is doing well. She gave interviews and explained what she was going through. She found out in the middle of her pregnancy that she was going to have to deliver her baby after she started cancer treatment. Evidently, it is no illusion; these cancers really are affecting younger and younger women more and more aggressively. This has an impact on the whole family and everyone around them. Truly, Geneviève Everell, whom I do not know personally—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the hon. member because we have to interrupt debate on the report. We will continue the debate another day.

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Public Services and Procurement; the hon. member for Calgary Shepard, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, Agriculture and Agri-Food.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[English]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from December 3 consideration of the motion, of the amendment as amended and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, we can never have too many Stewarts in the House of Commons. We are holding up the Scottish front over here. We were once royalty, but I will not get into that. I do not want to have to get into that, but it was real. It is true, from the 1300s to the 1800s.

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Today I will speak again about the production of documents ordered by the House on the Liberal green slush fund scandal. Who would have thought I would ever quote from a Toronto Star article? This is what they said in an article just yesterday. I will quote the Toronto Star, the very publication in which I used to read my Toronto Maple Leafs news until they did not like Darcy Tucker, and then I could not agree with them anymore. I am actually going to go out of my way and quote them:

Since late September, [the leader of the Conservatives] has gummed up most parliamentary proceedings in an effort to compel the Liberal government to cough up unredacted documents tied to a now-defunct green technology funding agency that was riddled with mismanagement issues.

Imagine the Toronto Star actually calling out the Liberals for the green slush fund being “riddled with mismanagement issues”.

As I have stated before, it is an honour and a privilege to be a member of the public accounts committee. Since we received the damning report from the Auditor General last June, where she found that the Liberal government has turned the once legitimate Sustainable Development Technology Canada into a slush fund for Liberal insiders, we have been trying to get to the bottom of this conflict of interest scandal.

Any good crisis manager brought in to try to get a handle on a scandal of this magnitude, of the Liberal green slush fund, always starts with chronology. Some of us may recall, in my last speech in this place, I discussed the chronological order around the suspicious appointment of Annette Verschuren as chair of the Liberal green slush fund in June 2019, when the culture of corruption really began. I said in my last speech that the lack of consistency in witness testimony around the chair's appointment certainly looked like a cover-up at the highest levels of the Liberal government.

It has only gotten worse this last month. Former industry minister Navdeep Bains has now testified twice at the public accounts committee and at least once at the industry committee. He cannot recall anything to do with his involvement in asking Ms. Verschuren to take on the chair role, even though he was told directly by the SDTC president that it was a really bad idea because of conflict of interest concerns.

I was able to question the former minister myself, but I am going to take us back a little bit to the 1980s. Most of us today are watching *Yellowstone*, some of us at least, but in the eighties, it was *Dallas* or *Dynasty*, *Dallas* in particular.

There is a reason I am going to talk about *Dallas* right now and a reason it relates to this speech. Can we remember that crucial episode that everybody was tuning in for, “Who Shot J.R.”? Was it his younger brother? Was it his disgruntled ex-wife? Was it other members of the family? Everybody had to tune in to find out who shot J.R. It was talked about so much, yet I do not even remember who shot J.R. Maybe I was too young to realize it at the time.

My point, though, is that, when I was questioning former minister Bains and when several of these former bureaucrats were brought in for questioning, they all had something in common, something that reminds me of daytime soaps that my mom used to watch, like *Another World* or *Dynasty* or *General Hospital*.

Do we remember that the cast members of these shows would get something called amnesia? I questioned many of these bureaucrats that are now in different positions or retired, or even the minister. Nobody seems to know anything. That is the one trend that persists through everything. Today, we want the production of documents. We want these documents tabled. We want to get to the bottom of this, but everybody who comes in does not remember anything. Sometimes I question if they remember their own names.

• (1745)

Some people did not even want to show up to these meetings, so they had to be dragged in here to the bar, a practice that I do not believe was used for 100 years. Maybe I have that a bit off, but my point here is that nobody remembers their own actions. Nobody remembers what they did when they were hired to work for the Canadian public. Nobody remembers what they did. Ministers do not remember what directives were given. Deputy ministers do not remember things they passed on to their assistant deputy ministers. Nobody remembers anything. It is unbelievable. I have never witnessed anything like it in all my time.

Since my last speech, we have heard from more witnesses at the public accounts committee, but the two who stand out in their utmost ridiculousness are the former deputy minister and former assistant deputy minister from the industry department. As my friend from South Shore—St. Margarets has said, they all must have watched old episodes of *Hogan's Heroes* because they all parroted Sergeant Schultz's famous lines: I see nothing. I hear nothing. I know nothing.

My point is, how come nobody remembers anything? How come nobody remembers? When this much money was given out illegally, nobody remembers what they did. The Canadian public is not fooled by this. People are going to be watching and they are going to say, of course they remember; they are just not telling because it is wrong, illegal, fraudulent or whatever word they want to use. We may have to call in public health officials because there has clearly been an outbreak of amnesia in every official who has been called to testify thus far.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary has three definitions for “amnesia”. Number one is “loss of memory due usually to brain injury, shock, fatigue, depression, or illness”. Number two is “a gap in one’s memory”. Number three is “the selective overlooking or ignoring of events...that are not favourable or useful to one’s purpose or position”. I think we can all agree with and select door number three as the right definition for all the officials who have appeared at public accounts and are clearly suffering from amnesia.

The former deputy minister from the industry department testified that he has no recollection of Ms. Verschuren’s appointment as chair of the Liberal green slush fund in June 2019 because he was retiring that month. He may have forgotten that he was still employed and he was still working on behalf of the people, but he forgot everything because his retirement was more important than the millions of dollars that went out illegally and fraught with scandal and conflicts of interest. He speculated that the president of SDTC did not warn him about the conflict of interest mess because she knew he was retiring. I see nothing. I hear nothing. I know nothing. The trend continues.

Speaking of retirements, I find it rather convenient how many officials chose to retire from the public service once the Auditor General received the whistle-blower’s information and began her investigation into the Liberal green slush fund. It is like all the officials saw what was coming and got out of Dodge, or in this case, out of Ottawa.

Let us go back to the former deputy minister from the industry department, who testified to the public accounts committee that he placed his former assistant deputy minister on the SDTC board as his “eyes and ears”. We will see how well that was working.

The former assistant deputy minister, who also retired last year, sat on every board meeting for over five years while \$330 million of taxpayers’ money was gifted to companies with which the board members had conflicts of interest, and not just conflicts of interest but known conflicts of interest. The former assistant deputy minister sat on every board meeting while another \$59 million in projects that were not eligible for funding because they were outside the foundation’s mandate were still approved. They were still approved by these very people.

• (1750)

The former assistant deputy minister sat in every board meeting where the Auditor General found that at least 10 of the projects did not even produce green technology or contribute to emissions reductions. The former assistant deputy minister told the public accounts committee a variety of fairy tales. He said it was a well-run board and it was not his job to review conflicts of interest, even though his former deputy minister called him his “eyes and ears” on the board of directors. The former assistant deputy minister also said it was his experience that the Liberal green slush fund’s board members recused themselves whenever they had conflicts of interest. They would have had to recuse themselves 200 times, or just shy of that, that we know of.

However, the Ethics Commissioner, in his “Verschuren Report”, stated the former chair did not recuse herself but abstained from voting when her own multi-million dollar projects were approved. Similarly, other board members of the Liberal green slush fund did

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not recuse themselves but abstained when voting themselves more than \$6.6 million in funding.

I will try to explain the semantics, because “recusal” and “abstaining” are not quite the same. When growing up, some of us had a great aunt who, whenever she came for a visit, always wanted a hug and a kiss. I have had a few of them, and some I welcomed. We knew it was coming every time she visited, but we would squirm and accept the affection. That is abstaining. However, a recusal is when we knew our great aunt was coming for a visit and we made the conscious decision to not be there when she arrived, so that way we avoided the hugs and kisses outright. We recused ourselves from that sort of affection. That is my example. I know it is a little bizarre, but this is me. I am a product of my environment, and Miramichi—Grand Lake would like that idea.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary’s definition of “abstaining” is interesting. The first is “to choose not to do or have something”. The second is “to refrain deliberately and often with an effort of self-denial from an action or practice”, such as to “abstain from drinking”. Third is “to choose not to vote”, as in “Ten members voted for the proposal, six members voted against it, and two abstained.” The Merriam-Webster Dictionary’s definition of “recusal” says, first, “to disqualify (oneself) as judge in a particular case” and, two, “to remove (oneself) from participation to avoid a conflict of interest”.

For the former assistant deputy minister from the industry department, who attended every single meeting of the Liberal green slush fund’s board of directors, to confuse “abstaining” with “recusal” is indicative of all the normal shenanigans that have occurred in this scandal to date. Here are the assistant deputy minister’s exact words at the public accounts committee last week.

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He said, “What I saw in front of me at SDTC was a regularly functioning board where people would recuse themselves when they thought there was a real reason to.” He also said, “I had no way of independently assessing conflicts of interest by the board... I’m not a lawyer.” He further said, “I had very limited information upon which to look at issues of conflict of interest”. Here is another quote: “I had no way to independently assess, Mr. Chair, what holdings individual board members had or who, in fact” was in a conflict of interest. He is clearly the best and brightest. As well, he said, “I could only speak to my deputy minister about what I saw in front of me. The conflicts of interest, which have since come to light with the organization, were not obvious to me. They were not presented in a way that caused me sufficient concern”.

These are the exact words of the former assistant deputy minister, whose role it was to be the eyes and ears of the industry department at the Liberal green slush fund board of directors. Again, I see nothing, I hear nothing, I know nothing. The trend continues.

The lack of accountability and responsibility by the very bureaucrats whose role it was to ensure taxpayers' money was being properly spent is shocking to me, and it is shocking to the members of my party. All of my colleagues are deeply shocked, and the lack of oversight by both former industry minister Bains and the current industry minister is outrageous

• (1755)

To recap, we had Annette Verschuren originally tell the industry committee she did not apply for the chair's role on the Liberal green slush fund. She said former industry minister Navdeep Bains called her two or three times, asking her to take on the role. This is after a nearly year-long competition process had been run by the PCO. It had gathered almost 100 names of interested clean tech experts, but the former industry minister does not recall ever calling Ms. Verschuren about chairing the Liberal green slush fund.

Something is not right here. Again, it is, “I see nothing, I hear nothing, and I know nothing”.

It was interesting when I got to question former minister Bains. Ms. Verschuren said she was asked on several occasions and over the phone by Minister Bains himself to take on the position. Minister Bains said that he never called her, but somehow, strangely, he admitted to calling hundreds of other people to tell them when certain board appointments were becoming available. The one he did not remember calling was Ms. Verschuren, but she says that he called her.

Is this why the Liberal government is refusing to give Parliament the unredacted documents relevant to their green slush fund? Is it a cover-up for the former industry minister or the current one? I want to know why the government would want Parliament to deal with this for so long. Let us just think about it.

These documents could provide the missing proof that all of this was totally corrupt and totally scandalous. The last time I spoke on this, I remember talking about the sponsorship scandal and how this scandal is eight times larger. I can remember back when the sponsorship scandal was a big deal in our country and everybody was talking about it. It was dominating headlines. It was dominating journalists. It was dominating everything, in terms of the political

landscape, but this one is eight times larger than that, and all we are asking for is documents that the government should be providing.

We have had a series of faceless bureaucrats, who come in and basically do not admit anything they did. They are all retired, or the have entered into a new position, and this is not the type of thing Canadians want to pay for. Canadians want the bureaucracy to provide good service, to give good advice and, definitely, to do a good job with helping to get value for taxpayers' dollars, because public money is being spent.

Taxpayers' dollars are being spent on these projects, and the bureaucrats are not getting value for money. That is one of our primary focuses at public accounts, and it was interesting to me. Witnesses would come in, and they might as well have spat in our faces. However, it is not so much that they were spitting in my face; they are spitting in the face of the taxpayers of this country, because \$400 million was wasted. It was all gotten illegally. It is fraudulent. There were nearly 200 conflicts of interest.

We are trying to get the documents, and the government is literally allowing this. The Liberals will not come clean. This is a cover-up.

• (1800)

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member's speech just shows how unserious the Conservative Party is about this. For 20 minutes, we have seen the member smirking, talking about such things as J.R. Ewing, Darcy Tucker and *General Hospital*. He has quoted a comical German prison guard from the Second World War multiple times. That is how serious they are about this.

I am wondering if the member could actually spend a minute talking about the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and RCMP officials' views on this. They have asked for Parliament not to proceed, as the member has said, because it may corrupt their own case in pursuing this. If there is misconduct, it should come forward, and the police should investigate it properly.

Why is the member filibustering his own party's motion?

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, the short answer to that is, the taxpayers have a right to know. This is not about the police; this is about the taxpayers, and that is about everyone who pays taxes. That member is supporting his Prime Minister.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, that member is over there heckling me and I cannot hear myself think right now.

What I see today is a bunch of triggered MPs who have backed their leader. He has run their party into the ground. He has destroyed whatever they thought they had for a career and they are over there keeping those same documents from being presented because somebody stole \$400 million, and they know who did it.

Privilege

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. I agree with him that lack of transparency and corruption are in the Liberal Party's DNA. We all remember the sponsorship scandal.

There is something I do not understand, however. We have been debating this question of privilege for five weeks now, and most of the House's work has been stalled. The Conservative Party has been saying for months, years even, that it has no confidence in the current Liberal government. For the past five weeks, the Conservatives have had the opportunity to bring down this government by asking for a confidence vote, but they are waiting for their opposition day to be on the agenda before finally putting forward a non-confidence motion.

The question to my colleague is simple. Why wait instead of taking action? For five weeks now, this party has continued to keep the Liberal Party in power.

• (1805)

[*English*]

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, I want to make reference to the individual who was heckling me the last time: the member for St. Catharines. He voted against sending Paul Bernardo back to maximum security. If I were him, I would not show my face in the chamber. Now that is just me.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, it is unconscionable that the member rises on his feet with a smile on his face to mention that name in this place. It is disgusting. It is disgusting that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is debate. The hon. member knows that is debate and it is not—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. Order. That is debate. Will the hon. member respect the Chair? It is not a point of order. It may be a question of privilege. The hon. member is free to rise on a question of privilege in due time.

Now, I would like to give the hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake the opportunity to answer.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, I would agree. I have the privilege to rise in this House on this question. I have the privilege to acknowledge how another member voted and I believe that particular vote is despicable behaviour.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, Standing Order 18 prohibits reflection on a member's vote. Again, it is disgusting, what the members are trying to do in this place.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for St. Catharines raises a valid point of order. Standing Order 18 states that:

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

I would remind the hon. member to please apologize and retract those comments.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, what am I to apologize for?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is in Standing Order 18, which I just read.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, I did not say anything about the Governor General or anything that you mentioned, so I am confused.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The last sentence of Standing Order 18 states, “No member may reflect upon any vote of the House, except for the purpose of moving that such vote be rescinded.” Therefore, I would ask the hon. member to apologize and retract.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, let me get this straight. You want me to withdraw the fact that he kept Paul Bernardo and he did not want him to go to maximum security—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member will not be allowed to continue speaking if the hon. member does not want to apologize and retract what the hon. member said.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, I withdraw and apologize, but I do not apologize for what he did though.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We have seen systematic violations of the Standing Orders by Conservative members. We saw this last Thursday, of course, with the absolutely deplorable spectacle of Conservative MPs showing up, some of whom had been drinking. It was absolutely disgusting.

In this situation, if the member has refused to withdraw and apologize, he cannot be recognized in the House. He did not do what you asked him to do, Madam Speaker.

• (1810)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows that he did apologize and retract. That is exactly what the hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake did, which is why I am continuing with the questions and comments.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I will agree with your ruling and ability.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Peter Julian: Again, it seems like some Conservatives have been in the sauce. Is that why they are acting this way tonight?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The member will refrain from making such comments please, because it does cause disruption in the House and it is totally out of the scope of the debate that we are having this evening.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, on the point of order on bringing disruption to the House, what the member said was patently false, and not only that, he abuses the heckling standing order against women, men, children, anybody he can heckle, and he does it inappropriately.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is definitely not a point of order.

Privilege

Questions and comments, the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby may ask a question of the hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I can categorically say that I have never heckled a child in the House of Commons, unless some Conservatives are self-identifying as children.

My question is very simple. The member referenced memory, and yet the NDP has been fighting to get to the bottom of the SDTC scandal, the \$400 million, which I would agree is a lot of money, like we did with the WE Charity and the SNC-Lavalin scandal.

However, under the Conservative regime, the nightmare of the Harper government, we saw not just \$400 million with the ETS scandal covered up by the Harper regime, but \$1 billion in the G8 scandal covered up by the Harper regime and \$2.2 billion in the Phoenix pay scandal covered up by the Harper regime.

If Conservatives really care about memory, will the member apologize for the appalling scandals of the Harper regime, all of them, every single one covered up by Conservatives refusing to allow committees to get to the bottom of them to do their work, and for Canadians to know the honest truth behind the myriad of Conservative spending scandals?

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, clearly there are a lot of triggered people in the House this week. I saw NDP members swarming one of my colleague's desks the other night as I left here, making people very uncomfortable; it was very aggressive.

The truth is, I feel bad that I mentioned the way somebody voted. I did not know that was a big deal. I can gladly apologize for something like that, of course. However, my point here is that NDP members are so triggered because they are basically propping up the most inept, scandalous government in the history of this country. They are the reason there is no election. They are the reason that the hurt continues for Canadians. It is always them propping up the government.

Members would not believe the things that the members over there call us members over here. I would not even repeat those words. I have big shoulders, and we have big shoulders over here. Do members know why? It is because we are making decisions that matter for Canadians, and they are over there crying and whining in the corner like a bunch of little babies.

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Madam Speaker, we can talk about déjà vu all over again. It is another day here in Ottawa; most Canadians would expect to see the NDP-Liberal government working to put out the many fires it has lit that are raging across the country: an economic recession, the housing and affordability crisis, disorder at the border, trade relations with the United States and seniors who have had to take a second job just to pay for essentials. It is crisis after crisis. Instead, we are again debating a privilege motion related to the green slush fund because the Liberals would rather cover up their role in the affair than deal with the problems, even if that means Canadians suffer.

We are here again because the Liberal government has failed to turn over documents to the RCMP regarding a \$400-million scandal that saw the Liberal-appointed executives funnel money to their

own companies, implicating them in 186 conflicts of interest. Not so long ago, it would have made national headlines to have a scandal of such epic proportions. It would have been plastered on every newspaper from coast to coast to coast. However, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, it is just another Wednesday.

What is another scandal or another cover-up when there seems to be a new one every month? After all, we have seen this many times before in the last nine years. The green slush fund is just the latest. We have seen the Aga Khan scandal, cash for access, the SNC-Lavalin affair, the WE Charity controversy, clam scam, ArriveCAN and the two Randys. It goes on and on.

When I look at the state of our country and the leadership of the Prime Minister, I am reminded of what I saw during the big Netflix fight, the Tyson versus Paul fight. When most of us were looking to watch the fight, our screen suddenly froze. There was this spinning circle that we were all staring at, stuck in place, going nowhere. We had hopes and expectations of moving forward; instead, we saw buffering, buffering, buffering. In many ways, that is also why we are here today as a country: We are not moving forward. We are buffering.

People feel stuck in place as their savings dwindle and their paycheques stop covering everyday expenses. Not so long ago, they had hopes, dreams and plans for the future; they do not anymore. When we look at the NDP-Liberal government, it is also stuck in place with no plan, no idea of how to fix the budget and address the economic disaster it has inflicted on Canadians. It has no plan to secure our borders. Therefore, it is forced to cover up its wrongdoing, and it would rather have the House remain in a standstill than face the consequences of its actions. It is buffering. We need strong leadership to restore the promise of Canada. Common-sense Conservatives will provide that leadership to this country.

I should also mention that the real winner the night of the great Netflix boxing event was Pefferlaw's own Melinda Watpool. Melinda made everyone so proud that night in York—Simcoe as she continued to earn the World Boxing Organization's women's super middleweight title.

Returning to the matter at hand, this shameful cover-up, sadly, is just another in a long list of scandals and failures from the weak, inept NDP-Liberal government.

• (1815)

In her damning report, the Auditor General called out the former Sustainable Development Technology Canada agency for “significant lapses” in its oversight and management of taxpayers’ dollars. Does this sound familiar? The Auditor General said almost the exact same thing this past Monday in her report on the CEBA loan program, which saw \$3.5 billion in taxpayer money paid to 77,160 recipients who were not eligible to receive it. It is unbelievable.

It was not always like this. Not so long ago, the Liberal government used to brag about its supposed ambition to grow the middle class. We can recall that the first chapter in the 2015 Liberal platform was entitled “Growth for the Middle Class”. As well, the front of the 2019 platform read, “Forward: A Real Plan for the Middle Class”. Now, instead of looking to grow the middle class, the Liberals have admitted that because of them, a middle-class lifestyle is now out of reach for far too many. It used to be an attainable expectation of most Canadians.

The contrast could not be any starker when we look at what the Liberals are focused on today. Considering the lengths they will go to, to cover up the green slush fund affair, we can imagine the buzzwords on the cover of their 2025 platform: corruption, waste, mismanagement, absolute failure. That is their focus now, not the middle class, not improving our country. Their focus is on themselves.

It is no wonder Canadians are suffering. Despite the suffering that can be seen on every street corner, in every checkout line and at every fuel pump, members opposite continue to gaslight Canadians. When Conservatives bring up the affordability crisis, the Liberals just fall back on their big-ticket measures. They pat themselves on the back. They point at the GST tax trick, carbon tax rebates, \$10-a-day day care, school lunches or the fake pharmacare plan and say, “Look what we have done.” In reality, each of these measures is proof of the economic devastation the NDP-Liberal government has wrought on Canadians.

It was not that long ago that Canadians did not need to look to the federal government for assistance to such a degree. People had good-paying jobs. Kids going hungry at school was absolutely unthinkable. In civil society, charitable groups stepped up to ensure the less fortunate were looked after. The Liberals, with their great ambition of transforming the country into their own image, have forced far too many Canadians into impoverishment, where even the most basic essentials have become unaffordable. It is a problem of the government's own making.

With Canadians suffering, the government comes up with poorly implemented programs to paper over the cracks and cover up the impacts of its disastrous economic policies. Canadians see right through this. They know what the Liberals have actually done. It is right there in black and white. People see it every day when they look at their gas and home heating bills, and when they compare them to their carbon tax rebate. They see how meaningless this 60-day GST tax trick rebate will be on their grocery bill when every item on it has skyrocketed in price despite shrinking in size.

• (1820)

The same applies to each of the headline programs the Liberals implemented, which only made things worse. They were supposed

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to help, but they came at a significant cost to taxpayers. Similarly, Canadians see right through the antics of the government in shutting down the business of the House to cover up their scandals. They see the lengths the Liberals will go to avoid accountability, and they recognize the serious nature of the revelations of this scandal.

This week, the Deputy Prime Minister was asked why she had still not released the public accounts and why there was still not an economic fall statement. She refused to say why the public accounts had not been released, and on the fall economic statement, she said, “I don't have an announcement to make.... The reality is business of the House is being filibustered. That has...consequences [for] the work we need to do for Canadians.”

However, the only people responsible for stopping the work of the House and dealing with government business are those in the NDP-Liberal government. They could choose to release the unredacted slush fund documents, but they refuse to. The Leader of the Opposition has already told the government that our party is willing to stand down on this order to get the economic statement tabled, but the government will not. It is because the Liberals do not want Canadians to know the dismal fiscal state the country is in as we head into the Christmas holiday. It is very likely because things are far worse than they have let on.

Last year, the Deputy Prime Minister made a commitment that the deficit would be no greater than \$40.1 billion. This was the red line. All evidence would now suggest that this is yet another cover-up. She has broken this promise yet again, which will have devastating impacts on interest rates, investor confidence and economic outlook in the coming month. On this side of the House, we have watched 20 or 30 questions asked of the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister: “What is the deficit number? Does anyone have it on the other side of the House?” After asking the Finance Minister 20 times, I wish there was one Liberal-NDP member in the House who would give the number. It is getting painful to watch.

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By refusing to turn over the documents related to the SDTC, the Liberals have shown their contempt for the will of the House of Commons, and by extension, democracy itself. Democracy has become a very inconvenient concept for the NDP-Liberal government that, may I remind everyone, was only elected with 32% of the popular vote. The Liberal government has held on to record low polling this whole past year. Liberals do not want to go to Canadians and account for their record in an election. They do not want to justify their terrible policies, such as the carbon tax. We just saw today the provincial leader of the Ontario Liberals, Bonnie Crombie herself, say the carbon tax is bad.

The Liberals do not want to listen to us, as members of Parliament, when we point out the issues our constituents face. They do not want to be accountable when they are found out for their incompetence and wrongdoing, which is why they refuse to hand over these documents. Instead, they want to run this country into the ground for as long as they possibly can and turn it into a place where Liberal grifters and insiders are the only ones who will become better off.

• (1825)

The actions the NDP-Liberal government has taken in covering up its scandals and prioritizing its interests over our citizens has fundamentally undermined the public interest. The Prime Minister and his caucus are more interested in protecting the tattered remains of their image instead of addressing the problems at hand. They care more about hiding their mistakes than fixing them. The implication of their utter failure to put people over partisanship is the most damning aspect of this whole thing.

At a time when our country is facing skyrocketing crime, immigration fraud and misuse of taxpayer funds by governments and organizations, it is especially concerning to see the cover-up taking place here. The message being sent from the very top, from the NDP-Liberal government, is that accountability, transparency and ethical vigour can be ignored. With this sort of example coming from the very top, it is no wonder we are seeing so much disorder and chaos in our communities. This is not what Canadians want. This is not why they elected us and sent us here; they want competence from their government, strength, a sense of duty and a commitment to our country and our shared values. All too often, it looks like the Liberal-NDP government has lost sight of that. More so, it looks like it has forgotten the values that are supposed to unite us and draw us together.

Common-sense Conservatives have not forgotten. We have a vision for this country that would see a restoration of the formula that used to work here, a formula that has become broken. This formula, the promise of Canada, was that a good job and hard work would lead to good pay. That pay would go toward the essentials of life, like a good home and good food, and the rest would allow someone to save, plan and invest in a future. That was the promise of Canada that must be restored.

At the same time, Conservatives want to bring home accountability to Ottawa, to put an end to the Prime Minister's corruption and put an end to bad practices, red tape and high-priced consultants that have led to so many of these scandals and ethical breaches by the Liberals. This may come as a shock to some people here in the

Ottawa bubble, but normal Canadians do not pay a lot of attention to what goes on here. Most probably do not even know that the House is seized with this issue. Some do not even know that MPs go to Ottawa. They probably think that caucus is a dirty word.

This has always been the case. Members of Parliament are elected to represent people and do the job of governance on their behalf, but every so often, good, honest, hard-working folks, who are usually preoccupied with providing for their families, building their businesses or contributing to their community start to pay more attention. They are paying attention now because the party that formed government, the Liberal Party of Canada, whose members were elected to look out for the best interests of the country, is failing them. Canadians are tuning in to see what their leaders are doing to address the problems Canadians are facing every day.

Common-sense Conservatives will be focused on axing the tax, fixing the budget, building the homes and stopping the crime. Conservatives have solutions for those problems and the leadership and convictions to bring it home.

In closing, I want to wish everyone across Canada and in York—Simcoe a very merry Christmas.

• (1830)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have respect for that member. Like some of his colleagues, he is very respectful of the House and I appreciate that, but yet again, we have Conservatives not taking responsibility for their scandals.

The NDP fought to get to the bottom of the SNC-Lavalin scandal. With the WE Charity scandal, of course, we played the pivotal role. With SDTC, we are now part of the majority in the House that has said very clearly the documents need to be provided.

Conservatives are responsible for scandals that were even bigger than the Liberal scandals. We look at the \$400 million of the ETS scandal, which the Harper government shut down so Canadians could never find the real links and the corruption of the Harper government. There was the \$1 billion for the G8 scandal; of course, we remember the gazebos. Again, the Harper regime shut it down so Canadians could not find out the truth of what happened with that billion dollars. There was the \$2.2 billion for the Phoenix pay scandal and the \$3.1 billion that somehow just disappeared. There was no paper trail around anti-terrorism funding.

All of these scandals: that is the Conservative record, the most corrupt government in Canadian history.

Will one Conservative MP, just one, stand up and say they are sorry to Canadians, they are sorry that billions of dollars were mis-spent, that they covered everything up, that they refused to allow Parliament to play its role? Will that—

• (1835)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to give space to other questions.

The hon. member for York—Simcoe.

Mr. Scot Davidson: Madam Speaker, the most important scandal the member left out is the scandal the NDP-Liberal government is actually putting on Canadians. That is the scandal of affordability. When we look at the GST trick and the \$250 giveaway, we remember that the leader of the NDP ripped up that agreement and said he was done with the Liberals. The fact is that he actually wrote that bill in conjunction with the Liberals.

Do members know what happened? They came in and said that they left out seniors and people with disabilities. Canadians just do not trust the NDP-Liberal government. It is a weak, inept government.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives are starting to sound like a broken record. The Conservatives say they no longer have confidence in the Liberal Party, but they have been blocking the work of the House for five weeks now and preventing a non-confidence vote. Now we learn that the Conservatives are feeling generous right before Christmas, so they are going to allow the Liberal Party to present their economic update. What an act of kindness.

I would like my colleague to explain why the Conservatives have been supporting this government for five weeks, even though they say they do not have confidence in it. Why did they not move their non-confidence motion, as they are going to do next Monday, and why did they wait for the government to give them an opposition day? Why are they saying one thing and doing the complete opposite?

[English]

Mr. Scot Davidson: Madam Speaker, as I said, this is about affordability. This is about transparency for taxpayers. This is what is so frustrating for Canadians. We are talking about \$400 million.

We have someone on a phone over here. They are on the phone now, trying to call me in. It is unbelievable.

We are talking about \$400 million. I have not seen one NDP or Liberal member of Parliament stand up and ask if anyone has even attempted to get the taxpayer money back. This goes on, time and time again.

When is the government going to show respect to the taxpayers of Canada?

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to ask this member about the rural top-up. I think it is a subject he is familiar with.

Adjournment Proceedings

In all seriousness, it is a great tribute to a member when as soon as we see that member, we know what issue he is going to mention. He has been such a dogged, effective advocate for his riding on the issue of the rural top-up.

For those who have maybe been living under a rock for the last few years and have never heard him mention it before, could the member tell us about the rural top-up issue?

Mr. Scot Davidson: Madam Speaker, quite frankly, I wish I did not have to talk about this. I wish the government promise that they put in the budget last year had addressed this problem. The government loves to divide Canadians, and it has divided them based on geography. My riding is the soup and salad bowl of Canada. I cannot even see the CN Tower from my riding. However, the government has classified us as Toronto. Why does that matter? It is because we do not get the rural top-up for the carbon tax.

The Prime Minister gets up every day and says that Canadians get back more than they pay in the carbon tax. That is absolutely absurd for people in my riding. They know they do not get the rural top-up, and they know that, as I have said before, Liberals are like atoms: They make up everything.

• (1840)

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, my geographical neighbour and I share a bit of Lake Simcoe. He obviously has a bigger part of that magnificent piece of water than I do, and Brock township is mine.

There was a Lake Simcoe cleanup fund that the Liberals cancelled and said they were going to bring back. How many years ago was that cancelled, and how many years have we been waiting for that promise to be implemented?

Mr. Scot Davidson: Madam Speaker, that is quite true. Actually, the promise was made on the shores of Lake Simcoe. The Deputy Prime Minister promised \$40 million for Lake Simcoe because the Liberals cancelled the cleanup fund. What happened was promises, promises, promises. Circling back to how important the environment is, I want to point out that this was from a government that did not support my bill, Bill C-204, on stopping plastic waste from going to developing countries. I also want to ask the Liberal government this: Where are the six billion trees? People in York—Simcoe at my Canada Day barbecue have planted more trees than the Liberal government has, and I am proud of everyone in my riding.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

*Adjournment Proceedings**[English]*

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have breaking news. Tomorrow morning, at the indigenous affairs committee, at 8:15 a.m., the member for Edmonton Centre, the former Liberal minister, not the other Randy, but the member for Edmonton Centre, is going to be coming to committee. I cannot guarantee he will answer questions, but he will respond to questions from Conservative members about the Liberals' indigenous procurement scandal and the factors that led to his resignation from cabinet.

I will be there, at 8:15 a.m., at the indigenous and northern affairs committee. I know my colleague from Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, our capable indigenous affairs critic, will be there. I know the member for St. Albert—Edmonton will be there. There is another member from Ontario, whose riding has the word “lake” in it, who will be there, as well as the member for Kenora.

This will be an important event because we have been trying to get the member for Edmonton Centre to come before committee to answer questions about the scandal. He will finally be there, and we will put to him the harm that has been done by false claims of indigenous identity.

Here is the scandal we are dealing with: The government says that over 5% of contracts go to indigenous firms, but the Assembly of First Nations says that it is closer to 1%. In other words, the majority of those benefiting from this indigenous procurement program are shell companies. There are shell companies and shady joint venture arrangements that allow non-indigenous companies to take the vast majority of the benefit, and there are outright pretenders, such as the member for Edmonton Centre, who, through their companies, are taking advantage of programs that were intended for indigenous people.

This is an overwhelming situation of abuse by non-indigenous elites and insiders, such as the member for Edmonton Centre. The member for Edmonton Centre, during the period when he was not a member of Parliament, set up a company, and that company claimed to be fully indigenous-owned to try to get contracts from the government. It did get some contracts from the government, but the company made the claim to be fully indigenous-owned.

Incredibly, the former minister says that he did not know and it was his wild partner making these claims. Why did the former minister's partner think the company was indigenous-owned? Maybe it is because the Liberal Party of Canada repeatedly and falsely claimed that the member for Edmonton Centre was indigenous. There is a proliferation of those pretending to be indigenous. According to the AFN and other indigenous leaders, there is a massive scale of indigenous identity fraud, as these non-indigenous elite insiders try to take contracts and steal benefits that were supposed to be for indigenous people.

Meanwhile, not a single firm has ever faced consequences for indigenous identity fraud. The Liberals have set up a system where, instead of the indigenous communities themselves doing so, the government controls the list of what is considered an indigenous business, which many have called a colonial system. The govern-

ment set up a system where it controls who is on that list. Many people made it on that list, or otherwise bid on contracts, falsely claiming to be indigenous. There have been zero consequences for anyone, including the former minister, who still continues to be a member of the Liberal caucus and still claims his innocence.

I invite others to tune in at 8:15 a.m. eastern time tomorrow.

● (1845)

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I first want to acknowledge that we are gathered on the unceded traditional territory of the Anishinabe and Algonquin people.

Indigenous procurement programs are in place because the Government of Canada is taking action to right past wrongs and move forward to advance, among other avenues, economic reconciliation. I will take a moment to explain how the program works and what it accomplishes. The procurement strategy for indigenous businesses limits bidding in federal procurement processes to registered indigenous businesses. By limiting bidding to businesses that are at least 51% indigenous owned and controlled, the government is creating more opportunities and access for these businesses.

There are huge opportunities for growth and economic development. The Indigenomics Institute estimates that the indigenous economy has the potential to grow from \$32 billion to \$100 billion in the next five years. The mandatory minimum 5% indigenous procurement target requires that at least 5% of the value of federal contracts is awarded to indigenous businesses. This ensures that procurement officers are considering indigenous businesses when procuring goods and services like office equipment, engineering services, technology and transportation, and the list goes on. These programs help indigenous businesses win contracts, generate revenue, gain experience and build networks, and all of this can be leveraged to win larger contracts with both public and private industry.

Indigenous procurement programs are a step toward making sure that indigenous people have equitable access to economic success and self-generated wealth. Simply put, these programs move the needle. In 2022-23, which is the most recent year we have data for, more than 300 indigenous businesses won contracts with a value of at least \$10,000 through the procurement strategy for indigenous businesses.

As a government, we understand that listening to indigenous people and acting on their advice leads to optimal outcomes. As we have heard from so many indigenous partners, these programs create opportunities and they are an essential part of economic reconciliation. Indigenous leaders have also been clear that these kinds of procurement programs should stay. Unfortunately, Conservatives have refused to say if they support that 5% minimum procurement target.

Adjournment Proceedings

In 2021, the Liberals began a five-year process to engage partners and co-develop a transformative indigenous procurement strategy to improve existing indigenous procurement policies and programs. As part of this work, partners around the table, including the Assembly of First Nations, ITK, the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association and the Canadian Council for Indigenous Business, have all been clear that indigenous people must be the ones determining who qualifies as an indigenous business.

The government wholly agrees and we are focused on collaboratively determining a path forward to transfer the administration of the indigenous business directory to indigenous partners. While we work toward this transfer and the co-development of a transformative indigenous procurement strategy, we will continue to diligently manage the directory, and support these vital and meaningful programs.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, we still have not gotten any response from the Liberals about the rampant abuse that has taken place. The most we have heard is them trying to deny the testimony of indigenous leaders. It is like they were not there. Previously, we pasted together their denials with the actual statements of multiple indigenous leaders. If the Liberals are really committed to this reconciliation concept, then they have to actually start by listening to what the folks who come to the committee are saying.

Over 1,000 businesses have been removed from the indigenous business directory. This should suggest that there is a problem. If, at some point, the Liberals look at the indigenous business directory and see there are over 1,000 businesses on this list that they have to take off the list, maybe that suggests there is a problem with the processes they have for qualifying indigenous businesses.

Will the Liberals recognize, at least as a first step, that there is a problem here?

• (1850)

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Madam Speaker, while I appreciate the Conservatives' new-found concern with issues affecting indigenous people, I really wish it was sincere. The Conservatives have not committed to continuing that 5% indigenous procurement target. In fact, they appear intent on sabotaging the success of this initiative to justify cutting it, if ever given the chance. Indigenous people, businesses and entrepreneurs should take note.

I will also highlight that outside of recent questions around the indigenous business directory, I have not heard the member, his party or his leader ask about missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, indigenous policing, systemic racism in health care, Joyce's principle, child and family welfare reforms, or anything related to actual reconciliation efforts.

Indigenous people are not puppets in the Conservatives' agenda. They deserve respect. They deserve authentic action on issues that impact them and their communities. They deserve better than this disingenuous display tonight.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am rising again to follow up with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration on a similar issue. It is on immigration levels and the immigration levels plan. I want to draw his attention to

comments made by a senior member of the Liberal Party who is deeply involved in the Prime Minister's economic planning. Of course, I mean the former Bank of Canada governor, Mark Carney.

"Mark Carney said that Canada has experienced 'failures of execution' when it comes to immigration policy in recent years, taking in more people than the economy was able to handle." He goes on to say, "It's not even with hindsight, it's in real time, you can see that we had much higher levels of foreign workers, students and new Canadians coming in than we could absorb." That is the complete opposite of what the Prime Minister claimed in his crisis YouTube video that he made on the immigration levels plan that his minister was unable to defend at committee. I am following up on a very specific part of the immigration levels plan.

Can the parliamentary secretary explain to me why the humanitarian and compassionate level was cut by 57% when promises have been made to Hongkongers, Ukrainians, Sudanese and Yazidis in Canada, and they will all be expected to fit into this particular stream that will only have 4,300 people in it?

Mr. Paul Chiang (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are adapting our immigration plan to suit the needs of Canadian families and communities today. For the first time in our nation's history, we have set targets for temporary residents in our immigration levels plan. That means that all temporary resident programs, like those for international students and temporary foreign workers, will have limits, just as there are for permanent resident programs each year.

By taking these steps, we are helping to preserve the integrity of our immigration system, responding to community needs and ensuring that newcomers to Canada are set up for success, with access to adequate resources to support them.

We have also reduced our permanent resident targets. Our focus for new permanent residents will be to attract the skilled workers we need to build new homes and provide patient care, and to focus on transitioning temporary residents to permanent residents. These are workers and families who are already here, are supporting our economy, have already adjusted to life in Canada and are best positioned for success over the long term.

Adjournment Proceedings

The latest levels plan reaffirms our commitment to reducing temporary resident volumes to 5% of Canada's population by the end of 2026. These reductions are the result of a series of changes over the past year, including a cap on the number of international students and tightened eligibility requirements for temporary foreign workers.

On that side of the House, the leader of the official opposition speaks from both sides of his mouth. Two years ago, during the pandemic, he said he would “remove the gatekeepers to allow faster immigration”. Just this year, he went to a community event and said we need to end deportation. He said, “We have a worker shortage in Canada. We have a demographic problem, our population is too old...we need these workers in our country.”

A few months later, the leader of the the official opposition went to a different community and said the opposite. He promises different things to different people. Canadians cannot trust a word he says.

On this side of the House, we are committed to ensuring that everyone, including newcomers, has access to the quality jobs, homes and supports that they need.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, with all respect to the parliamentary secretary, he did not answer the question, so I am going to follow up on a different part in the immigration levels plan.

There is a specific line item now for those people who claim asylum from Canada, and the government has put a target. Part of the target is that the people who apply at the Immigration and Refugee Board get approved. Not getting the immigration levels right leads to border disorder.

I want to draw the parliamentary secretary's attention to the following Globe and Mail headline: “Jordanian terror suspect deported from the U.S. had crossed the Canada-U.S. border illegally twice”. The same person applied at the refugee board for asylum over seven years ago, did not get asylum and was able to spend seven years in Canada. Canada Border Services Agency then confirmed that this same terror suspect was facing deportation when he illegally crossed into Washington State.

The minister then claimed that, for privacy reasons, he could not inform Canadians on the details of this particular case regarding how the individual crossed into Canada illegally, failed an asylum claim, was not removed for seven years and then crossed into America before American authorities deported him to Jordan. Can the minister explain which privacy legislation—

• (1855)

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

Mr. Paul Chiang: Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada's latest immigration levels plan for 2025 to 2027 pauses population growth from immigration in the short term to maintain well-managed and sustainable growth for the long term. It sets targets for temporary residents for the first time ever, lowering our permanent resident program targets to reduce pressure on families and communities. The plan is expected to bring our population levels back to pre-pandemic projections, and it is expected to reduce the housing supply gap by approximately 670,000 units by the end of 2027.

The reality is that the leader of the official opposition has no plan for the future of Canada, and his made-up math formula on immigration just is not adding up. The only plan he has is to cut, cut and cut. While the Conservative Party focuses on slogans, we will remain focused on building a stronger, more sustainable immigration system that works for everyone. We are supporting newcomers' integration and giving them a fair shot in Canada.

• (1900)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Before the hon. member starts speaking, I would ask her to lower the boom on her headset.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am always happy to lower the boom, but it is nice that it is on the headset.

It is an honour to rise virtually tonight on a snowy night in Ottawa to pursue a question I originally asked on October 25. It related to the regulation and management of pesticides in this country, particularly a class of chemicals referred to as “neonicotinoid insecticides”. I have to say that the response from the hon. member for Ottawa Centre was excellent. I almost felt it was wrong to ask the question in Adjournment Proceedings, but events have continued to move ahead on this file.

What I raised in question period on that day referenced an in-depth investigation by one of Canada's better investigative journalists and newspapers. That is the National Observer, which is online. They documented that the Pest Management Regulatory Agency of the Government of Canada had colluded with Bayer, the manufacturer of neonicotinoid insecticides. We used to think of Bayer only as the nice provider of aspirin, but it is the producer of a lot of pesticides. It undermined the research of a Canadian researcher, Christy Morrissey, and prolonged the use of chemicals that we know to be dangerous to human health and that science knows are also particularly dangerous for pollinators. We desperately need pollinators for the health of ecosystems and for agriculture. If we lose them, it will be a multi-billion dollar hit to the economy. This is not to mention that these chemicals are dangerous, as I said, to human health and the environment.

We should have banned these pesticides by now, but I have to say, it appears that between Health Canada and Environment Canada, the Government of Canada has been investigating the role of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency in response to my question, including with the pesticide manufacturer. That was documented in a further article by the same researcher from the National Observer. On the same day that I asked the question, the journalist in question, Marc Fawcett-Atkinson, published an article entitled “Health Canada probes claim that government officials helped pesticide company overturn a ban”. There is a series of articles, for those who wish to look, that are looking at the deep connection, the collusion between pesticide manufacturers and our regulatory agency in protecting pesticides instead of protecting human health and the environment.

In the debate at Adjournment Proceedings tonight, which I am honoured to participate in again, I really hope that the Government of Canada is ready to step forward. Since I asked my question, a huge coalition of environmental and health protection groups, with independent scientific support, have been asking the federal Minister of Health to at least temporarily ban the toxic insecticides known as neonicotinoid insecticides until an independent panel of experts can determine whether the benefits outweigh the known risks. Of course, no one can call an insecticide or any toxic chemical safe. I really hope that the Minister of Health, or whichever parliamentary secretary is on hand tonight, can give us an update on this process and encourage us to believe that we can, at long last, move for at least a temporary ban on one of them. That is imidacloprid, which is the most—

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

Mr. Paul Chiang (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the question and the opportunity to address a matter that is important to Health Canada and to all Canadians.

I want to assure the member and all Canadians that we take our role to protect the health, safety and well-being of Canadians seriously and hold our scientific processes to a high standard. PMRA scientists are professionals who use their expertise to support Health Canada's mandate when it comes to pesticides. They make decisions that are guided by rigorous scientific principles and rooted in objective scientific evidence. PMRA's scientific staff are experts in their fields and believe in the importance of their work and its impact on Canadians and the environment. Casting doubt on the integrity and independence of their work undermines their professionalism.

PMRA's work is governed by strict legislation and policies that ensure decisions are based on thorough scientific evaluation, using scientific evidence and robust data, whether from academia, industry or non-governmental organizations.

Public consultations are required on all proposed major decisions and do not compromise PMRA's decisions. In 2016, a proposal to cancel all uses of imidacloprid was shared with the public, based on various data, including from academics. This consultation generated numerous comments and new information.

Adjournment Proceedings

In 2017, a multi-stakeholder forum was created to address data gaps and gather new water-monitoring data. Since then, substantial water-monitoring data and new scientific papers were reviewed to inform the PMRA's final decision. The analysis showed that, with additional protective measures, some uses could continue safely, while others would be cancelled.

The PMRA continues its efforts to communicate its decision transparently and accessibly, ensuring Canadians are informed about pesticide safety. It works closely with the science advisory committee on pest control products to ensure independent scientific advice supports evidence-based decisions, enhances transparency, communicates the science behind decisions and informs a rigorous approach.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I am sorry to have to say that, wherever the hon. member said “robust”, the correct adjective is “lax”. Where he said the pest management regulatory agency uses science, I would have to say it is colluding with industry at every stage.

I urge all hon. members to see the further reporting, entitled “Deep links revealed between Canada's pesticide regulator and industry lobby groups” of November 29. It shows a revolving door with industry lobbyists and industry representatives in and out of PMRA's management.

I have had a lot of experience with PMRA. It is not listening to science. It is as if toxic chemicals in this country have constitutional rights and are innocent until proven guilty, while the rest of us are exposed to unacceptable risks.

● (1905)

Mr. Paul Chiang: Madam Speaker, the integrity of Canada's pesticide regulatory system depends on continued reliance on robust science as prescribed by the Pest Control Products Act.

The regulatory decision by PMRA on imidacloprid was supported by data from registrants, provincial and federal governments, academia, non-governmental organizations, grower groups and open literature. This decision was open to public consultation for 120 days, which ended in March 2017, and resulted in approximately 46,000 comments.

In addition, a multi-stakeholder forum, composed of federal and provincial government agencies, grower groups, independent researchers, non-governmental organizations and manufacturers, and facilitated by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, examined the use of—

Adjournment Proceedings

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:06 p.m.)

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